



WINNING *at* WIRELESS RETAIL



produced by
CEA
Consumer Electronics Association

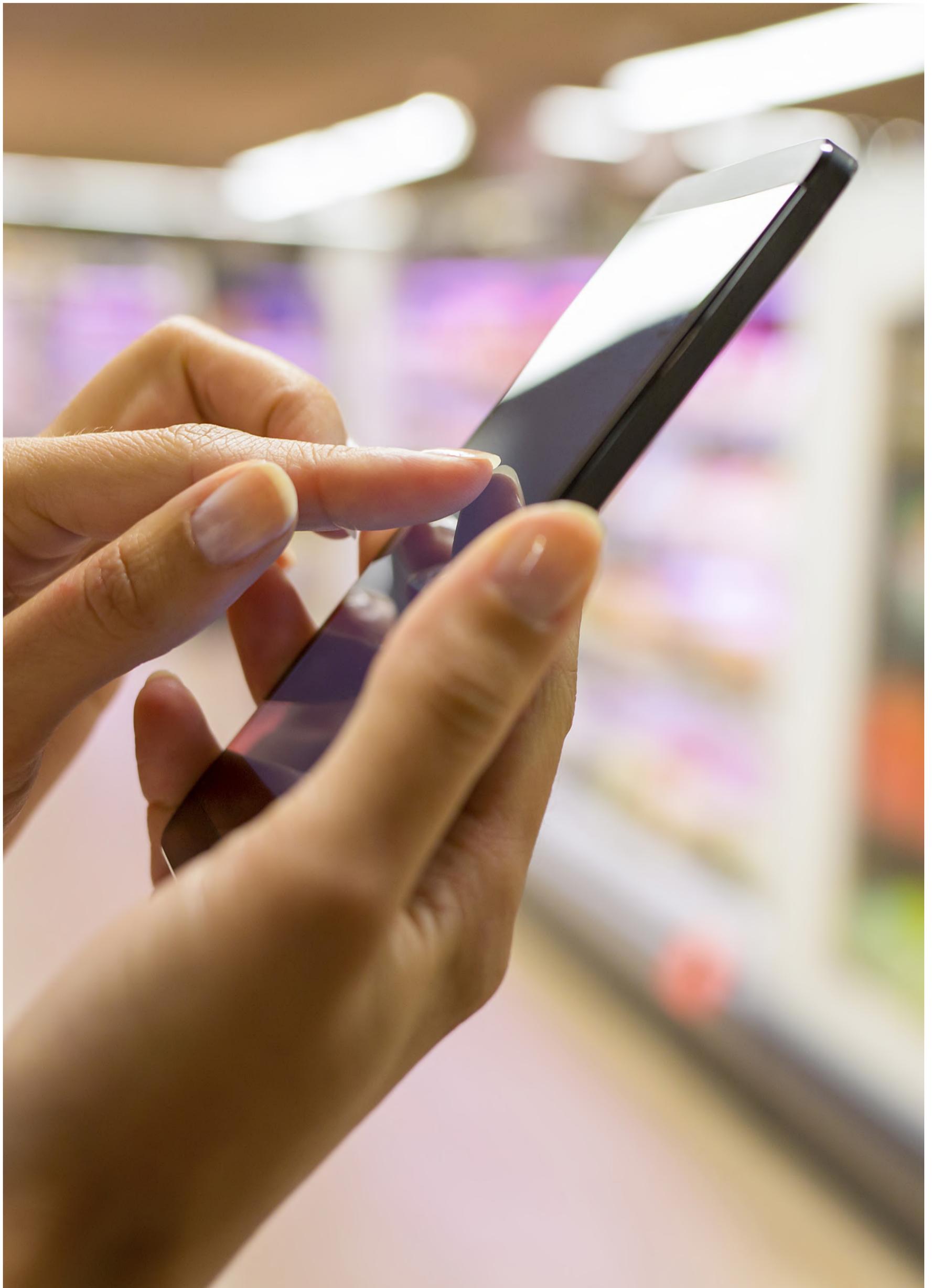
CEA would like to thank Retail Business
Development for authoring this material.



Retail Business Development provides a wide range of retail services geared toward revenue generation and product and services sell-through. Our expertise is in augmenting retail sales as a whole – assisted sales, event sales, and kiosk sales – and providing sales force management and retail consulting services. We have the experience and know-how to support your retail business from planning to execution, including go-to-market strategies, pop-up retail design, retail sales training and operations management.

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- Sales training programs delivered in-person or online
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- Merchandising and marketing that elevates brand awareness and sales
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CEA would like to thank the following members for their contributions to the production of this Guide.

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THE MIRROR

YOUR FIRST ASSIGNMENT is to find a mirror, a reflective window or use the screen of your wireless phone. Look in it. What do you see? Start by evaluating your team, your store, your business' financial well-being, and yourself as a leader. Are you telling the story you want your team and customer to hear? Are you presenting the store you want to be known for? Are you raising the bar, or following a step or two behind? Is there something you can improve in the story you are telling?

If you are thinking of opening a wireless retail location, you probably have a million questions running through your head. If you have one door, there are tips you can learn to improve what you are doing. If you have 100 locations, you can still do more. Whether you are a veteran or brand new to the wireless retail business, there is something more you can do, something new to learn, and questions to be answered.

To many, maybe even to you, the wireless retail industry can look like a beast—a 12-headed, fire breathing, razor clawed monster. The Consumer Electronics Association (CEA)[®] has the weapons to help you tame the beast and make it

yours, including this Guide. Our objective is to help you be successful and set yourself apart. Business advice can be acquired by studying other successful business ventures, first-hand experiences, attending school and doing research. At the same time, wireless retail has its own unique challenges and obstacles.

CEA wants you to succeed. The stronger the industry, the more successful our partners become. Therefore, we have put together this wireless retail success guide, using experience from partners, vendors, retail owners and executives. From basics to details, the *Winning at Wireless Retail Success Guide* will help you improve your business. It's filled with real-world practices to create a superstar team, sound wireless retail strategies, tips from the field, true life examples, and ways to add more to your bottom line.

Winning at Wireless Retail Success Guide is organized into four different categories of tips and success stories: "Your Customer," "Your Team," "Your Store," and "Your Business." In each, you will find years of experiences from inside the world of wireless retail, with first-hand accounts of where it has been, where it is now, and where it is going, plus views from other industries that can be applied to the wireless industry. Broken into

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Your customer

Your team

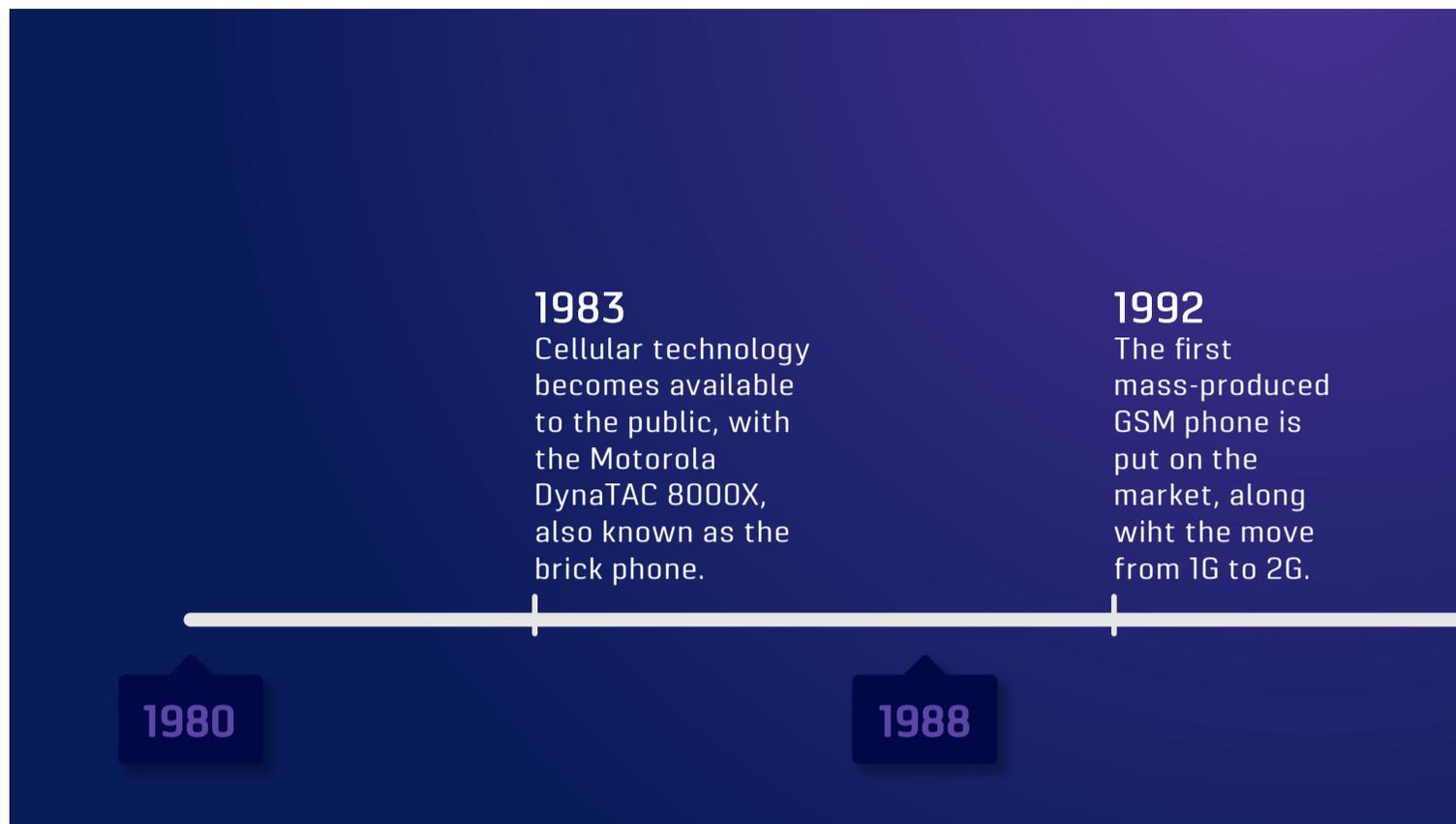
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quickly read tips and actionable articles, you can create the right approach for your customer, your team, your store and your business' success.

WHERE WE WERE / WHERE WE ARE / WHERE WE'RE GOING / WHERE ARE YOU?

To know where you are, you have to know where we've been. Cellular technology did not become available to the public until 1983, with the Motorola DynaTAC 8000X, also known as the brick phone. At a sticker cost of \$3999, it was effective at helping you see the sights in town as you drove around searching for a cellular tower to make a call. Made famous on screen in the 80s and 90s by Zach Morris in *Saved by the Bell* and Gordon Gekko in *Wall Street*, the brick phone pales in comparison to today's technology, capabilities, weight and

prices, but it opened the doors to a new venture in retail.

Since 1983, wireless phones have continued to get smaller, adding more and more features, eventually becoming a full computer in your pocket. Today, smartphones are the majority of phones sold.

In 1992, the first mass produced GSM phone was put on the market along with the move from 1G to 2G. In 1999, the first MP3 compatible phone arrived. In 2001, the first Bluetooth enabled device appeared and the introduction of 3G followed in 2002 with the first camera phone. In 2003, Blackberry released their first PDA combined in their phones; in 2007, Apple's iPhone changed the wireless field with its auto-rotate and multi-touch sensors. The Android operating system was first seen in 2008. And, in 2011, we saw the beginning of 4G speeds, not to mention the introductions of high-

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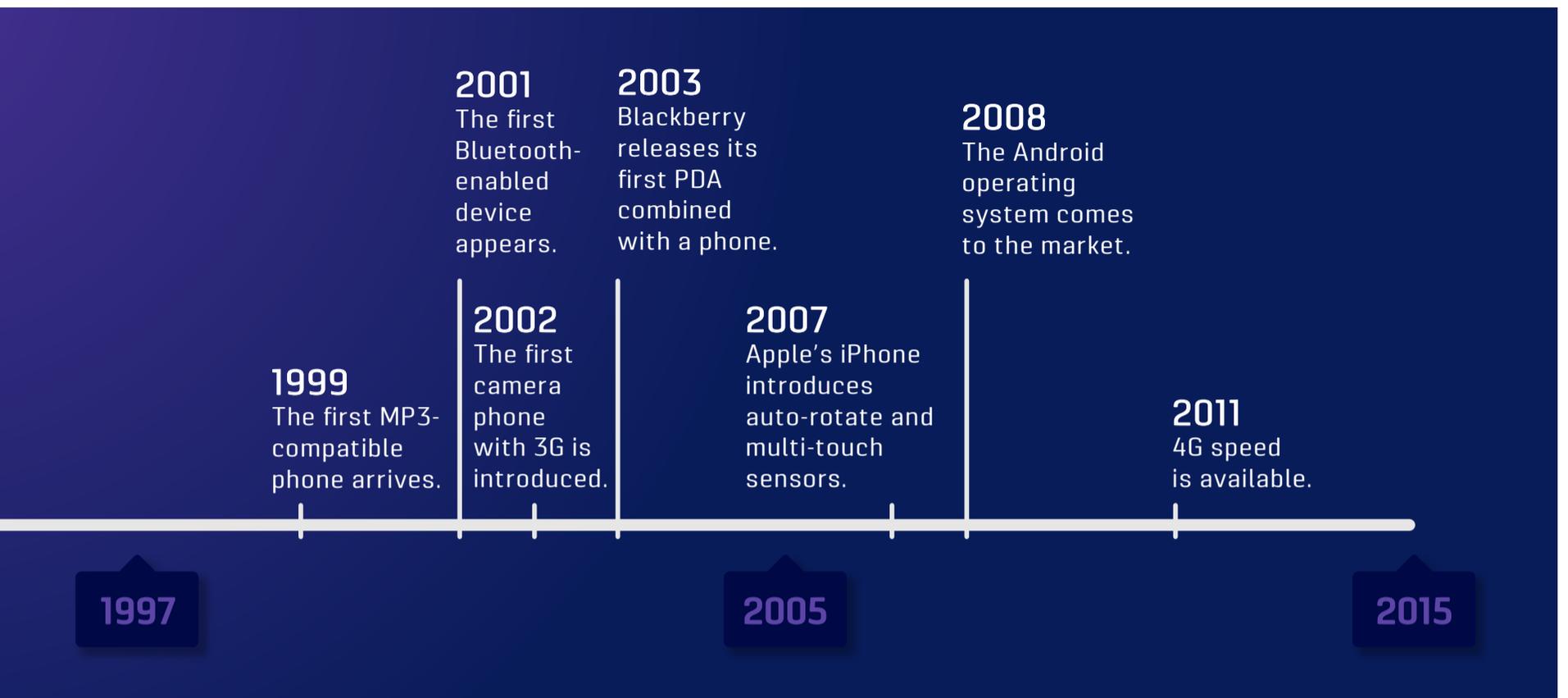
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definition screens and recording, easy sharing technology, app stores and processing speeds.

To put the speed of change in perspective, in the late 70s and early 80s, Atari, Commodore and Apple computers—yes, they had Apple computers before the iPhone—ran on one megahertz speed, which was considered lightning fast. Many of the phones on the shelves today are 1,000 plus times faster. Along with technology, commission policies from the carriers, marketing, the customer base, the necessity of mobile devices, business practices, team growth and store design have all changed. Phones were once free. Many times, this is still the case, but with the expense and demand for smarter phones, higher quality screens, better

cameras and more features, the carrier commissions do not cover the cost.

The wireless retail environment also continues to evolve, from a sign outside to showrooming and multi-media displays; from a couple phones whose main difference were their design to small computers; from brick and mortar locations to strip malls, kiosks and online shopping; from pressing television and radio ads to brand advocates; from caring about your customer to... well, some things should never change. These changes are just the easily seen. P&Ls, marketing campaigns, store design, sales psychology, your workforce and your customers have all changed, too.

The question is: Which side do you want to be on? Are you jumping ahead, keeping up or being left behind? When you look in that mirror, what do you see and what do you want to see?

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customer





The first place to start is with your most precious resource: your customer. Put yourself in their shoes: view your store, team and products through their eyes. Without them, there is no business.

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THE CUSTOMER'S POINT OF VIEW

THE SINGLE THING that can set you apart from your competitors is the experience you offer your customer, whether you aim to be a luxury brand provider or a low cost alternative. Get out of the mindset of selling to a customer, or being there for the customer. Sell for the customer, not to the customer. Your goal should be to find the right product for

the right person, not necessarily to sell what has the highest profit margin or is your favorite. Walk customers through benefits based on listening to their needs. Present what will work best for them and let the customer make the decision. Every day, look at your store and your team through a customer's glasses. What does your customer see? What impression are you making?

Customer view #1:

The sun has just started to go down and the street lights come up. You pull your car into the lot and park. The light above the store's door is out. The back side of a promotional sign is facing the sidewalk, the tape visible to walkers-by. Something about BOGO in bold print points to the inside. The trash can outside the door is starting to overflow and was pushed to the side by three kids an hour before on their way to the ice cream store three doors down. A handful of cigarette butts float on the red mulch under the bushes outside your car door.

The front door and windows have fingerprints on them. One handprint, two feet from the ground, had a chocolate cone at some point. You open the door. The store is brightly lit and you are the only customer there, unless someone is in the bathroom in the back corner. The 20-something behind the counter is leaning hard to keep the counter firmly on the ground, demonstrating the texting capability of the newest hero phone as he pushes his plans for the night to someone on the other side of the network. No "hello" or immediate acknowledgement. The floor is relatively clean for being late afternoon, some dirt on the shelf and a couple pamphlets on the floor just under the holder.

"Hello." The sales rep finally looks up and recognizes your entry, as you are now at the accessories. Line after line of chargers, cases and screen covers are uneven across the wall, some packages pushed in from being handled by earlier customers, three on the counter below the pegs, waiting to be returned.

"How are you?" The sales rep has placed his phone on the register, but has not gotten up from his stool.

"Great."

"Do you need any help?" A smile.

"I'm looking right now. I may need a new phone. At least a new battery charger."

"You're in the right place. You're right in front of the chargers. Let me know if you can't find it."

A poster in the back announcing the next sale is hung by thumb tacks behind the sales rep's now lowered

head. A response to the evening's plans has been announced on his phone's screen.

"Bathrooms?"

"Back corner." His pointed finger directs the way.

A fluorescent bulb flickers above as you pass under it, almost on cue.

The roll of paper is unraveled to the floor. The small chocolate hand from the window made an appearance on the mirror. You wash your hands and pull the last of the paper towels from the dispenser and open the door.

Back in front of the accessory wall, the sales rep has finished his plans for the evening and put his phone back in his pocket. The sweating Big Gulp cup in his hand is placed back under the counter.

"Are these all the chargers you have?"

"Yeah. I don't have any more in the back. You don't see yours?"

"No."

"We have another store about five miles down the road.

"Thanks."

"Have a great day." He waves as you open the door back to the parking lot. The little hand left the last finger print of his dessert on the metal bar.



It is essential to look at everything from a customer's point of view. Every day, walk the store as a customer. Coach your team to do the same thing. Require it. Write down things that can be improved, even if it is something the property management has to do, even if some items are the same day after day. If there aren't at least five things on the list, you and your team are not looking hard enough. It is easy to pass by the same thing day after day. It may be too familiar. But this is the first impression the customer has of your store. They are forming an impression about you and your location.

The sales rep in the previous example does not need to be terminated, but he does need to be coached. He didn't do anything particularly horrible. He was

probably doing things exactly as he has seen or was possibly even trained to do. Maybe even by you. The customer's experience was not memorable and he will likely forget the store's name and location as soon as he gets in his car, which means he won't be recommending your store to anyone. This does not build repeat customers or referrals.

Let's try again.

Customer POV Walk Through	
<p>Headline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Signage visible from the road <input type="checkbox"/> Sign fit and in good repair <input type="checkbox"/> Printing tolerances easily readable <p>Notes: _____</p>	<p>Floors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Clean (including corners and thresholds) <input type="checkbox"/> In good repair (no chipped tile, discolored, torn, pulled) <p>Notes: _____</p>
<p>Parking lot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Garbage-free (litter, cigarette butts, dead animals, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Proper lighting <input type="checkbox"/> Parking signs well-maintained <input type="checkbox"/> Handicapped readily accessible <p>Notes: _____</p>	<p>Counters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Clean (including corners and underneath top) <input type="checkbox"/> Free of clutter <input type="checkbox"/> In good repair (not chipped, discolored, torn, pulled) <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing material readable, current and tidy <p>Notes: _____</p>
<p>Windows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Signage featuring current promotions <input type="checkbox"/> Damage in good repair <input type="checkbox"/> Signage easily seen from road <input type="checkbox"/> Signs don't obstruct the window <input type="checkbox"/> Signs are in good repair <input type="checkbox"/> Inside of store visible from outside <input type="checkbox"/> Free of fingerprints <input type="checkbox"/> Free of smudges (spills, repairs, non-shipped, hand-drawn, self-inking stamps) <p>Notes: _____</p>	<p>Ceiling and Lights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lights on and working <input type="checkbox"/> Well-lit and comfortable lighting <input type="checkbox"/> Ceiling (downer, clean and in good repair) <input type="checkbox"/> No watermarks, chips, discoloration <p>Notes: _____</p>
<p>Restroom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Clean (floor, sink, toilet, walls, ceiling, floor) <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh scent <input type="checkbox"/> Mirror clean <input type="checkbox"/> Stocked (toilet paper, hand towels) <input type="checkbox"/> Handicap accessible <input type="checkbox"/> Hand sanitizer <input type="checkbox"/> Hand washing sign clean and in good repair <p>Notes: _____</p>	<p>CEA</p>



Customer POV
Walk Through

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Customer view #2:

The sun has just started to go down, and the street lights come up. You pull your car in the lot and park. The lights across the front of the store highlight the address so it is easily found, and the lights across the plaza are bright, showing the evening crowds and diners. Two posters hang in the window advertising the BOGO special for two smartphones and the new tablet computer launch. Both are boldly colored and simple, looking like a movie opening weekend. The landscaping around the plaza is well-maintained and freshly mulched.

Through the window, no one can be seen except a professionally groomed young man sweeping the front corner. The windows are clear and clean except for a couple handprints and a face print on the outside at a child's height. Wonder what caught the child's eye to press his face against the glass? Looking through the corner, probably the sports-themed promotional poster framed on the back wall.

You open the door.

"Good evening." A big smile, broom still in hand.

"How's your evening?"

"Great so far."

"Let me put this away. Just cleaning a little." He places the broom just out of sight around the corner.

The accessory wall is fully stocked and evenly spaced. A plan rate pamphlet was left on the counter under the pink cases. The sales rep approaches you.

"What brings you in today? Oh, I'm sorry. My name is Matt." He reaches out his hand and shakes yours.

"Hi Matt. I'm Keith. I may need a new phone. At least a new battery charger."

"Great to meet you, Keith. What phone are you using now?"

"This one here." You show him the phone from your pocket.

"We have a charger for that phone in stock." He takes the charger off the top peg and hands it to you.

He asks you questions about the problems you are

having with your phone and what you use it for. He asks additional questions about what you would like to use your phone for and how many minutes and how much data you use a month. He asks about your family and who else may be on your plan. After gathering this information, Matt suggests two phones, citing the benefits they have from the answers you gave. He hands them both to you and walks you through a couple of the functions they have that would be most beneficial to you. He also suggests a different plan, closer to the minutes and data that your family and you actually use.

"I think both of these will do everything you need your phone to do. I have both in stock. Which one did you want to me to grab out of the back for you?" The sales rep closes.

"I really like this one. While you grab that, where's your bathroom?"

"Back corner," he points, "between the 'football on your phone' poster and the picture of the little league team we sponsor."

The bathroom is clean. No water spots on the mirror and full paper towels and toilet paper. Either no one has used it today or Matt started with the bathroom and worked his way to sweeping the front.

The phone is at the register with a phone charger and case.

"I have the phone here, Keith. And I grabbed an extra phone charger as you said you lose them on occasion."

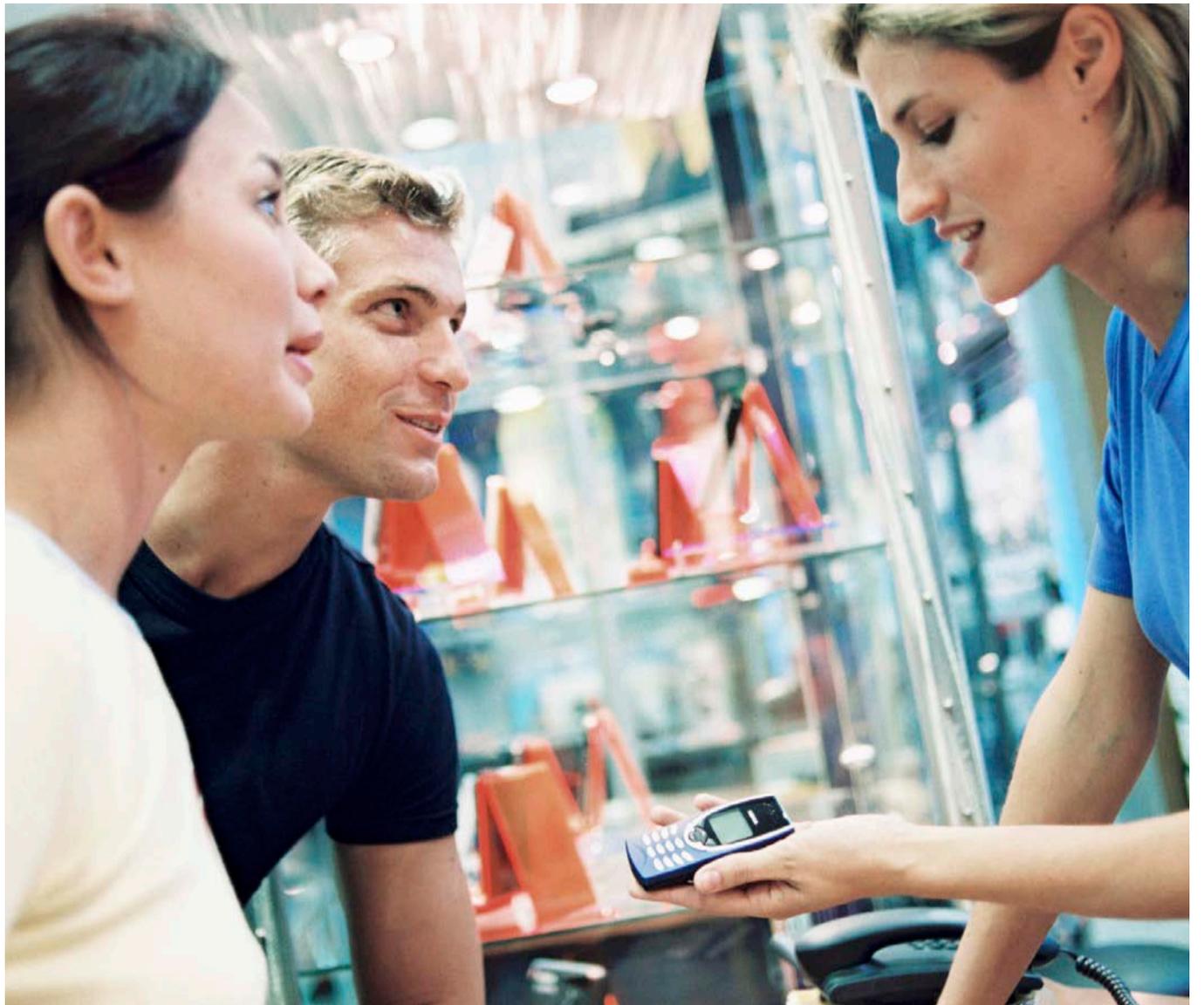
"True."

The sales rep completes the sale with the new plan discussed.

"Glad you came in today, Keith. I'll see you soon."

A 6-year-old almost collides with you as he runs past the door on your way out, smearing the remnants of his chocolate ice cream cone on the window.

As you drive away, you see the sales rep, window cleaner and towel in hand, open the door toward the race track and streak across the front window and wave goodbye.



Q Which of the two experiences will be remembered? Which of the two experiences will the customer tell others about? Which store will he remember the name and location of?

they are looking for in their next wireless devices and plans. Or, everything that comes out of your team's mouth may sound like a foreign language. What the customer wants and needs and how to discuss it with them is formed through that relationship.

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THE CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP

It is necessary to form a relationship with the customer. You may not invite them to your house for the big game or ask them to your wedding or kid's school play, but developing a relationship with the customer is critical in creating a happy customer who will spread the word of your business. Your customer may be comfortable with the changing technology, they may have researched all the options and know exactly what

WALKING ADVERTISEMENT

Find the right product and present it in the right way. Do this well and you will have that customer return time after time. Just as important, you will have them as your walking, talking billboard. Word of mouth, no matter what the product or year, has always been and will always be the best advertisement. Customers listen to those they trust.

A salesperson can tell a customer that the Super-Widget-Pro is the best widget on the market, but if their friend, co-worker, mother or neighbor tells them the same thing, the salesperson is a footnote. The customer knows the salesperson is there to sell them something. Even if it is the right product for their needs and wants, the customer may still be skeptical of “being sold to.” On the other hand, someone they know does not have an ulterior motive of money. Even a stranger in line at the coffee shop can have more impact than the salesperson. Telling the person behind them while waiting for their \$4 cup of java about the cool new Super-Widget-Pro in their hand and the great service they received from your store is incredibly powerful.

By forming a genuine relationship with the customer, you can gain some of that influence. Treating the customer right,

providing exceptional customer service, and finding the right products for them is a prerequisite for their return and the spreading of your business’s name.

Just like great service, poor service is also spread by word of mouth, and in greater quantity. According to Colloquy, a loyalty marketing, publishing and research firm, 75 percent of people surveyed would share a negative experience with others, where only 42 percent would share a positive experience, lending credibility to the old belief that one happy, satisfied customer may tell five friends and family members about their experience, where an unhappy customer is more likely to share their bad experience with a hundred people, especially in our current social-media oversharing culture. Providing great service to everyone makes this an easy battle to face.

The image shows a questionnaire titled "Returning Customer POV Questionnaire" with the subtitle "Winning at Widgets Pro". It contains several sections of questions with lines for answers. The questions include: "What do you look for in a store?", "What is the biggest deterrent when deciding where to shop?", "What is your overall impression when you walk in to the store?", "What is the first thing you notice when you walk in?", "Why do you return?", "What is the impression of the employee working when you walk in to the store?", "Have you ever felt uncomfortable when you have entered? Why or why not?", "What can we do to improve your first impression?", "Would you recommend this location to friends and family? Why or why not?", and "Have you recommended this location to friends and family?". The CEA logo is at the bottom right.

 Returning Customer POV Questionnaire

The image shows a questionnaire titled "First Time Customer POV Questionnaire" with the subtitle "Winning at Widgets Pro". It contains several sections of questions with lines for answers. The questions include: "Where do you usually shop for your widget products?", "What is your favorite widget in general? When do you usually prefer to shop? Why?", "What do you look for in a store?", "What is the biggest deterrent when deciding where to shop?", "What was your impression when you walked in to the store?", "What is the first thing you noticed when you walked in?", "What was the impression of the employee working when you walked in to the store? Can you give examples?", "Did you feel comfortable in the store and with the employees? Why or why not?", "What was your impression of the sales process?", and "What can we do to improve your first impression?". The CEA logo is at the bottom right.

 First Time Customer POV Questionnaire



TO DO:

Look in that mirror even if it stings a little bit and get a true customer’s point of view. Approach a customer who you recognize, one that has come in multiple times. You have probably formed a relationship with them. Ask them to help you get a better read of your store. Most people will be happy to help as opposed to taking a survey. Emphasize you are looking for honest feedback to make the customer’s experience the best it can be. Ask open ended questions and let them answer. Your job is to listen and learn. Ask permission to take notes while talking to them.

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Customer #1:

A woman walked into a new car dealership. She was confident and prepared. She had left her job downtown early in her business suit to test drive a few models and hoped to find what she needed. She knew there would likely be some haggling over price and features, but she had done her homework and knew this specific car manufacturer had several models she liked. Her main concern was something safe and large enough to fit her husband and three children into when they took road trips, which they enjoyed doing three to four times a year. Decent gas mileage would be a great bonus for the same traveling reason.

A thirty-something salesman in a crisp white shirt with the dealership's logo across the pocket stepped from the office and taking one look at the professional woman with the designer bag felt good about his next commission check.

"How are you today?" He asked.

"Great," she responded. "I'm looking for a new vehicle."

"Let me show you something. This sporty car is an extended-range electric car. It will get 25 to 50 miles on electric alone and then around 35 mpg when the gas engine kicks on. And it screams beautiful. What do you think?"

Customer #2:

A second customer walked into a different new car dealership. He stepped out of the car he has driven for the last 25 years, through eight grandchildren's births and high school graduations. A luxurious car at the time, it had gone from nice to classic in the time he has owned it. As a present to his wife and himself, he decided to get a new car to take them to the grocery store, church and their shuffle board club once a week—a total of 21 miles a week combined there and home. They make their children and grandchildren drive to them, a luxury of senior citizen status. He wanted something simple with good gas mileage and from a company they knew. He decided on the same make and the hood ornament he already had. It had lasted 25 years after all and still looked great.

A 20-something saleswoman in white blouse, the dealer's logo across the name tag next to Lisa came from the glass doors and greeted him halfway through the lot.

"Good afternoon, sir." She shook his hand firm and intentional. "I see by that gorgeous machine there, you are already a fan. What brings you in today?"

The man told her he was looking for something new. As for the old car, "I'll probably just keep it in the garage," he said.

"Great!" She had a brand believer and a new spiff that started that week on last year's model SUVs. "Looking at luxury and quality, this SUV is the most comfortable on the lot. It has GPS and OnStar built in with the ability to connect your MP3 player. On longer trips, you can even put in a DVD."



Wireless devices are much like cars. They are filled with features, gadgets, lights and exciting new technology, but it's not for everyone. The key is to listen to the customer.

The first customer wanted a vehicle with room for her family and safety being her largest priorities, followed closely by gas mileage. The salesman went straight to telling her about the coolest new electric/gas hybrid sporty car based on her appearance and his commission. She had done her research on what she wanted. What she was looking for was on the lot. This could have been a simple sale, but more likely, the salesman scared her away by trying to sell her what he wanted to sell,

not what she needed or wanted to buy. He didn't even ask.

The second customer had been using the same technology for 25 years in the car he drove in to the dealership, and before that, the car was likely even more basic. A built in GPS system, OnStar, premium sound with MP3 capabilities and a DVD player are likely not his priorities for the 21 miles he drives a week. He was looking for something he understands and feels comfortable with is, but the saleswoman didn't ask.

It is essential to ask and listen to the customer.

Let's apply this to the wireless industry. The technology in wireless phones and devices

is increasing and changing rapidly. With the continued advancement of smartphones, they can do more than we ever thought possible just a couple years ago. Along with the advancements in processor speed, screens, cameras and Internet capability, an estimated 700-1,000 new apps are added to the major operating systems—IOS, Android, Windows, BlackBerry—"stores" each day.

You must ask yourself, does every one of your customers need these features and apps? Just because it is the newest and most up-to-date phone, with the capacity to handle dozens of apps at lightning fast speeds, does the customer in front of you need or want those abilities? Are they going to use it?



Imagine an 87-year-old woman who just learned to text, although very slowly and with a lot of strange auto-correct mistypes. She uses her phone to occasionally make calls when she is not at home and to text her grandchildren. No matter how many times she is shown, she is not comfortable taking and sending pictures or getting online. She doesn't use the GPS mapping program and has no desire to understand the concept of an app store. A smartphone or tablet with a large data program would be wasted on what she needs or wants.

The customer buying a new version of his 25-year-old car is something everyone in the retail industry wants. He is brand loyal, walking back into a dealership based on name alone. This is the same customer who will visit the store again if he is treated right, shown great service, and feels like a VIP. He is

also the category of customer that will recommend that same store or brand to others. By asking the right questions, you would discover this customer is looking for something simple to use and familiar. A smartphone, although capable of a lot of functions, would be useless to him and he would either leave empty handed or with a phone he didn't need, doesn't want and can't use. The right product may be a basic features phone with a smaller minute and minimal data. The smartphone may have a larger profit margin and the data plan a bigger impact on the immediate P&L bottom line, but it will hurt more in the long term.

You want that customer to leave happy, because as a brand loyalist, they will recommend your store to others. They will also tell others if a product they did not want was pushed on them, if they were not listened to, if they were treated

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poorly, or if they experienced bad customer service. The additional customers and reputation for doing the right thing the right way will create a larger bottom line.

SPEAK TO YOUR GRANDMA

It is unlikely your grandmother reads Wired magazine. She probably doesn't follow the technology blogs and booking a trip to the International CES® is not likely in her vacation plans. She does, however, want a wireless phone. When a salesperson forms a relationship and asks the right questions, they would discover a smartphone is not for her. She does not need much, if any data, and a basic feature phone is the perfect solution for her. There are still several options that must be explained. She should be spoken to according to her technology comfort. Make it simple. Simple is not condescending. Speak to the customer in a vocabulary they can understand. Pixels and hertz may mean nothing to her.

This does not apply only to grandmothers. People of all ages,

sexes, races and education levels have no interest in technology. Not owning a smartphone or tablet does not make them a less valuable commodity to your bottom line. They may convert to a more advanced device in the future, or they may tell 10 technology enthusiast friends what great service they received at your store and how you found exactly what they were looking for, explained in a way they understood.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TECHNOLOGY

For most, a cell phone is not a luxury anymore. At one time, home phones were king. At one time, Morse code was king, but that shows how much things have changed. Many customers have replaced their home phones. They have moved their entire communication network—phone calls, texting, emails, social networking—to mobile devices. They have become a mobile photographer, sharing pictures instantly. Their phone and tablets are their entertainment hub,

watching movies and listening to music on the go and at home. It is their office away from their office, completing work spreadsheets and making full presentations using the few ounces of electronics in their pocket.

It is essential to understand how and why customers use their wireless devices before presenting anything. Form a genuine relationship and get to know their wants and needs. They may not even realize some of their own wants and needs until you get them talking.

THE MOBILE WORKPLACE CUSTOMER

Wireless devices have become an extension of the office. With the advancements of smartphones, tablets, and wireless Internet modems, people can take their meetings and work anywhere. This has become an important benefit for customers.

You can't make presumptions about your customers. How they dress may or may not be a

reflection of who they are or what they do. Steve Jobs was usually seen in jeans and a turtleneck. Mark Zuckerman, CEO of Facebook, is famous for wearing jeans and a hoodie everywhere he goes. You must know your customer to make the right recommendations.

Business people, no matter what type of business, are taking their job on the road, whether on the plane, in the car, from office to office or from event to event. Having the capabilities to bring spreadsheets, presentations and communication with them has become a requirement for many companies. At one time, companies would supply smartphones to their employees, forcing them to carry two devices—one for work, one for personal use. Many companies now require the employee to supply their own. Being able to switch the functionality from work to personal is a need and want they may not realize they have.

All smart devices have features and applications to make the mobile workplace easier. Knowing what they are will help you discuss options.

THE MOBILE ENTERTAINMENT CENTER CUSTOMER

Customers of every type use their wireless devices as entertainment centers. Thousands of songs, hours of movies and

television shows are loaded, viewed and listened to on phones and tablets. This does not count the unlimited streaming capabilities available online. The sound and picture quality rivals some home systems, just on a smaller scale. Users have replaced and extended their entertainment use with these devices. Runners have replaced their MP3 players. Business travelers keep up with their favorite shows and movies while waiting for flights. Students carry their favorite YouTube videos from friend to friend. Parents everywhere have rejoiced at the ability to occupy and distract their bundles of joy for a moment of sanity in car rides and shopping trips.

THE COOL CUSTOMER

You've seen them. Some of you may be one. They have the coolest toy, the latest gear and are ahead of the next big trend. They actually understand what the "Fourth G" is, and might even know what LTE stands for. But the really cool thing is, they listen. Most of them don't try to outsmart you. They are just looking for information and want to try new things.

They are not all young and they are not all students. They can be any age and be heading any direction. They may be students, but they can also own their own companies. Many times they are the trend makers. Be aware and never look past them.

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**TO DO:**

Work with your team and explore questions and answers that will help lead to the type of customer they are dealing with. No customer can be categorized in just one customer type. Most are a combination of multiple types of customers. To understand their priorities, you must expand the conversation and listen to the details of their usage.



Question: What do you use your phone for?

ANSWER	CUSTOMER TYPE
Work, conference calls, presentations, electronic business cards, schedules/calendars	Mobile workplace customer
Games, Internet research, video chat, apps, instant social media updates	Cool customer
Watch movies, stream video, listen to music	Mobile entertainment center customer
Photos, texting, social media	All
Phone calls only	Basic technology customer



What other questions can you think to ask?

THE BIG COMMITMENT

A two- or three-year post-paid contract can be a long commitment to a customer. Some people's relationships, including marriages, don't last that long. They are afraid of being stuck with bad wireless service, bad customer service, or high charges for multiple years. Empathy is the best approach. Form the relationship and provide all information you can to set their minds at ease.

They will have a wireless phone and/or devices for multiple years. If a relationship is formed with the customer, the trust they have in you should assist in the customer service concern. More trust can be created with the offer of ongoing help.

Explain the benefits and cost savings of the contract, though keep in mind that monthly and pay-as-you-go options may be the right choice for the customer.

Do not let surprises ruin your store's reputation in the future. If the monthly charges, taxes, fees and possible overages are explained in full to the customer, there should be no shock when the bill comes in. If an unexpected charge appears on their bill, the customer won't feel misled by the carrier, by government taxes or by the overages. They will feel misled by you, destroying trust and creating a negative perception of your business.



Most carriers require two years into a contract before the customer is eligible for a hardware upgrade discount, making the commitment with the hardware just as worrisome as the carrier. Asking the right questions to find the right phone or tablet for the customer is just as important as finding the right carrier and plan. Wireless devices have become an appendage to the user, relying on them during their daily routines. The matchmaker is key to a successful and fulfilling commitment.

had the same greeting. Both characters were a part of the *Cheers* family, valuable people, not just customers.

Who's a VIP? Answer: everyone is a VIP. And everyone should feel like a VIP. Without customers, there is no business.

Everyone should feel like Norm when they walk in to the store. Cliff should feel as important, recognized and loved as Norm. When a customer walks in, they must immediately feel welcome. A big genuine smile and a "Hello" is the easiest and most sincere approach. If the customer is recognized, welcome them back. If you're not sure if they have been in, stay on the side of VIP Norm and welcome them back. The customer may correct the team member, but they are automatically recognized as an important regular. Remembering a name would put the team member at the top of a VIP welcome.

First priority in any business is to make the customer happy with their experience, not selling. If the customer experiences great service and feels like a VIP, they will more likely purchase from you and

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TO VIP OR NOT TO VIP

Every week for 11 years on the television show *Cheers*, the large and lovable character Norm Peterson would walk through the Boston bar's door to a chorus of customers and employees screaming his name. The barkeep would pour the same draft beer for him with a sarcastic exchange. Each and every week.

Cliff Clavin, one bar stool over, never got the same response when he entered. He may have been just as loved, but he never



become an advocate for your business.

Consider this scenario. A man walks in to a locally-owned gourmet market for the first time and a young employee in the corner greets him, "Welcome back. Good to see you again."

"This is my first time in," the customer stated.

"Well, I had a 50-50 shot at getting that right," she replied with a laugh.

She shook the customer's hand, asked his name and guided him through the store. While she asked about the dinner party he was attending that evening and the types of guests invited, she showed him several local wines and a few desserts made at a local bakery. She assured him they would be a huge hit.

He signed his name on the mailing list and planned to return before he departed to his Florida home.

By the time he left, wine and pies in hand, he wanted to invite her to the party.

The wine and desserts were a hit and he took pleasure telling the group of the fantastic market he had stopped in. Several knew of the store and the clerk who helped him and the others planned on shopping there on their next trip.

The next day, the customer received an email over his smartphone from the same clerk asking if the wine and desserts went over well and invited him to an invitation-only wine tasting the next day.

Nothing makes a customer more loyal or a bigger advocate than feeling like a VIP in the store. Many wireless retail stores do a good job of this. They pay full attention to the customer in front of them. They ask questions and use their name. They make assurances and promises of the service and devices.

But what happens when the customer walks back out the door? Customers are scared they won't be treated like a VIP as soon as they sign the contract. It is your responsibility to continue that relationship. That customer is both a potential returning customer, adding devices, options, accessories and upgrades in the days, weeks and years to come, and a potential advocate of your team's service.

At the local market, the clerk not only paid personal attention and related the suggestions to the customer in front of them but followed up the next day. The customer told everyone at the dinner party of the hands-on, personalized service he received and the additional attention received after the sale has certainly made an advocate.

Follow up with the sale and be sure the customer is happy with everything promised to them. Reinforce your team's commitment

to the customer's importance to the business. Make a phone call, send an email, mail a postcard. Welcome them to the family and ask how their new device and service is, and if they have any questions. Offer additional training in-store, free of charge. This will get them

back in the store, possibly bringing a new customer with them. The sale and relationship does not end after they leave.

Who's a VIP? Everyone. And they should be before, during and after the sale.



TO DO:

- Call all new customers and all returning customers from the last month.
- Welcome them to the family. Ask how their new device and/or new services are and if it's meeting their expectations. Find out if they have any questions. Offer in-store training and invite their friends to come along. If it's a regular or recognized customer, consider offering a coupon or incentive as a thank you for their loyalty. This is a good time to discuss a new product that would pertain to their needs.
- A follow up thank you card is a great addition to the phone call.

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THE IMPACT OF ONLINE SHOPPING

Whether you are in a standalone store, kiosk or event sales, customers are wise to online stores. Online stores have many advantages over traditional retail outlets. They have less overhead. They can rely on a couple web programmers and a warehouse. There is no training for salespeople. There are no salespeople. They can add lights, whistles, theme

music and magical animated characters without a lot of remodeling, bands, and special effects. This usually creates a lower price than at a traditional retail store. The customer is aware of this and it has created different challenges for the traditional retail store.

Customers have done their research. They have looked online for features and prices. Many are prepared. It is estimated that 25 to 30 percent of shoppers will comparison

shop using their phone or tablet while in the store. Phone apps have been designed specifically for this purpose. Customers can scan the UPC code and compare prices with online outlets and local competition.

Many customers will use the retail store to feel the device and then go home and purchase it for less online.

WHY A RETAIL STORE?

There are three main reasons customers still prefer to go to a traditional retail store to purchase wireless devices.

1. Nothing beats the opportunity to touch, feel, and try a product, electronics especially. Customers want to see a product in action, see how it fits in their pocket or purse, and see if it does everything they need it to do.
2. The product is available for them to take home today. Nothing is more satisfying in a shopping experience than finding exactly what they want and need and carrying out the glossy bag today.

3. The biggest reason to go into a traditional retail location is having experts available. Customers have questions. They have multiple choices in devices, operating systems, apps and accessories. Having an expert in the store to ask, demonstrate, and review is essential to most customers' buying decisions.

CARRIER STORES

The carrier store has the money and resources to make their location shine. They have large displays, the newest products and often a large, well-trained staff to help the customer immediately.

In the same four walls is usually a help desk to assist with warranty or repair issues the customer is having. A broken phone can be devastating. The customer knows going into a shiny carrier store, they will be able to fix the problem then and there, or be provided a new phone.

Customers also perceive a carrier store as having a more permanent place in the retail market. The large, glossy carrier store will be consistently in the same corner

of the plaza or in the same parking lot with the same consistent service.

CONTENDING WITH ONLINE

Cheaper, don't have to leave the chair, slick websites. How do you contend?

You can either battle or embrace the online shopping world. Customers, when asked, will rather shop at a traditional retail location. Your store must be prepared.

Have live handsets and devices in the store. A customer can go online and find a picture of a device that doesn't do anything. Having something in the customer's hand they can try gives your team the opportunity to answer questions and show applications the website doesn't provide. A picture is not the same.

Stock the store. The customer wants to take the product home today. If they wanted to wait for the product, they could do that at home and answer the door when the mail carrier arrives.



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Be sure the team is well-trained. If the main reason a customer comes into a traditional store is to ask questions, the team must know the features and benefits of the devices and how to qualify, present, close and handle objections. Websites only offer a list of features—hertz, megapixels, processors, screen resolution. Customers may have done their research, but the store's team can make that research come alive. They are the experts. Practice translating the features into how they benefit different

types of customers. For example, the team should know how the speed feature online translates into a benefit for the business customer, the technology deficient customer, the entertainment centric customer, and the student. Build the relationship. People buy from people they like. When the customer feels important and treated properly, they are more likely to purchase from you and spread the word of their great experience. They become an advocate for the store.

Know the prices online. Customers understand there is more expense to a traditional store, but know your policy for pricing and discounts beforehand. The online store does not have you.

Some customers will use the store as a showroom and still order online, sometimes while in the store. Do not show any disdain for their activity, even if it is obvious. Be prepared with the response. Will you match the price or explain how the online store does not have your continued assistance?

In the classic holiday movie *Miracle on 34th Street*, Macy's department store's Santa Claus—spoiler alert: the courts proved in the movie he was the real Santa Claus—would send customers to competitor Gimbels for better prices and selection. Macy's built customer loyalty by providing better customer service and product knowledge. You may not send people to another store, but understanding price is a large deciding factor in the online store difference.

To survive, you must go above and beyond putting a product on the shelf and waiting for the customer to pick it up and say "I'll take it." In *Miracle on 34th Street*, Santa did the shopping for them. He knew where the best benefits and costs were provided. If your store cannot provide the same or better price than online stores or the dealer locations, the benefit of your team must be vastly superior. If you get close to the price and provide superior service and added benefits, your store will win more often than not.

Provide workshops for the devices. Wireless devices are becoming more and more advanced. Providing workshops on their use builds legitimacy of the team's expertise and continued relationship.

Build your own website. Use the technology available. Answer common questions on your site and update it with specials, sales and events. Websites have added the perception of legitimacy to a business. Even if you are not able to activate and ship phones online, invite the customer in to the store for personalized service.

With every event your store is involved in—rallies, concerts, fundraisers, festivals, etc.—broadcast it live across your website. The store's presence becomes more than a one location event, but available for everyone.

The iconic British luxury clothing and accessories brand Burberry, founded in 1856, has fully embraced the online experience in their flagship London store. They have renovated their traditional store to reflect the experience customers get in their award-winning online store. Large screens display the models' images from their online marketplace next to the physical products. If the item is not in stock, the customer can order it right there from the website to ship to their door. Burberry broadcasts their runway shows, concerts and special events across the website and on a large screen in the center of their store.

Instead of battling the online experience, they have embraced it.


TO DO:

- Go to your favorite online stores. These may or may not be wireless industry stores. There is a reason these stores are your favorite. Now ask yourself why?
- What is the best from online stores?
- How can you transform it into a benefit in your store?

ONLINE	TRANSLATED INTO STORE
Clean, simple specs of products	Create and print simple spec sheets of products focusing on the benefits. Keep small and simple. Do not overshadow the product. Frame and/or laminate next to product. Place in similar position as online.
True pricing of products, often discounted for Internet	Provide easy to read and understandable pricing on all items. Have store exclusive specials that are a better value than online.
Internet-exclusive products	Work with carriers and accessory distributors to provide products not easily available online or in the area. Advertise the products as such in store and in the sales process.
Reviews of products	Find reviews, print them and provide them to customers and include both good and poor reviews. Having both will validate the team member's opinion and the good reviews. Bookmark review websites that can be easily brought up on the same devices for the customer to evaluate.
Flash/animations of products High-production videos of product use	Use screens and/or tablets near the products and cycle commercials and animations featuring those products.
Easy shopping cart checkout	Use mobile point of sale systems to ring up customers from the floor or gather the items for them as they go like a personal shopper.
Shipped to the door	Offer to ship out of stock items to their door or call when they arrive. Offer to ship gift items to the recipient's door with a card from the giver.
Online training of product(s)	Train your team. They are the experts. Offer in-store training for new and existing customers. Bookmark training video and material on the devices they discuss.

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CONTENDING WITH CARRIER STORES

Carrier stores and independent retailers—yes, there are differences. Just because the same devices are on the wall and the same plans are available, the look, feel and perception from the customers are different. The carrier stores have the financial backing of a very large corporation. Their stores are often bigger, brighter and shinier. And the perception from customers is they are more stable, will last longer, be more stocked and employ more educated salespeople.

Go to the carrier stores and figure out what they are doing well. Now improve it. Catching up to the carrier store is one thing, but making it better will be noticed by the customer and make you their retailer of choice.

The marketing material, the displays, and the team's appearance in a carrier store are all professional. This is easily recreated. Change your marketing material. Have copies and posters professionally printed. Frame your

posters and be sure your store is bright and welcoming. Repair the items in your store. It may seem like an unnecessary expense to repair something solely cosmetic, but to the customer's perception, it makes all the difference.

The carrier stores are often busy, with long waits. Customers stand in long lines with outdated phones or new plan needs waiting for a few salespeople. They give a name or take a number and wait. The independent retailer has the opportunity to provide customized service for each and every customer walking through the door. Even if there is a wait, you have the opportunity to provide something more, with or without a wait list.

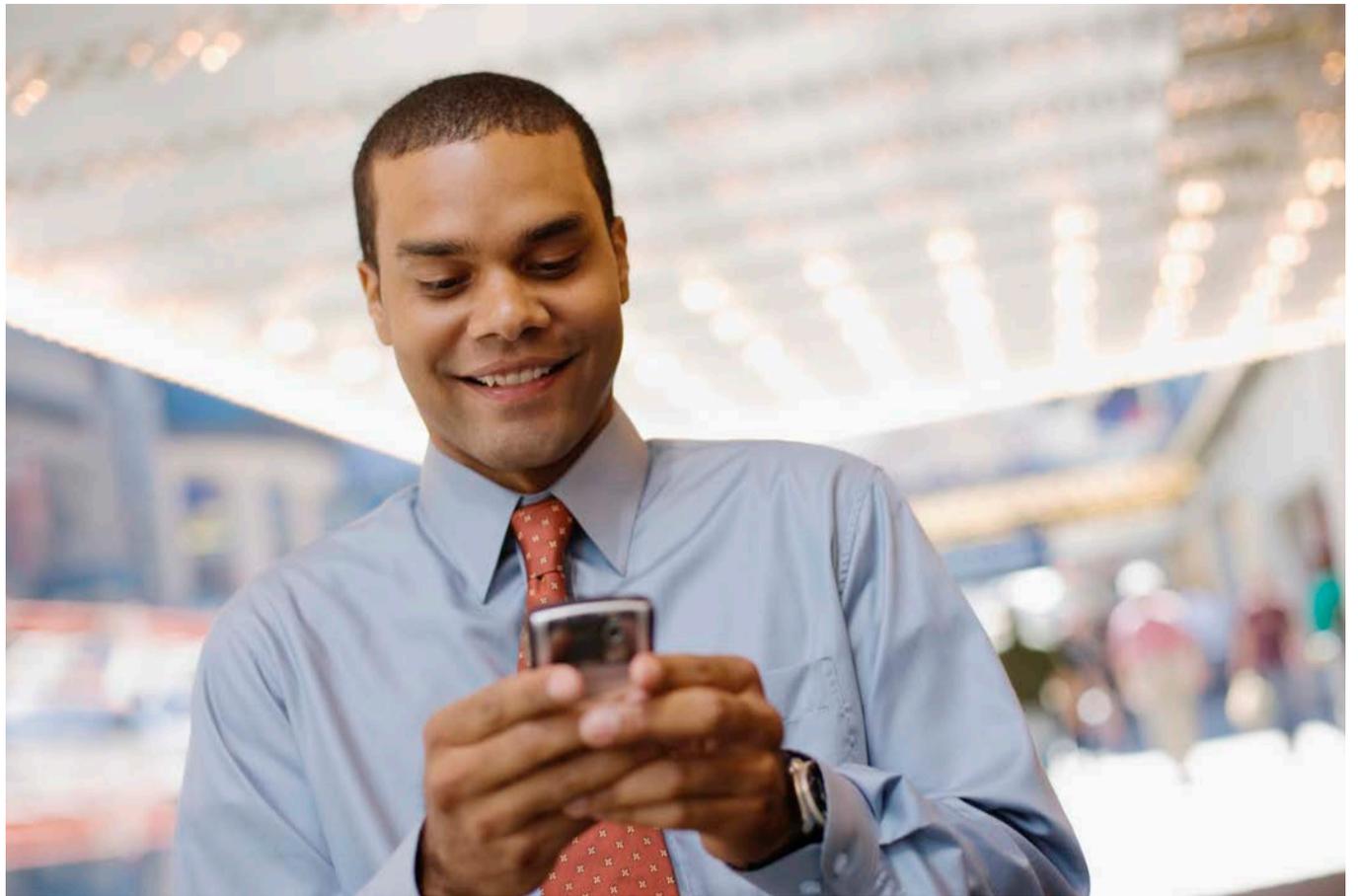
Be sure your team is well-trained. Customers expect the carrier store to know everything about their devices and plans. Train your team to do the same and stay up-to-date with devices, plan changes, and product launches.

Customers may see a carrier store as being a more stable location. It will be there in the years to come

if they have a problem. If your independent store has been there a long time, let your customers know. Assure the customer that you will be there for them. You are more than bricks and flooring.

Form and keep your relationship with the customer. Form a genuine connection with the customer when they enter the store and continue with it after they leave. They should always be a VIP. Provide fantastic professional and personal service to each and every customer.

The carrier stores do a lot of things right. They are well-staffed, well-trained, and have large marketing budgets. They get support from the device manufacturers and the corporate infrastructure. Learn from what they do right and improve it. You can train your staff, provide more personalized service, and your marketing material can be just as professional. The biggest difference is your customers have you. You are not a huge company in a different city. You are right there. Use it.



A COMFORTABLE PLACE

Starbucks created an entire culture around having a comfortable third place to go. Home, work, Starbucks. They created comfortable seating, places to read, study, work, and meet friends. It's a place to find out what is happening in the community and poke around the Internet for work and/or pleasure with free Wi-Fi. The \$4 lattes became an easy sell.

Customers want a comfortable buying environment.

Wireless retail locations have begun creating areas in their store for customers to gather, play with products, and participate in classes on devices and apps. Providing free Wi-Fi is a necessity today. Customers are likely on their devices when they walk in the store and will need to be on the Wi-Fi to demonstrate devices and functionality.

The comfortable seating becomes an inviting area if there is a wait. It allows a place to preview information and events.

Offering a gathering place will get customers in the door and keep them in the store. The longer a customer is in the store, the more comfortable they become in your location and the more likely they are to buy something. The more often the customer is in the store, the more likely they are to buy something and spread the word.

CUSTOMER RETENTION

Contracts end. Devices break or become outdated. Accessories are added or change colors. Customers need to renew their contracts, upgrade their devices, and add on accessories. They may add to their family and need to add on to their plan. You want to be their choice as well as

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create an advocate to tell others about you.

The customer has choices: in devices, plans, carriers, and in businesses online and in stores. By forming a relationship and continuing to keep them as a VIP, retaining the customer when they need to add-on, upgrade, or renew becomes easy.

Returning customers become a rotating value to your business and you become more of an asset to the carrier.

THE CHANGING CUSTOMER

The wireless industry is changing and your customer is evolving with

it. If you are not keeping up, you run the risk of being left behind. Get ahead of the game.

The business person, the entertainment heavy user, and the student have many of the same—and many different—needs. One size does not fit all. Ask the questions to get the needs and wants of each and every person who enters your store.

Look at your walls, your team and your business through their eyes. How do they see it? How would you want them to see it? There is your goal.

Know the importance of technology, or their disinterest in it, and talk to them, not at them.

Change your view and vocabulary for each and make sure they are all a VIP before they walk in and long after the sale.

You can keep up and embrace the best of the Web, carrier stores, and retail around you by finding the best in what they do and make it better.

The customer allows us to do what we do. Without them, there is no business. They are the final say in what works and what doesn't work. We work because of them.



TO DO:

- Create a database of customers with their device upgrade date. When the date is close, call the customer with the latest upgrade deal and invite them in to try it. By setting an appointment, and being available for that appointment, the customer will understand they are important to you. Keep them as a VIP.
- Create a database of technology savvy customers. Call them when a new technology or accessory arrives in the store. Invite them in to get their opinion and review of the item. They will understand their opinion matters and will spread the word.

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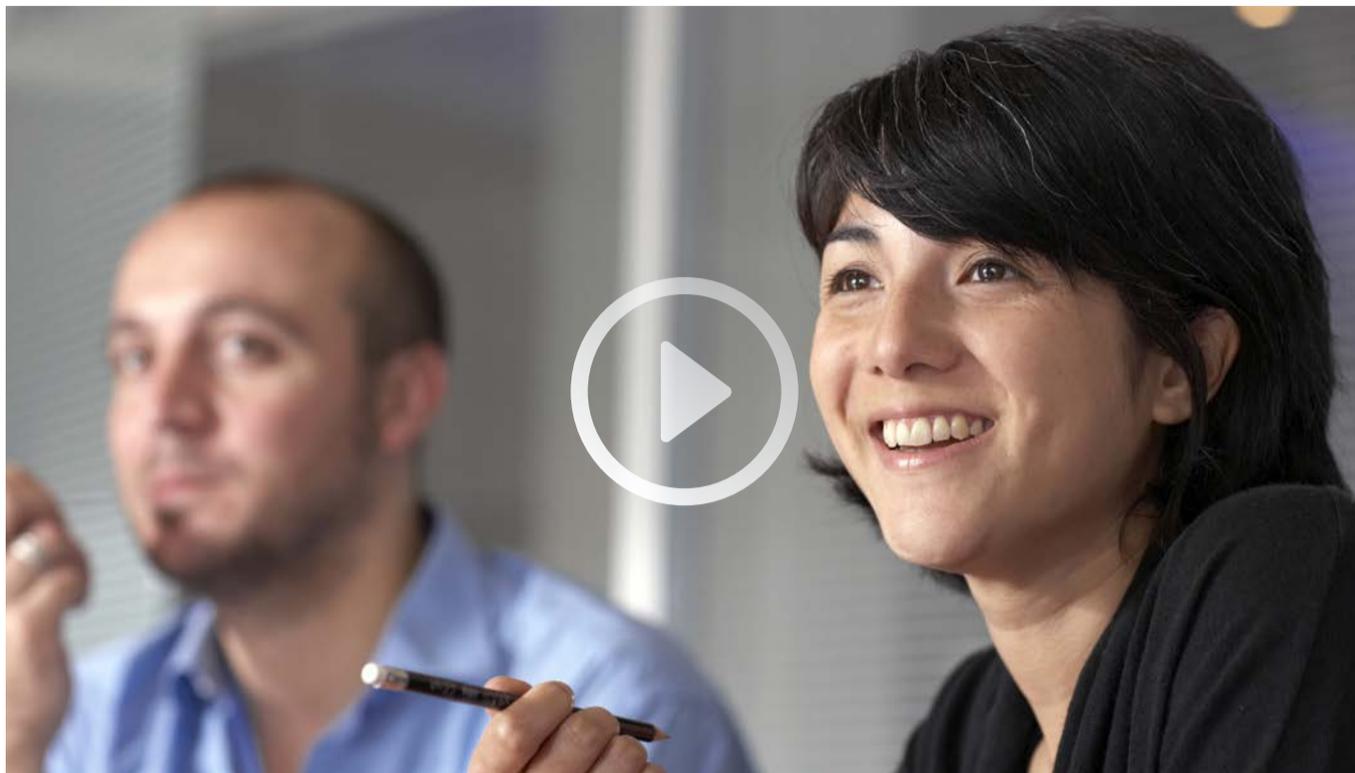
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All successful leaders will tell you great teams start at the top.

RECRUITING AND HIRING

A GREAT TEAM starts before any HR paperwork is completed. A college football coach studies film to judge a player's talents and his own team's weakness. He is looking for the right team members to fill a void or upgrade a position. He doesn't take just anyone. He may see something outside the position the player fills now and changes their position. He can go on athleticism or attitude alone and teach the rest. Just because there is a hole in the lineup, he does not fill it with a warm body. He takes trips to sell his team, his institution, his philosophy and the opportunity he has for the player. The coach is a salesperson.

Apply the same ideas to the store. Look for weaknesses. Define the ideal employee. Dream away. Make a list.

- How enthusiastic are they?
- Are they driven and self-motivated?
- How personable are they?
- How many people are they willing to greet in an hour?
- How much knowledge do they have about the products?
- How much knowledge do they have about the industry?
- What schedule are they willing and able to work?

 This is what you need to look for and actively recruit.

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**TO DO:**

Create a list of qualities you want in an ideal employee candidate. Go crazy. Dream away.

Now, determine how much of what you want you can teach.

Create a list of qualities of a realistic employee candidate. Take into account your location. Saturation of candidates, education level and similar businesses in the area will influence the type of employee candidates you will receive.

Employee Candidate			
Qualities	Ideal Candidate	What is Trainable?	Realistic Candidate
Education			
Skills/Experience			
Personality/Attitude			
Ability to grow			
Sales experience			
Wishes industry knowledge			
Product knowledge			
Schedule			
Leadership experience			
Knowledge of area customer base			
Interviewer reflection			

**Employee Candidates****THE HUNT**

Question: When do you look for team members? Answer: You should always be looking.

Do not wait until you need someone before you recruit. It is already too late. If you have exactly the right amount of people to fill your schedule, what would happen if one team member suddenly quits or has a long-term absence due to illness or personal matters? If you are suddenly short staffed without a plan, you could overwork the team you have, hurt customer service and lose sales.

But if you have a pool of qualified candidates to choose from and are constantly refilling it, you will

find an abundance of potential superstars now and for the future. You can staff your team with the best and not just settle to fill a hole.

You never see a championship team go out and wing it. They plan, create plays and practice. Recruiting is the same way. Have a recruitment plan, practice the plan and prepare for a successful team.

Setting aside time each week specifically to recruit builds consistency and fills a pool of potential superstars. "Sometime in the middle of the week" doesn't work. Wednesday at 2 p.m., does. Schedule the time and stick with the plan. A plan can be changed if

needed, but to change a plan, you need to have one first.

DIRECT RECRUITING

Direct recruiting is recruiting people through visiting establishments that require a similar skill set and attitude as what your team needs. The main advantage of direct recruiting is you can see the candidate in action without having to rely only on an interview. Look in businesses and industries that have a similar skill set and more importantly a similar attitude to what you need in your successful team. It would be great to find a mirror business and get the duplicate of the most



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ideal employee you can dream of and convince them to come aboard. They know the product and the industry inside and out because they sell it successfully now. They'll start off day one beating all sales records and bring the team up as a whole. It is possible, but a rarity. The industry and the products can be taught. The environment and customers can be learned. Look for candidates in industries and businesses that have skills that cannot be taught.

Look for the industries, stores and jobs with similar sales skill sets:

- Electronic Stores
- Big Box Retailers
- Department Stores
- Restaurants—Servers and Host/Hostesses have a similar skill set. They are outgoing, greet constantly, sell products and read people.
- Bars—Bartenders, like servers, have to greet people constantly, build relationships and are constantly suggesting and selling different items.
- Small Retail Stores—Think of shoe stores, clothing stores, book stores, novelty stores, toy stores.
- Apartment Complexes—Receptionists and Leasing Agents
- Hair Salons—Receptionists and Stylists
- Cellular Stores
- Mall Kiosks

POACHING

Poaching employees is a difficult concept and opinions vary. Many believe great workers are working and therefore need to be pried away from other businesses. Being easier to see how an employee truly relates to customers by watching them with customers makes direct recruiting a very popular tool. Turn the tables and think of your best team members being poached by another store. How would you feel and respond? And what does an easy poach say about employee loyalty and/or the employer's treatment of their team?

The cure: happy and satisfied employees will likely not leave. This is both your defense against being poached and your approach for direct recruiting.

When you observe someone you find to have the attributes you are looking for, shop. Look at the products they're selling. If they are selling shoes, look at and try on a pair. If they are selling sound systems, listen to speakers. If they work in an apartment complex, hair salon or similar service industry, ask about their services. Don't take

too much of their time, two or three minutes building this initial relationship should be sufficient. Once you've established this friendliness, ask the employee how they like working for this company.

"You have been really helpful. How do you like working here?"

There are a couple responses:

1. "I love it here."

Do not try to recruit this person. They could resent you or your company for aggressively trying to pull them from a position they love. Follow up with a compliment and ask for a possible referral. Good people know good people.

2. "I like it pretty well. It's OK"

Being non-committal or negative, move to the next step. Ask how long they have worked there. Give them a compliment. Tell them you are impressed with their skills and bring up the opportunity. Do so casually. You do not want to give them the impression you were setting them up.

Remember, when direct recruiting, you are at another business. If asked to leave, do so respectfully. The golden rule applies.

INTERNET RECRUITING

The Internet is everywhere and everyone is on it. Use it correctly. There are positives and negatives to advertising a position on Internet websites. The positive: you receive a lot of responses to a post. The negative: you receive a lot of responses to a post. To combat this, be sure the post is well written, with an exact description of the requirements and responsibilities and that it is being posted on the right sites.

Before posting a position, review the site. Be sure the postings are similar in qualifications and caliber of candidate. Similar skill requirements on other postings will likely result in more of those potential superstars searching that site. You wouldn't want to post on OpsLadder.com, which focuses on senior level management with a minimum salary of \$100,000 a year, nor would you want to post on idealist.org, which focuses on jobs that deal with social and environmental change.

People are visual. They will judge a company and opportunity quickly by what they see. The job posting



should be designed to look professional. This can be as simple as adding a border or a logo. The language of the post should be accurate and professional. Be short and concise. Too much description will not be read and the posting ignored by a potential superstar. Not enough description and you'll get any and every candidate without an idea of what is needed or expected. Check spelling and grammar. The post should reflect what is expected from the candidate. The post is the first sales pitch for the company.

Employment Opportunity Advertising Sites*

- craigslist.com (free)
- snagajob.com (free)
- simplyhired.com (pay)
- indeed.com (pay)
- gotajob.com (pay)
- Monster.com (pay)
- CareerBuilder.com (pay)

- Jobing.com (pay)
- Local weekly magazines/ newspapers/ websites
- Alternative newspapers/ magazines/websites
- Local daily newspapers/ websites
- Local college and university websites
- Local unemployment office website

* Sites and payment structures subject to change

REFERRALS

Great people know great people. Great referrals can come from employees, customers and vendors.

Team members know what the job consists of and what it takes to be successful. They will know who they want to work next to and help build the team.

Always talk to an employee referral, even if there is no opportunity open at the time. Even if the referred candidate is not a fit for the team, refusing a teammate's

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suggestion may not only cost a possible superstar, but can injure the teammate's morale and you may never get another referral from them.

Question the team member before meeting the referral and then ask the referral the same questions. A comparison of answers can be beneficial in the final decision.

Sample questions:

- Where has your friend worked in the past?
- How is their work ethic?
- What is your relationship with them?
- Have you ever worked with them?
- Why should I hire them?
- Why do you think they'd be a good fit here?
- If everything that can go wrong does go wrong, and you are slammed on the busiest day

of the year and corporate representatives come in, do you want them by your side? Why? Or why not?

Referral bonuses are a great thank you to the team member.

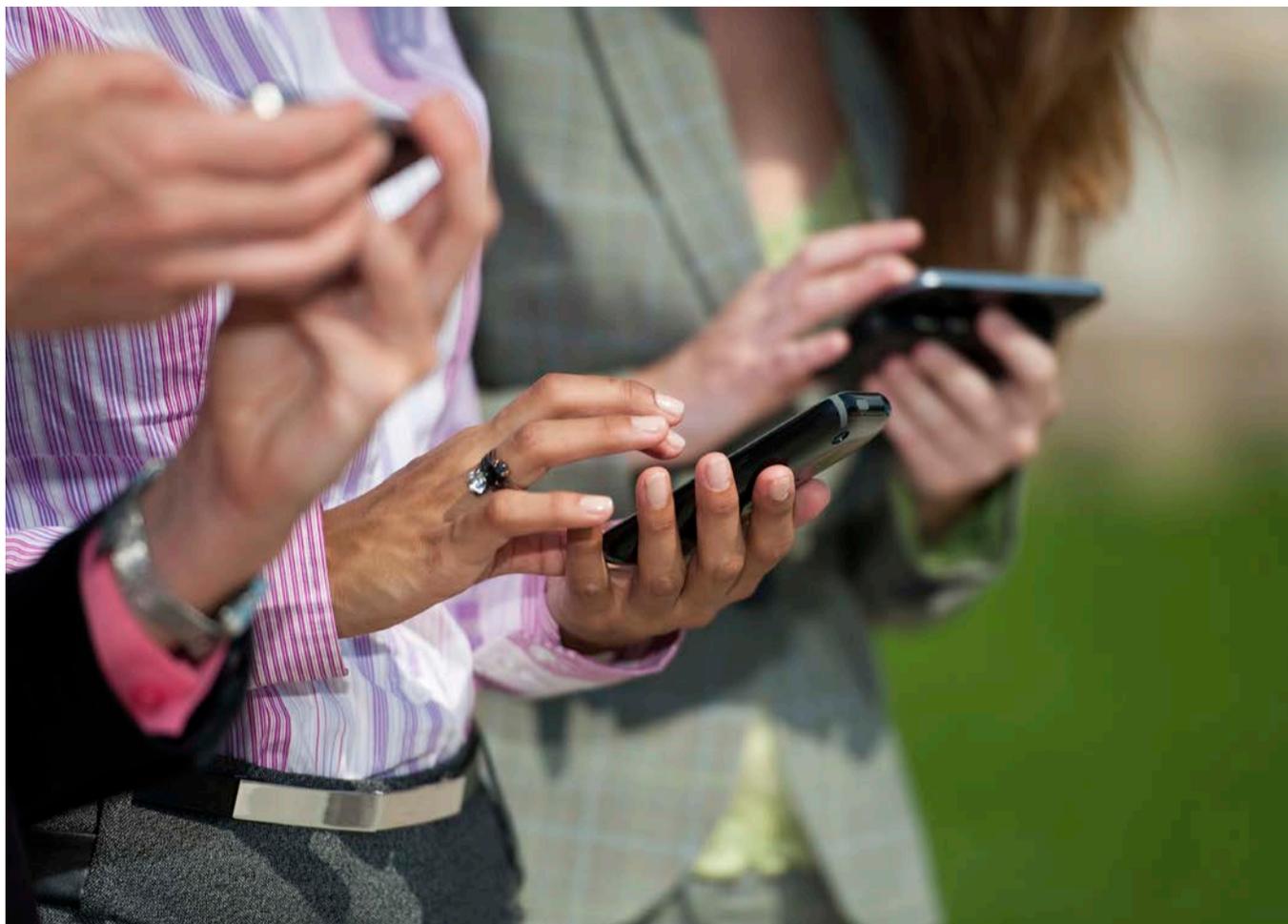
Universal Studios theme parks have an aggressive referral program. They routinely announce their challenge to find great people. This costs the company nothing. And as a bonus, after 30 days, the team member who referred the new employee receives two complimentary admission passes to the park to share with their friends and family anytime during the year. The park has someone they can verify through a trusted employee, the current team member has someone they want to work next to, and they receive something tangible in return—two tickets.

Vendors can be another great

tool to finding potential superstar candidates. They already know the industry and see many people over the course of the day. If they know you are looking, they can get the word out.

Don't speak negatively of your hiring needs. Don't say, "Why can't I find anyone good?" "I'm so short-handed right now." "These people have no idea what they're doing." Although you may simply be venting frustration, it can be easily assumed you're not a good employer, adequate training isn't provided, and any referral they send will not find a team atmosphere. Besides, vendors also see potential customers. Remember, you are selling.

You do have to judge the source. If the vendor is always late, rude, smelly, inappropriate and loud and says they know the perfect person,



and are just like them, be courteous, but be wary. But when a great vendor referral does work out, a gift card to a local restaurant, store or coffee shop is a great way to keep them recruiting for you.

Some of the best employees may have been customers. They already use the product and have been convinced of your brand. The advocacy and enthusiasm may already be there.

The customer may simply need to know about the opportunity. Use signage. The signage should look professional. An “Employment Opportunities Available” sign says as much about the company as a stocked and clean accessories wall and groomed team members.

Use word of mouth. Normally, the team member has asked a customer what they do for work and if they like it while building rapport or asking the right

qualifying questions. Both open up the conversation to the opportunities with the team.

THE RIGHT CANDIDATE

The right team member will not jump out of the crowd and scream their superiority to all other candidates. Well, they might, but their loud and slightly awkward proclamation will have to be confirmed. The interview will help.

It is best to meet candidates when they apply. A quick impression of the intangibles can be made—their friendly personality, handshake, smile and outgoing nature. As a representative of the store, the prospective employee would have one chance to make that same first impression on a customer. Here is the trial run. With a large pool of candidates, the best must be found and

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this is a first step in the best rising to the top. Without meeting the candidate when they apply, the paper is the only representation.

NARROW THE POOL

With a large pool from posting the position and gathering candidates from recruiting, the pile needs to be narrowed. Large chunks of the pile can be separated easily by eliminating the bare minimum requirements.

The “definitely not” applications will be obvious: the application is written illegibly in crayon and glitter, “arrested for theft” is the reason for leaving their last job, no reliable transportation and lives three towns away. These may sound unreal, like exaggerated jokes, but all are true examples from applications and resumes.

The smaller pile can be broken down into “definitely interview” based on the requirements listed and “maybe.”

Have they worked in an industry that has similar customers? Are they in sports or another competitive activity? What intangibles are

there? Use your gut. Do not underestimate your instincts of calling in someone for an interview that may have an untraditional background or little employment history. You will learn more when they come in.

“Maybes” may not be ideal now, but can be worth looking at later. It is important to have a steady stream of candidates.

THE INTERVIEW

First impressions count. The team member has a very small window to make a statement to the customer. That same concept applies to the interview. Energy and enthusiasm are key.

- Do they make the impression you want your customers to experience?
- Do they present themselves professionally?
- Do they make eye contact when they meet you and through the interview?
- Is their handshake firm and intentional?
- Do they have an inviting and genuine smile?

- Do they appear to be enthusiastic and happy, with energy and a welcoming attitude?

This first impression can be a great gauge for what is in store, but remember they may be nervous, so keep an open mind and do not finalize judgment too quickly.

It is important that you prepare for the interview as well. Look at the application and prepare questions relating to the experiences and intangibles listed.

Ask open ended questions that cannot be answered by a simple “yes” or “no,” and listen to the answers. Like building rapport with a customer, you want to build rapport with a candidate. Your goal is to get them talking. You have written down the team member traits you want. Ask questions that reveal those traits. Let them tell you about themselves.

Once you get them talking, keep the information you need to make your decision focused. What notes did you take about the candidate, their past experiences, the qualities you noticed, impressions from their application, resume and phone call?

By using an interview worksheet and asking similar questions to everyone, candidates can be more easily compared.

Sample questions:

- Tell me about your previous work experience as a retail salesperson.
- What type of products and merchandise have you been most successful selling?
- What do you know about this company's products and services?
- What makes you a great candidate for this job in particular?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses when interacting with customers?
- What do you enjoy about working in retail sales?
- What have you done at your present/last company to increase revenues, reduce costs, or save time?
- Tell me about an experience where you felt you were at your best with helping a customer.
- Talk about a time when you were challenged in the sales process—why was that, and how did you handle it?
- What type of retail sales systems have you used in the past?
- How much did it require you to use your math skills?
- What was the management structure in your previous retail sales jobs?

- Did you work on a sales commission basis?
- What have you done to become a better retail salesperson?
- What type of schedule are you looking to work?
- Would you be available to work additional shifts?

Use the Internet. A search for “interview questions” produced 71,700,000 results and “interview tips” resulted 2,030,000. The information is there and a tailored approach to your needs will be most effective.

Below is an example of a basic interview guide. Customize it to fit into your needs. Like sales, be sure the questions you ask are open ended and show actionable items they have accomplished. When interviewing for a leader position, cater to more leadership skills; for a sales member, use personality based skills.

A SECOND OPINION

Legal Sea Foods, an upscale restaurant chain on the East Coast, requires managers to meet all candidates upon completing an application—no matter how busy they are, if only for a quick introduction. They believe no matter how busy they are, the management is selling

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Basic Interview Guide
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Applicant Information:
 Candidate: _____
 Position Applied For: _____
 Department: _____
 Interviewer: _____
 Date / Time: _____

1) Background and Work Experience
 a. Review Applicant's Resume in detail.
 b. Why did you leave your previous job(s)? Please be specific.

2) What did you enjoy about your last position? What could have made the job more enjoyable?

3) If asked your prior supervisors, what would they say were the best things about you? What would they say were the biggest challenges?

4) Describe a time when you had a goal that you had to stretch in order to achieve.

CEA

 **Basic Interview Guide**



the company as an employer of choice and the first impression the company makes is just as important as evaluating the applicant's intangibles. After a formal interview with the applicant, a senior team member (server, cook, host/hostess, bartender) speaks to them. This allows for a second opinion from someone in the trenches. And it allows the candidate to ask questions they may feel uncomfortable asking leadership or that leadership cannot legally answer. For example, how are the management's leadership skills? How much money do you make? And it will allow someone in the trenches to evaluate if the candidate will fit in with the team. With a restaurant industry turnover rate of around 110 percent a year, finding the

right team members that fit the leadership's requirements and will work well in the team is important.

Revolution Consignment Shop is an upscale designer consignment stand-alone retail store. After a candidate's formal interview with the manager, the candidate is scheduled for a paid half day working interview. This allows the team to evaluate how well they connect, their working knowledge of brands and fashion and how outgoing they are in greeting customers and assisting in the daily workings of the store.

A national retail outsourcing company interviews all of their candidates for a sales representative position in one of their VOIP service mall kiosks within view of a working kiosk.

At the conclusion of the manager's interview, the candidate is invited to speak with a team member. At that time, the candidate is encouraged to greet customers walking by and try to get someone to stop. They believe the second view of the candidate and seeing how outgoing they are is crucial in their decision. The more fun the candidate has with it, the more likely they will be hired.

A second look can be the difference in expensive turnover costs and unsuccessful team dynamics.

TRAINING

A potential superstar only has the potential to be a superstar. Turning that potential into reality takes

**TO DO:**

- Identify a trusted non-management team member that can be a second pair of eyes on an applicant during interviews. Explain the traits you are looking for and the questions they may ask. Use them as a second look for the candidate's ability to work in the team, handle the requirements and pressure, and exhibit an enthusiastic attitude.
- Have lead candidates do a half-day following a strong employee through the heaviest of operations and coaching days. Observe how they interact with the team, how quickly they understand the operations of the store, and if they are able to approach customers and additional team members without being coached. This will tell you about their drive and enthusiasm for the job and their ability to handle the changing atmosphere. If this is a requirement, you should (and in many states must) pay them for a working interview.

training and practice. Too many times, they are trained and practice doing the wrong things by being told on their first day to "Follow them and do what they do." If that person is doing it wrong, the wrong way will be passed down over and over again like a bad grade school game of telephone.

Have a plan. Training checklists create consistency of training, and ensure all team members have received all the information and tools they need and provide accountability. It takes time to get the right training solution for the store's needs, but molding the right impression and teaching the right story the first time is easier than retraining the wrong. One of the primary reasons for new hire

turnover is not getting the training and support tools they need to do the job successfully.

Does your training program checklist have all of the following?

- A full description of roles and responsibilities
- "A day in the life"
- Opening procedures
- Inventory management procedures
- Product/plans knowledge
- The store's/brand's story
- Sales skills review
- Cash handling procedures
- Return/exchange policies

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- Point of sale system
- Carrier activation procedures
- Cleaning and maintenance procedures
- Closing procedures
- Schedules/time clock procedures
- Pay schedule/Commission

SOFT SKILL TRAINING

Do not forget the soft skills. Many stores are so focused on the product knowledge and the operational routine they forget how to present the store and themselves, what story to tell and how to sell. There are companies that can provide easy and efficient computer-based training to teach proven sales techniques and preparation specific to the wireless industry.

Teach people to smile, how to greet someone when they walk in and how to shake their hand. Do you require them to stand out from behind the counter? What does body language say? What is the maximum time it should take

for a team member to greet a customer from the time they enter a store?

Nordstrom and Lands' End retail stores, consistently voted best in customer experiences, devote hours training how a customer is treated, how to greet, and how to approach different types of customers. They see product knowledge as important, but recognize how the customer is treated and how they feel about their experience are the reasons they come in to the store or return to it.

ROLE PLAY

Practice like you play. A hundred coaches across football and soccer fields, basketball and tennis courts, baseball diamonds and hockey rinks have been yelling these four words. Practice like you play. They understand the more comfortable players are on the practice field, the better they are when the game starts.

In wireless retail training, the same is accomplished by role playing. Get the training participants on their feet and practicing just like in a store with a real customer. It can feel awkward and strange, but if they can demonstrate the step comfortably in the training room or in front of their peers, they will be comfortable in front of a real customer.

A trainer can talk about a sales step, repeat themselves, ask questions and repeat it again. The trainee may get a hundred percent on a quiz about the same subject, but until they stand up and say the words, shake the hand, ask the questions, present the solution and close the sale, they do not have it. The same person who lists the steps will stand up and stutter their way through half the process. Without practice, they will not be comfortable on the field.

After they get up and demonstrate their comfort or lack thereof, it is time to coach it.

1. Congratulate



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2. Correct
3. Repeat

If it needs improvement—

1. Congratulate what they did well.
2. Correct one or two items maximum.

3. Repeat the same exercise corrected.

If done well—

1. Congratulate what they did well.
2. Repeat the same thing the same way. This will solidify it.

Congratulate, correct, repeat.
Practice like you play.

Role play #1:

John, a veteran at UWC (Ultimate Wireless Connection), walked into the store for his Wednesday shift.

"Hey, John," Debbie, the store leader greeted him.

"Go clock in. I have a good one for you. I have been bragging about you to Jane here."

John put his bag down, clocked in and returned. Every day, when an employee arrived, they put their personal items away, clocked in and prepared for a role play exercise. It was expected and the leader was always ready with a scenario catering to the team member's opportunities of improvement.

"I am ready. Bring your best." John challenged.

"I am a pregnant woman with a screaming child. Greet me." Debbie walked out the door and opened it, pulling an invisible screaming child behind her.

"Good afternoon, ma'am. Do you mind if I show your little one something pretty cool?"

"Sure," the fake mother acted frustrated.

"Hey, Big Guy. Come check this out." John went to

the device wall and started a children's video on a smartphone. "Can I show you something cool as well, ma'am? This just came in."

"Stop. That was awesome," Debbie, now back to her un-pregnant, non-mother self stated. "Did everyone hear that?" Debbie directed to the rest of the team.

"Do it again, John. OK, everyone, I am a pregnant mother with a screaming child. John is going to greet me. Watch how well he occupies and calms the child. Ready, John? Go."

Debbie left the store and returned. John repeated the same great job to team applause.

John was a veteran, but everyone has something they should practice and perfect. Debbie congratulated one or two things John did well and repeated the role play to emphasize, exemplify, and build confidence. Make it a big deal to the rest. The rest of the team will continue to pay attention, without needing to call attention to the scenario.

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Role play #2:

Barry, a new team member at UWC, walked in the store, put down his belongings and approached Debbie, the team leader. He knew the role play was coming. He was warned in training, experienced it every day he worked and saw others tackle it.

"I'm ready. I've been prepping. John helped me a bit yesterday, too. Give it to me," Barry said.

"I love the attitude. OK, I'm a college student wearing sports paraphernalia. Qualify me."

"Got it. Ummmm..." Barry paused.

"Ummm?"

"Alright, I have it. I see you are wearing a Mustang shirt. You must be a student there."

"I am actually. A junior. I'm majoring in business administration." Debbie is now a make-believe college student.

"What do you want to do with it when you graduate?"

"I want to help people invest their money. Stocks, bonds, retirement funds, estate planning."

"That sounds great. Can I ask you what kind of phone you use now?"

"I have this right here." Debbie pulled an imaginary phone from her pocket.

"Do you like it?"

"Not really."

"How often do you use your phone for the Internet?"

"Quite often. I check things for school, stock prices and such."

"You'll need to keep doing that when you get out of school, won't you?"

"Oh, yeah."

"How many minutes do you usually use?"

"About a thousand."

"Do you text a lot?"

"I do. I have no idea how many. I have unlimited now."

"How much was your last bill?"

"Almost \$170"

"Wow. That's a lot. Let me show you a few things. I know I can save you a bit of money with a better phone."

"Stop." Debbie started the applause and the rest of the team caught on.

"I love that you started by building rapport with the college team and were able to use that to find out what they would use the phone for in school and after school. Be careful of closed-ended questions. Open them up. Let the customer continue the conversation. 'How much was your last bill?' was a nice one. Better than what they pay a month. Yours included taxes and fees."

"Yeah, I knew a couple of them were closed questions after I asked them," Barry responded, proud of his other accomplishments.

"You ready to open those questions up?" Debbie challenged.

"Yes."

"Let's do it again. I'm a college student wearing sports paraphernalia. Qualify me."

Role plays do not need to be random. A new team member has a lot of opportunities to improve their sales technique. If he needs coaching and confidence on qualifying a customer, the role play should focus on that. The leader congratulated one or two things Barry did right, corrected one or two things, and repeated the role play to build confidence.

COACHING AND MOTIVATING

A leader is part coach, part manager, and part cheerleader, without the whistle and pom-poms. However, these may both be substituted with high-fives and applause.

Coaching helps develop people to the best they can be and brings their potential to light. Coaches enhance the player's performance.

All great coaches have some of the same basic fundamentals to building a championship team. They must know the sport, communicate effectively, run a quality filled practice, and be able to motivate the team.

CREDIBILITY

First, you must establish your own credibility. Know the sport. Your team will buy into your philosophy and the store's story if they know you are willing to grind it out and make things happen.

Know the product. Know the team. Know the competition. Know the culture. Walk the talk. You need to know the product, plans, customers, competition, and team as well or better than your team. You are a resource as well as their coach. It is all out there. Study it and use it. Get in the game. You have to practice and become an expert yourself. If you want the team to smile and be welcoming, you must smile and be welcoming—not only to your customers, but to your team.

The time of "do it because I said so" has passed. It may never have existed. More credibility is formed if the team sees no job is beyond anyone.

The corporate office of a casual dining restaurant concept noticed the general manager of one particular store would consistently produce general managers who

produced higher profit margins, lower staff turnover, and better customer satisfaction reports. As a result, the director of operations went to his store to see how to copy it across the company.

"First," the general manager responded, "all the managers that work with me have to know all stations before putting on a tie and manager badge. Regardless if they are primarily in the front of the restaurant or the kitchen, they have to train and pass the certification for each station—grill cook, prep cook, busser, host, server, dishwasher, etc. Not only does the manager have a better understanding of the details, but they become a resource to the team and the team can see the manager is willing to jump in anywhere something needs to get done. They can work side by side. No job is too big or small for a leader. I even schedule myself on the dishwasher during a dinner shift once every two weeks. I put on an apron and scrape plates, wash bowls and stack glasses. I use that shift to cross-train the normal dishwasher on a different station in the restaurant so they are learning something new and not losing



money they would normally make on the shift. The team sees me in a different position and I can see the workings from a different light. The managers need to do the same thing before taking the next step.”

“How do you know if a manager is ready for the next step?” The director asked.

“Before I recommend them for a promotion or to take over a store,” the general manager paused and looked to his side. “Let me show you Jan.” He called over to a manager in crisp shirt and tie, a big smile on her face.

“Yeah, boss,” she answered.

“Give me a quick sweep of the store.”

The manager grabbed a rolling sweeper and got three feet before a server from the other direction took the sweeper from her and continued.

“That is how I know. The team knows she is willing to do it. They know she is doing it because she has pride in the store and they took the sweeper from her not

because she asked them to or that it is even part of the server’s job, but because they want to do it for her. They don’t want her to do it. She has credibility and their respect.”

It should not be seen as something below the leader to sweep the store, wipe the counters, or clean the bathrooms. They should not have to do it all the time, but it will show their willingness to get in the trenches and the importance they see in the task. If the leader has earned the team’s respect and they have bought into the leadership and coach’s philosophy, the employees should eventually take the mop from the leader’s hand. If they do not, look at other areas where this willingness is not seen.

For you to coach the sale of the product, you must know the product. Study up. You must know more than the X’s and O’s. You must keep your eyes open for the strengths and weaknesses surrounding the ball.

What there is to know is endless. Keep studying. Seminars and books are great

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**TO DO:**

Ask every team member what their main motivational factor is for coming to work and for coming to work at your location.

Type of team member	Communication approach/motivation/focus
Single-earner household	
Additional income	
Part-time worker	
Student	
Working for discount	
Older team member	
Young team member	
Looking for leadership advancement	
Brand status	

resources. Ask others. You will be surprised what the simple question “What works for you?” will provide. You may be even more surprised what the same question posed to your team will provide.

Education is only part of it. You must practice and apply the knowledge. Just like those on the field, the more you practice, the better you will become.

COMMUNICATION

It is fantastic to have a plan, a direction, and a story for the store, but if your team does not know what those are, they do no good. They would be unintentional secrets.

The leader must communicate a clear vision, clear plan, and clear direction. Sit the team down and tell them. Make sure it’s understood. Answer

the questions as needed.

Communication breakdowns equals undelivered messages.

Don’t just tell them you want higher sales and better customer service. How many sales? How are you going to reach them? What is the judgment for customer satisfaction? And what is in it for them? A great coach makes sure the players know the plan and expectations before the play.

Visual representations are a great way to communicate goals and plans. Signs in the back of the store, progress and contest charts and messages in paycheck envelopes are a great way to remind the team of the messages and reinforce understanding.

Communication is not a lecture. It is a conversation. Motivate the individual as well as the team. Use positive language. No one wants to be berated and insulted.

These are adults and teammates. Talk to them not at them. Spilling orders does not build a team and will not help find the individual team member’s needs. Each team member is motivated differently. They are usually in the store for different reasons. One may be a single mother providing for her family. One may be there for extra money. One may just like the discount. Ask what that is. Ask how they prefer to be managed.

Tony Dungy, NFL championship coach, is known not just for his amazing knowledge of the game, but for the respect of his players. His philosophy is to guide, not goad. He believed he was a teacher to raise his team to be the best they could be by understanding the vision, buying into the plan and executing it the best they could. It was not necessary to berate or belittle any one to do so. Respect begets respect.

YOUR REFERENCES MAY NOT BE THEIR REFERENCES

This is a different generation. The “why” is important. They are looking for information fast, communication fast, details fast. Years ago, most magazines had articles 10 to 15 pages long. Today, the average article in many magazines catering to the “now” generation is what would have been considered little more than a caption. This does not make them better or worse. It just makes them different. The generation born after 1990 has always known cell phones, a computer in the house, and remote controls for the television. They have always had information at their fingertips through the Internet and anyone with a blog or an opinion can be an expert online. This may be your generation, too, but think of how this has changed when looking at past leadership training. If you are reading a management or leadership book from your parents’ bookshelves, many of the concepts may be the same, but the approach will need to be modernized.

MEETINGS

Meetings are a great way to communicate plans, goals, and events. More accurately, effective meetings are a great way to

communicate to the team. It is a great way to keep everyone involved and constantly learning new things.

Most coaches’ biggest mistake in conducting meetings is consistency. Meetings should be at the same time. Daily, weekly, monthly.

“A meeting once in a while, when you need one” is not effective. The point to be made “when you need one” has already been lost and with consistent meetings could have likely been prevented. Decide how often to hold meetings. The best coaches meet with their team every day before practice and before every game to fire the team up, go over their plan, inform of changes, and direct them to the next move.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Keep it simple. All meetings should consist of the same three things. Complaining, whining, and threatening are not the three things. Unfortunately, most meetings evolve into those three things.

1. Motivate
2. Educate
3. Direct

In that order, every time.

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Motivate the team. Get them fired up to be at work. High fives, candy, and congratulations for jobs well done are great starts.

Educate on the plan, the events, new products, new plans, things that need to improve, and role play sales steps and tasks.

Direct which teammate is doing what as soon as the meeting ends. Clear and precise directions.

1. Motivate
2. Educate
3. Direct

NO AGENDA, NO MEETING

An agenda is necessary to stay on task and prevent the complaining, whining, and threatening meetings can turn to. All complaining, whining, and threatening should be done on an individual basis.

No agenda, no meeting.

Daily, weekly, and monthly meetings. These should build off each other and not just repeat. One agenda does not fit all.

The daily meeting should handle the daily goals, the weekly meeting more weekly-based items, and monthly meetings as a summary overview of goals, progress and training.

DAILY MEETINGS

Daily meetings are a great way to start a shift. Remember you are motivating, educating, and directing for the day.

Daily meetings work best at a specific time. No “about five minutes before the doors open” or “give or take”. If it is at 8:55 a.m., then be sure it starts at 8:55 a.m. The team should know exactly what time it starts and be ready. If the leader is wrangling the team

for 10 minutes, the meeting could have been done. Wrangling five team members plus the leader for 10 minutes is 60 minutes wasted a day.

The best daily meetings last no more than 10 minutes. There is plenty to do without spending a half hour before the shift. Utilize your time and focus properly. Motivate for the day and educate on the weekly focus, which should be the same every day. If the weekly focus is greeting all customers in ten seconds of walking in, by the end of the week, everyone will know and practice it. Then direct exactly who is doing what to get the doors open. “John will restock all brochures. Tina will finish counting the register. Tom will do an outside to inside sweep for cleanliness” is a much easier list than “let’s finish getting open.”



WEEKLY MEETINGS

There may not be enough people to have a meeting every day. But, main topics should be emphasized every day. Even if there is a daily meeting, a weekly meeting is important. A little more time can be taken presenting and practicing larger focuses. Schedule the meeting on the day the most people are there. If the most people are scheduled for Saturday because it is the busiest day, schedule your meeting that morning. It is better to bring in a couple people for a half hour than bring the entire staff in for a half hour.

The focus is to sell more. Even the team being happier with their position and the cleanliness of the store is part of getting the team to sell more and the customers to buy more. If the focus is sales, the weekly focus should be sales. The floor needs to be swept, the bathrooms need to be cleaned, and the drawers need to

be organized, but these are tasks, not focuses. Closing a sale, accessory sales, product presentation, asking for referrals, handling multiple customers, working a busy floor, marketing an event—these are sales-focused. These increase sales. These put more money in everyone's pocket. Focus on one for the week. Look at it a different way every day. Ask what has worked for the team member. Get best practices that can be shared across the store.

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The thumbnail shows a document titled "Weekly Meeting Guide" with the subtitle "Winning at Wireless Retail". It features a table with columns for "Weekly Meeting", "Date of", "MONTHS", and "Event/Time". Below the table, there are sections for "Weekly Priorities" (listing Weekly Goals, Control System, Personal Priorities & Announcements), "EDUCATE" (with a note: "Weekly Focus/Issues must be actionable and measurable based on the sales process"), "Role Play Scenarios", "Control Announcements", "New Product/Plan Priorities", "Weekly Sales Goals", and "Misc Announcements". At the bottom right, there is a logo for "CEA".



Weekly Meeting
Guide

MONTHLY MEETINGS

The monthly meeting builds off the daily and weekly focus. It does not need to be a different day and does not need to be an additional meeting. It takes the place of the daily meeting for that day and weekly meeting for that week. Hold it on Saturdays slightly earlier than usual, 45 minutes or an hour, depending on your style. Notice it was 45 minutes or an hour, not 45 minutes to an hour. Be exact. Plan your agenda accordingly.

These should be larger, higher level items—the direction of the store, change of responsibilities, large events, announcements of contests, monthly promotions.



Monthly Meeting Guide

RETENTION

A superstar is hard to find, even if it is finding a potential superstar and developing him/her into a full-fledged, cape wearing all-star. When they are found—the ones who can sell in their sleep, learn new products by osmosis, train like a champion, and do it consistently day after day—the store never wants to see them leave... ever.

Employees work and stay with leaders, not with companies. At one time, employees would stay at General Motors for 30 years and retire with a party and an engraved gold watch. Those days are over. Many companies do not stay around for 30 years let alone the job or people in them. People work for leaders. When a great leader leaves, so do their great team members.

If it is a surprise that a superstar is leaving and/or the leader does not know why, there is a lack of communication. Team members have different motivations for working, and working that specific store. Know what they are. Ask.

Talk to the team member. Is it for the discount, the camaraderie of working with friends, the learning experience, extra spending money, primary income in the home, helping get them through school or because they were told they had to have a job? Not knowing and helping achieve those goals will lead to the superstar feeling unappreciated and becoming invaluable somewhere else, possibly even the competitor around the corner.

WHY THEY LEAVE

There are three primary reasons a superstar will leave:

1. Lack of appreciation
2. Lack of learning
3. Lack of money

Lack of appreciation. Everyone wants to be appreciated.

Top team members do not often ask for recognition, but they are human. It is not necessary to fall all over the team member, but appreciation either publicly (being recognized in a meeting

or being designated “employee of the month”) or privately (in evaluations and daily conversations) will show the superstar you are paying attention. It is imperative the team member never feel disrespected. The golden rule comes into play here. Screamers and mean bosses develop departing superstars. The store is then left with underachievers and fearful employees scared they may not find another job.

Lack of learning. Leaders often ignore top performers. They are seen as low maintenance employees.

Coach and motivate them. Top performers normally strive for the next goal or bit of information. If they stop growing, they will get bored and complacent, turning a top performer into a poor performer. What other responsibilities can they take over? Knowing what the superstar is interested in helps keep them learning. A student studying marketing would be a perfect candidate to be the store’s promotions guru. They can inform the team of any new marketing launched from the providers/manufacturers and create in-house events. Someone with entrepreneurial spirit would be a great candidate to learn the operations side of the business—inventory, maintenance, scheduling, and the P&L.

Lack of money. It is the reason most are working.

This one was put as number three as it is the easiest to fix. The first two are the more likely before a lack of money, especially if there is a commission aspect to the superstar’s earnings. Superstars, besides being role models and leaders in the locker room, are seen as superstars because they sell more. Selling more earns more commissions.

Don’t necessarily give in to a demand for more money, but do the math. Compare giving a deserved increase in pay to a superstar versus the cost of hiring someone new.

A superstar is given a 50¢ an hour raise

$50¢ \times 40 \text{ hours a week} =$
 $\$20 \text{ more a week.}$

or

$\$1 \times 40 \text{ hours a week} =$
 $\$40 \text{ more a week.}$

To replace a superstar, a new hire has an estimated one week of training @ 40 hours x \$10 an hour = \$400.

Plus a new hire has an estimated one month before feeling comfortable and oriented. What is the guarantee the new hire will match the lost superstar’s sales and expertise in that time?

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It would take a three- to six-months' increase in pay of proven production from an existing team player and superstar to pay for the one week replacement training of an unproven new hire. And this does not count the month or two before the new hire is maybe producing to speed.

Attach a raise with additional responsibilities. A dollar raise may come with the added task of tackling inventory receiving. The superstar will feel more appreciated, learn something new and make additional money. Be sure the added responsibility does not outweigh the monetary raise. The gesture will go from appreciation to resentment.

A bonus can be less expensive as a form of appreciation. Giving a superstar a one-time \$100 bonus

for a consistent job well done may be less expensive than a permanent raise but will leave a lasting impression.

BUILD ADVOCATES

Cultivate believers, not just employees. A teammate who believes in the store, the product, and the leader makes a more productive and effective teammate. When a person believes in where they work, what they sell, the story the store is telling, and who they work with, the entire team is better for it. Make a store a place to be, not just a job. Value opinions, show appreciation, provide discounts, and allow creativity. People who work there will want to come to work. People who shop there will tell their friends of the most helpful

and passionate people they have encountered. People who do not work there will want to.

SECRET SHOPPING

What is happening in the store when the leader is gone? The team will usually straighten up when the leader or owner is in the building, either out of respect or fear. Customers will be greeted in the first five seconds, qualifying questions will be asked, the floors will be clean, toilet paper will be in the bathroom. But what happens when that same leader walks out the door? Who steps up to the plate? Who takes the ball? Who goes in for the score every time?

Secret shopping can tell exactly what type of customer experience is being cultivated and what story is being told. Secret shopping

started with private investigators looking for thieves and wrong doers. Knowing if a team member is stealing or blatantly doing something wrong is important, but think of secret shopping as a different tool. Judge what the customer's experience is. Use the results as a coaching tool to keep improving the store. View the store, the team and yourself through the eyes of someone who does not look at the same walls and faces every day. It's like having a virtual district manager in your corner. When the results arrive, use them as a way to coach the team to a better standard. Let them see the results. Reward the great behavior as well as coach for improvements.

There are plenty of secret shopping companies in the *CEA Member Directory* to help evaluate your team and the customers' experience. Emphasize your needs and focus to ensure the shoppers can provide an accurate and actionable evaluation.

EVALUATION

The team needs to know how they are doing. If, as their leader, you are not giving them continued feedback, you are not doing your job. This does not mean for the leader to yell at them

every day or constantly harp on the negatives. The goal of feedback is to develop the team. Praise can be and should be done everywhere. A sincere "great job" will go a long way with motivation and retention.

Pulling a team member aside should not fill their heart with fear. If they are pulled aside for the good as well as opportunities to improve, the "can I talk to you for a minute?" will not be a negative. When there is an opportunity to improve, they should be given direct and actionable things they can do to get better. Just telling them they are doing wrong, does not make them better, it just makes them bitter. Coach and educate, do not goad.

Every team member should get a performance review at least once a year. They should also be allowed to evaluate the leader. Inform them the evaluations should be actionable and respectful.

Evaluations should have concrete examples of what opportunities need to be improved and how it can be accomplished. The how should be a conversation and agreement. "Get better selling" is not a specifically actionable item. "Increase sales by 20 percent" is. Ask the employee how they feel this can be done, what they need to accomplish

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**TO DO:**

- Schedule evaluations of every team member and mark on the calendar exactly when they will be.
- Schedule when the ongoing evaluations will be through the year—once a year, twice a year or once a quarter.
- Complete an honest evaluation of every member in your team, including yourself.
- Decide what is attached to each evaluation—raise in pay, increase in responsibilities, or improvement plan.

the goal, and what benchmarks can be reached when. The team member has ownership in the improvement and a path is put forth to reach it.

**Employee Performance Review****REFLECTION**

Your team is a reflection of your store. How they present themselves is the story the customer will walk out the door with. What story is that?

It starts at the top and through great hires, training, coaching, and a team mentality. Your vision can be the team's vision. Have a united front on how the team approaches sales and the process in which they sell. Your store will have the team everyone competes for, tries to steal from, and is completely envious of. It is not from luck. It is from a conscious effort and a detailed game plan to develop that team.

One last thing: lead by example.

A team watches and mimics its leader's behaviors. If the leader is telling the right story, there is a better chance the rest of the team is telling the right story.

You are the leader. If you believe it, live it. By taking a two handed grasp of what needs to be done to make the store successful, the team will see and mimic the same behavior. You are a part of the team as well as the coach. Be prepared to get in the game and field sales and catch tasks.

Pave a way for the team to take ownership and pride in the four walls and the team concept. Only then will the customer see it.

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The store is a part of the team. It has its own heartbeat and character. The team and customers are the lifeblood, but the store can and should have its own personality. It is a reputation, an impression, a feeling, an involvement in the community and people's lives. Your store should strike a chord in people's minds when they hear the name. This does not happen by accident. It takes work to create the store's personality.

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THE STORE MIRROR

WHAT is your store saying about your product, your team, your services, and your respect for the customer?

Start with the basics. Look high and low, outside and inside. What needs to be cleaned, fixed, replaced, power washed,

or repainted? Look from the parking lot to the back storage area. Once there is a list, look at the store again. Something has been missed. Something always is.

Now that there is a list, work on it. A mental list is forgotten. Write it down and cross it off.

OUTSIDE IN, INSIDE OUT

The store should be seen from a customer's point of view. Start there. The first impression is made getting out of the car in a standalone location or approaching the store/kiosk in a mall. Even if it is the property management's responsibility and part of the common area maintenance fees, inspect the outside daily. It may be the property manager's responsibility, but it reflects on the store.

Start from the road. Get in the car and take a couple loops around. Grab a cup of coffee in the drive through and pull back into the parking lot. The sign(s) should be seen from the road and easily read. Clean messages are easily seen and are more inviting. There is such a thing as too much info. Keep the sign(s) simple.

Look for trash, cigarette butts in the dirt, dirty and unpainted parking spaces. Look for roof tiles in ill repair and discolored paint. If there are issues, contact the property management and get a time when they will be repaired.

Plants are an easy way to bring pride to the store's appearance. With little money, plants from the local nursery or home improvement store can liven up an otherwise grey parking lot décor. A team member can take responsibility for the upkeep of the greenery. Dead plants are just as bad as or worse than no plants at all.

The windows and entrance should be clean and inviting. These are seen from the road or down the mall. Window washers are relatively inexpensive and can easily get the highs and lows usually missed by regular team members.

The material in the windows should allow room to see inside. A full wallpaper of the window distracts the customer and covers the welcoming and comfortable feel created inside.

Go through to the storage areas and out of public view areas. The stock room shelves should be in good repair. The break room must be clean and serviceable. The team members are also customers. Superstars can find work, and

having an area they can have pride in shows the leader cares about them. The areas unseen to the public can set the entire energy of the store.

Start outside and work in. Then reverse it.

A COMFORTABLE PLACE TO STAY

Imagine going to a dinner party at someone's home. You ring the doorbell and the host answers the door with a hurried and abrupt, "Come, in. Sit down. What do you want to drink? Let's eat."

It would feel rushed and uncomfortable. You may like the people, the food may be fantastic, the wine superb, but the energy and atmosphere would not feel welcoming and relaxed.

Party hosts will invite the guest into their house, possibly with a hug and/or handshake, and ask how their day was, if they had trouble finding the place. They would offer something to drink, a place to sit and introduce them to the other guests.



The same rushed and uncomfortable feeling can be produced at the store. Door opens, “Hi. Welcome to the store. Let me show you this phone. It’s great, isn’t it? You ready to be rung up?”

You can time how quickly the customer will turn and run. The store should feel as inviting and relaxed as a host at a dinner party.

Studies have found the longer a customer is in a store, the more money they spend. And people stay longer when they feel comfortable in a location. You see where this is going? Make your customers feel comfortable in your store and they will stay longer, come back more often and purchase more.

AN INVITING PLACE TO GATHER

A customer lounging around is not a bad thing. Loitering is a funny concept in retail. The goal is to create a place where people are comfortable, will return to and tell others about. And when they do, they are looked at as loiterers. Turn it around. Congratulate yourself in creating an environment where people feel welcome and well received.

Starbucks has created an entire industry from “the third place to go.” At creation, Howard Shultz, president and CEO of Starbucks, envisioned a third place for people to go, between home and work. Comfortable seating, light woods, jazzy music, friendly staff, free Wi-Fi, open

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electricity outlets and, by the way, they sell coffee. People gather, talk, work, and even conduct interviews at Starbucks. Most of you reading this have spent time in line at a Starbucks, with most returning again and again for a seat, a conversation with a friend or co-worker, and another cup.

The entire feel and vision of Starbucks was planned. Nothing was an accident. Look to the basics of what has created an inviting and welcoming place for customers to come and stay. If it's not Starbucks, take notes on the places you feel most comfortable, the places you find yourself returning and spending more money. They will have the same concepts. Translate them into your store and create a comfortable place for your customers to return to again and again.

SEATING

Comfortable chairs and tables tell a customer it is ok to come and stay. If there is a wait—with the extraordinary service your team has created, there is sure to be—a

seating area is a great place to handle the overflow, where the customer has a chance to look around. A table eliminates the doctor waiting room impression because no one likes a doctor's waiting room. Neatly displayed marketing material and trade magazines on the table will get the customer in the right mindset.

Use the table as a place to close the sale. By explaining the plans with the live handset in front of the customer, it signals that it is time to buy. The seating can also be used in teaching about the new handset or operating system or to preview the newest hardware coming to the market.

BEVERAGES

A hot water kettle, a few tea bags, coffee, sugar and creamer is a very inexpensive way to show hospitality. As the host of the party, you have invited the customer in, asked how their day was, and offered a drink. The team member may not offer to get the drink for the customer, but for a longer customer service

interaction, the team member can get the beverage for them.

Having a beverage in hand, the customer is more likely to sit and listen through all the services offered or wait if there is a line. People are less likely to abandon a full beverage. It is not necessary to hire a cocktail server. Waiting customers can be invited to get a beverage and directed to the table.

FREE WI-FI

The store sells wireless devices, most of which connect to Wi-Fi. It is logical to have Wi-Fi available in the stores. If live, which is highly recommended, the handsets and hardware displayed will require Wi-Fi to demonstrate. But also, every customer with a smartphone or computer uses Wi-Fi.

McDonald's increased the amount of time people stayed in their locations by adding free Wi-Fi in their restaurants. Having customers stay in the restaurant longer may go against the idea of "fast food," but it has proven the longer they stayed the more money they spent and the more often they returned.

Does this increase the possibility that people will use your store as a temporary office? Hopefully. Business devices and plans are a huge market. If the customer feels comfortable enough to set up shop in the store for an hour or two, they are more likely to buy accessories, add a device, or renew.

What will be the word of mouth advertising return on the small Wi-Fi investment you likely already spend and just need to make open? If security is a fear, add a second Wi-Fi router and leave one secure for the business and one open for customers and displayed devices.

SOCIABILITY

Customers will sell for you if you get them talking and interacting. Creating a social gathering place starts with the comfort of the store, but can be elevated or destroyed by the team. Introduce people, even if they are strangers.

“Hi. I’m Tom,” says the team member with his hand outstretched. “And your name?”

“Bob,” returns the customer with a shake.

“Tom,” he repeats to the customer next to him.

“Sam.” The second customer answers.

“Bob, do you know Sam? Bob this is Sam. Sam this is Bob. Now you two are best friends. I will be right back in 145 seconds, after I ring this lovely customer up to show you the Acme 2000 I see you both eyeing.”

Promote the sociability of the store. It can be a gathering place. It can sell for you.

Local bookstores do this well. The local bookstore, if promoted correctly, is not a library. Libraries are meant to be quiet, designed for private study and research—solitary and alone. In bookstores, people feel comfortable sitting and talking about their favorite authors, recommending their favorite books and there it is, right on the shelf, ready to be rung up. Walking past rows of bound pages, a stalled customer may get a suggestion or deterrent about the book in hand, by another customer. No salesperson necessary.

By creating a sociable store, customers will more likely return, stay, and help you sell to others.

FLOW OF THE STORE

How customers get in, through and out of the store should tell a story. There are a lot of ways to tell that story, but there are a few constants.

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It begins outside. The customer should feel like they are making a grand entrance, red carpet with applause and fanfare. Maybe not that far, but the story begins there. Can the customer see inside the store? When they look through the window, the layout and colors should lead the eyes in a direction, covering the entire store.

Pay attention when you walk into a store and pay attention when a customer walks into yours. A customer usually looks or turns right when they walk into a store. Have a focal point immediately right, something clean and colorful, something that sets the tone for the store's story.

There are many ways of telling the story.

COUNTER CLOCKWISE

This is most common and works.

Maneuver the focal points of the store with color highlights, marketing material and products counter clockwise. If you start with all devices immediately right, a traffic jam can occur. A hero product to get them interested and continue circling to see the other products, accessories, and add-ons can keep the customer moving and viewing everything your store has to offer.

VIGNETTES

The story can be broken into several chapters. Instead of one grouping for a device and another for accessories, the store can be broken into vignettes.

IKEA, the Swedish ready to assemble superstore, sells every item needed, from furniture to décor for every room in the house in a huge warehouse space. If the customer needs to renovate their

kitchen, they can find everything, from the cabinets and appliances to the window valance and pasta strainer. The store sets up vignettes of an entire room—the kitchen with cabinets installed, curtains up and forks in the drawer—so the customer can picture exactly how it would benefit them in their own home.

Devices and accessories can be situated the same. Organize them in a story so the customer can better see how the combination will benefit them. Smartphones with the accessories, cell service with television service, home phone and home security. Paint the picture to tell the story.

SPOKES

A customer service center in the middle of the store forces the customer to come all the way in and view the highlights on the



way. The products are then arranged like spokes from the center.

Sony Style stores place a round service desk in the middle of the store. The customer passes one or two of the coolest hero products on the way in and is then led to the different products and vignettes from the center of the wheel.

This story layout requires a lot of room to keep from feeling crowded. The goal is for the customer to feel comfortable and welcome.

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ESTABLISH BRANDING GUIDELINES

Whether you have one store or a thousand stores, branding guidelines for anything going in or around your store create a unified feel to the entire story. Carrier stores spend lots of time and money creating a brand, tweaking the color scheme, ensuring the guidelines are

followed so customers know they are in the right store and are treated with the same care and detail as the appearance of the store, whether they notice it or not.

You decided on a purple, neon green, and silver color palette for your stores. First, rethink that combination. It might make customers a bit nauseous. But being your favorite colors and the ones you have had in the stores since 1988, you stay with what everyone knows. Every store should follow the same color palette. Whether it is one store or a hundred, having familiar references is important for customers to feel familiar and comfortable with. Write the colors down. Make it part of the guidelines. Guidelines include what shade(s) of purple, neon green, and silver for the store.

Guidelines should include where marketing material goes—how far apart, how high, and in what color frames; the layout of the store—if you tell the same story with the flow of the store



in every location; the color of the wood fixtures—light or dark finish; the lighting—types of lights, placement and brightness; the layout of marketing materials—having the same feel and tone to the graphic design of the posters, flyers, banners. There is a lot to think about, even for one store. To build your store as a brand, there must be a branding plan.

The guidelines can then be used to keep consistency in the stores' story—whether it is one store or a thousand. When one guideline is changed, everything should be changed. If you decide to change the neon green to neon pink (also, not the best color scheme, but your choice), change everything at the same time. If it is going to be a noticeable change, make it a noticeable change. If a poster is changing, change it in every store

at the same time. One tone, one feeling, one perception, one story.

BATTLING SHOWROOMING

Showrooming has become a large part of a customer's purchasing process. It may or may not be a purposeful component from the manufacturer. The customer will look and play with the latest and greatest product, whether it is test driving a new convertible or browsing with the latest computer at a display in the middle of the mall. The customer then goes online to compare prices and purchase. Or the customer will use a retail store as a showroom and look online for pricing, possibly even purchasing from their smartphone while in the store. This is a loss of a sale for the store.

Swords drawn. Battle or embrace?

THE WEB

The Internet is not going anywhere and Internet shopping is only getting stronger. Customers still go into stores and purchase online. You cannot get angry about it and you must not get irritated by the customers for doing it. You can battle it, make people feel uncomfortable while looking things up on their smartphone, shine a spotlight on them or blow warning horns when spotted. Or turn it around. By helping the customer look and compare, you are showing your effort to find the right product at the right price for them. Fighting it will eliminate the interaction to convince them of purchasing the right products now from you.

Use your help finding the information online as a talking point. The team member now



has the opportunity to emphasize their support as a differentiator now and in the future.

YOU, RIGHT NOW

What the Internet does not have is you and your team. Emphasize this point to the customer. The customer understands the additional costs of a lease, electricity, maintenance, and labor. Everyone knows there are additional costs for the experts in the store. A team member—an expert—is there to help them find the right product for their needs. A computer screen cannot do that. The expert can help them with the set up and transfer of pictures, files, apps, and videos stored on the customer's phone. They can train them how to use all the features that

make the customer's life easier and more entertaining. A computer does not give that personal service. A store can get them the device now, in a glossy bag out the door today. No having to wait for the mail or miss the package they must sign for.

If the store's prices are competitive to the websites, the price objection is a non-issue. The customer came in interested in buying. The team member did not knock on their door with a handful of dirt and a vacuum cleaner, hoping to get past the entryway to make their pitch. The customer came in. They are interested.

MONEY MATCH

A powerful handling of the online shopping phenomenon is price matching.

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If possible, matching an online price can close the sale. Adding free accessories to a package to overcome the online price is another tool. Set criteria and processes before setting into action. Will the price matching only be valid from an in stock, “major” site or from a website that has brick and mortar stores? Communicate what accessories will be available to the team to use as a bonus and what the procedure is for recording the discount or bonus.

It is important to know the prices on the websites first. If the price is close, even a little higher than online, the customer will less likely be deterred from buying in the store.

YOUR WEBSITE

Do you have a website? Customers give validity to locations with websites they can preview and browse. It should look as professional and welcoming as the store. It is an extension of the store. There may be restrictions on making purchases or activating

devices online, but having a place for the customer to contact the store is important. Check the spelling, the pictures, and all content to be sure it is professional and correct. Misspellings and incorrect information will destroy any reputation of expertise.

It is a good idea to have a professional assist in building the site you envision with the proper coding and SEO content. Ask the team. There may be someone who builds websites, is a copywriter, or has a passion for photography to help.

If the customer is researching online, have them start with your website.

ADD THE EXTRAS TO THE WEBSITE

Make it worthwhile to search the store’s website.

Have additional accessories available online. If the store has one color in the store, there may be other custom colors or versions on the website. Order it while in the store. The device goes home

with the customer today with an additional prize to arrive in the mail.

Coupons and bonus deals only available online is a way to make the customer feel in the know and a VIP.

An appointment scheduling feature on the website will ensure the customer receives personalized service. They cannot get that from an online store. Even if there are restrictions on purchasing and/or activating on the store’s website, the customer can make the request and the team member can be prepared with what they are looking for at the time the customer has available. Customers will have a personal shopper with a VIP reservation and the store has follow-up information.

LIVE DEVICES

You would not buy a car without being able to test drive it. The devices in the store are the same. People come in to play. If the store only has non-functioning display models, there is no difference in

looking at the device online than coming into a store. A customer cannot touch online so have it available to touch in the store.

It is more powerful to put the device in the customer's hand and have them open the features and picture the benefits they will experience with the right device than a simple description and empty plastic toy. Hand the device to the customer and walk them through the apps, programs, cameras, benefits and entertainment.

Connect all devices, utilize the Wi-Fi and set to games and Internet. Put them in hands and get them into shopping bags.

TECHNOLOGY PLAYGROUND

Technology is changing quickly. The store can be the place to interact and experiment with it. Doing the same thing the same way leads to the same foot traffic and sales. Increase the traffic in the store. People like to play.

The store is a playground. To sell an item, the customer has to be in the store. Invite anyone to play with the devices. Having a reputation for a place to play is a good thing. The team should be prepared to start the show. They must know the newest and most popular apps, the

most up to date features and play with them. Introduce a customer to the app or feature and hand it to them. Getting it in the customer's hand will allow them to see it in action. The benefits it will add to their daily life do not need to be described, because they are experiencing it as they play.

QR CODES

QR codes can be placed on devices to lead the customer to features, devices and/or videos of the product and people using them. Free QR code makers can be found online, linking the cubed picture to any site.

Make a QR code treasure hunt leading customers from marketing material to marketing material to win an accessory or discount. They learn more, the team has more talking points to discuss, and the customer has an interactive experience to the sale.

INTERACTIVE CHECKOUT

The sale does not have to be completed at the front register. Tablets and handheld computers can be used as part of a presentation and as the register.

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Completing the sale without having to move back to the counter and register is a simple few buttons on the screen. The same device can track inventory and schedules.

Restaurants are increasing their efficiency by ordering the guest's meal on a handheld device, sending it to the kitchen, notified on the same screen when it is ready to be delivered with the receipt easily printed and credit card rung all in one. And they do not sell technology. Wireless stores do.

VIDEO

Video screens can be used through the store to display videos of the hero products and commercials of the services. Carriers spend thousands of dollars producing commercials and advertising content. A request to the carrier and/or hardware rep will result in a lot of material.

With multiple locations, streaming live events (entertainment or community related) to all locations will bring everyone together in the store's brand. Spreading the

message across screens in the store can add to the interactivity of the customer's experience.

DIGITAL SIGNAGE

Customers have a short attention span. This is the age of quick, change, entertain. The store does not want to appear stale or stagnant in its design or displays. Digital signage can be changed quickly and efficiently to display the newest and coolest of the store. Interactive touch screens are an option to get the customer involved in the purchasing experience. The customer can answer usage questions, device needs and knowledge assessment on the screen. The team member can then discuss the information the customer has already started and close the sale.

THE STORE IN THE COMMUNITY

If the store is seen as part of the community, people will visit, stay, and buy. Customers want a local business with big business

practices. Juggling that is a challenge.

Sponsoring sports teams and school organizations gets the store's name in the community, shows a vested interest in the area, and gets a framed picture on the wall of the team, hopefully with a trophy. Check with the community centers, schools, and area leagues for baseball, football, soccer, tennis, badminton, synchronized swimming, honor societies, cheerleading, youth-organized charity organizations, etc., needing help. An event in the store for the members is a way to fill the store with energy and wireless-using parents and children.

Schools, churches, and community centers constantly need help with events and fund raising. Being involved is more than the bottom line. It is responsible and creates growth where everyone benefits.

Scholarships supporting applicants in the community or team members in the store is another chance to give back. It spreads through any marketing effort put forth and the priceless word of

mouth benefits. There may also be tax benefits.

Building community advocates is as important as building team advocates. Although customers want the big business appearance and professionalism in a store, they will perceive the same big business as uncaring, greedy, and out of touch. One or a thousand stores should fight for the small store perception with the high grade look, feel, and service.

UTILIZE RESOURCES

There are plenty of resources available for the asking. Ask the carrier and/or hardware representatives what resources they have available. Advertising and training dollars may be given for the right idea, either yours or theirs. Get help with marketing posters, banners, flags, sponsorships, contest prizes, and advertising support.

Utilize the plaza, mall, or property management resources. They may have a newsletter or notice to the other businesses where a neighbor special can be announced, a website the store can be linked to, or empty store windows the store can place graphics on or a display in. Unused or underused signage in and around the location of the store could

be available. These are always great negotiating pieces when discussing the lease, but may be available free or at a small cost even after the lease is signed. No plaza or mall wants a location of empty spaces; the perception of full store fronts draws people into the parking lot. Everyone wins.

KEEP THEM IN THE STORE

Events can introduce a new customer and build the store's reputation with returning customers. Schedule educational seminars about the devices and operating systems. Many people are unsure of how to use the newest and the coolest, but want to. Schedule classes, taught by in-house experts and sign up customers. Even if they did not buy from your store, invite them anyway. They may next time.

Educational events and speakers on the community happenings and interests, the future of technology or how technology will affect the future by teachers, professors, experts, and community leaders will bring an entirely different group into the location.

Invite business organizations and networking groups to have their meetings or events in the store.

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The goal is to get people in to see what makes the store different. Simply making the store available to them makes the store different.

Think outside the norm. Musical guests and book readings bring a different energy into the store and a different customer base to your team. Why have it in a wireless store? Everything can be streamed, recorded, marketed, and sent through social media by a wireless device. Make the event a practice in using their device to spread the store's story. Record it, stream it, and market it as part of the store's difference.

OPEN THE DOOR

The store is another teammate. It needs to be developed and groomed. Iron its uniform and put on a nametag.

Customers are looking for a big business appearance with a small

business feel. Your plan must breathe life into the four walls to give the customers and your team what they want. Create a comfortable place to come and stay by the right attitude, layout, store approach, and community involvement.

If done correctly and placed in front of the pack, the store can be your top salesperson, your marketing guru and the best party host you have ever encountered.

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The idea of everything in this *Winning at Wireless Retail Success Guide* is to help put more money in the bottom line. To do so, the customer, team, and store must be put first. The top line sales are directly related to how the customer is treated, how competent the team is, and how the store tells the story, but to get the top line to the bottom line, you must manage your business. Putting nickels and dimes on the top line add up, but losing quarters and dollars on its way down closes store doors quickly.

THE BUSINESS is about the customer, the team, and the brand, but it is ultimately judged by the numbers. The mighty trio variables are sales, labor, and inventory management. Once the rent and CAM is negotiated, there is nothing much that can be done about it. Turning off lights will only save so much. Changing Internet servers may save a little money. All are

important, but the largest variables you can control are sales, labor, and inventory.

DON'T LOSE THE FOREST FOR THE TREES

It's easy to lose site of the future when you're worried about the present. Be careful not to lose the dollar by

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concentrating on the quarter. It takes time and patience to form a great long-term plan. The key is to have a plan and follow it through. Stay focused on the goal and keep an eye on both the big picture and how the details fit into it.

IF YOU FAIL TO PLAN, YOU ARE PLANNING TO FAIL

It does not happen magically. Sales do not increase, labor does not find its appropriate level, and inventory does not manage itself by wishing it. It takes a plan. The plan might change. The plan will change, but to change a plan, you must first have a plan.

A plan should be focused on where you want to be but based in where you have been. An unrealistic plan is a worthless plan. Wanting one store to make millions of dollars a month is a great dream, but an unrealistic one. If that

dream's numbers are used, the storage room will overflow with stagnant inventory and the walls will be lined with team members standing around for the sales made in a fantasy world. Knowing the history of the store's sales, labor, and inventory costs will allow you to forecast for the present and prepare for growth realistically.

Start with a high level plan and break it down into yearly, monthly, weekly, and daily plans. These plans should be reviewed daily and changed as needed to meet needs. The goal is to manage the three largest variables—sales, labor, inventory.

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY: THE POS SYSTEM

The technology in the customer's hand is changing fast. So is the technology available to the business leader. Using the tools

available can save money, time, and stress.

Point of sale (POS) systems are more than a calculator and cash drawer. They can receive inventory, releasing it with every sale. The physical inventory counts can be entered into the same system and cross referenced with the sales report. The discrepancies can then be researched.

The same POS system can track trends in accessories and devices to help forecast sales and labor. Knowing it is busy is important, but knowing how the foot traffic has translated into sales can tell if the right people are helping the customers the right way. It can also tell if accessories are being sold with each device and by what team member. Without this information, the leader is guessing.

The POS system can also act as the time clock, entering schedules and notifying if a team member is early,



TO DO:

Gather all the historical data in the store for sales, labor, and inventory costs. Refer to that data as you work through the following sections.

late, or approaching overtime. It can calculate payroll and notify accounting departments of paycheck and commission amounts.

There is accounting technology, some in the same POS system that will assist in handling bills, cash flow, and P&L statements. You must decide if accounting is a department you should tackle in addition to your other responsibilities, or perhaps hire someone or outsource the role. Hiring or outsourcing can free up time to focus on bigger tasks.

No point of sale system replaces a well-trained and observant leader. Inventory still needs to be counted, schedules still need to be written, team members need to be interviewed, hired, trained and developed, customers must be consulted, and decisions need to be made on what will work best in your community. The reports and information technology can provide can help make those decisions.

SALES

The store can sparkle in the sun, the team can be primed and educated, but if there are no sales, the store folds. The store and team are providing products

and services to ring in sales. Without the cash in the bank, rent cannot be paid, inventory cannot be purchased, and labor cannot be paid.

All variables are managed by sales. What are the sales expected in the store? What will keep the store afloat and what is the goal profit? This determines how you market, how you order inventory, and how you schedule labor.

GOALS: START BIG

Look at the year. Start with last year's sales. What was the store's total revenue? What did that put in your pocket?

Because the wireless industry is changing, running the store the exact same way as last year will not put the same money on the bottom line. The approach must change. Since the approach must change, instead of working to make it the same, work to make more.

Before the beginning of the year, create next year's goals.

Complete what last year's total revenue was, the total cost of goods, the gross revenue, and what that meant to the net profit. What is the goal for the next year? Starting from the bottom, after all is

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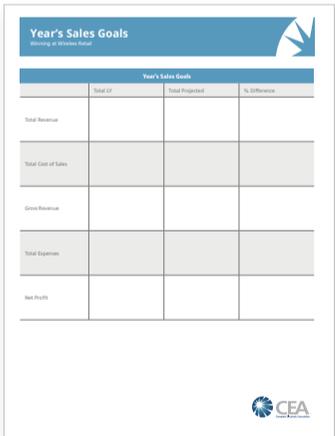
said and paid for, what increase in profit are you working for? What is the goal? Be realistic. Tripling the bottom line may be a great idea and might even be possible, but not probable if last year was healthy. If a 10 percent increase in profit is the goal, look at how that might affect the monthly and weekly goals.

Labor and inventory are large, controllable variables. The entire goal sheet does not need to increase by 10 percent if you manage your inventory and labor effectively. By saving money controlling inventory, eliminating

over-ordering and theft, and by scheduling the correct amount of team members to balance labor, you can save on inventory and total expenses. Working from the top down, if the goal is to increase the total revenue by 10 percent, it does not trickle down, it runs down if inventory and labor is controlled. Top line sales are important, but controlling the expenses on the way down is just as important. You cannot make a quarter and spend a dollar. But by making a dollar and saving a couple quarters on the way down, more goes into the bank, into the business, and into your pocket.

With labor controlled, and inventory managed, a couple percentage points can be saved on the way down, but also the uncontrollable expenses do not increase drastically. The store needs more inventory to sell more, but the insurance does not increase, utilities increase very little, labor is controlled and does not need to increase enormously, creating a large percentage of the top line sales falling to the bottom line. That is the year's goal.

Year's Sales Goals			
	Total Last Year's	Total Projected	% Difference
Total Revenue	\$427,586	\$470,345	10%
Total Cost of Sales	\$252,804	\$273,028	8%
Gross Revenue	\$174,782	\$197,316	13%
Total Expenses	\$136,200	\$141,648	4%
Net Profit	\$38,582	\$55,668	44%



 Year's Sales Goals

Monthly Sales Goals
Winning at Wireless Retail

Year's Sales Goal \$

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Historical % of Sales (LY Month/LY)	8%	15%	8%	5%	6%	6%	5%	7%	5%	7%	10%	15%
Total Revenue (projected)	\$37,628	\$70,552	\$37,628	\$23,517	\$28,221	\$28,221	\$23,517	\$32,924	\$23,517	\$32,924	\$47,035	\$84,662
Total Cost of Sales (projected)	\$21,356	\$38,333	\$19,403	\$12,821	\$14,225	\$15,311	\$11,455	\$17,425	\$12,697	\$18,071	\$28,389	\$50,902
Gross Revenue (projected)	\$16,272	\$32,219	\$18,225	\$10,696	\$13,995	\$12,910	\$12,062	\$15,499	\$10,821	\$14,853	\$18,645	\$33,760
Total Expenses (projected)	\$11,664	\$20,997	\$11,431	\$7,666	\$8,628	\$8,510	\$6,886	\$9,858	\$7,261	\$9,661	\$13,519	\$25,568
Net Profit (projected)	\$4,608	\$11,222	\$6,793	\$3,030	\$5,368	\$4,400	\$5,176	\$5,641	\$3,559	\$5,192	\$5,126	\$8,192

CEA



Monthly Sales Goals

GOALS: BREAK IT DOWN BY MONTH

Having to increase the store's sales by tens of thousands of dollars a year to make the yearly sales goal can be overwhelming. Since the sales will not be made immediately, break it down into twelve months.

As sales fluctuate from month to month, break the sales goals accordingly.

November and December's sales are historically heavier due to the winter holiday shopping. Post-holiday January is historically slower. Expect an increase in February and March sales due to tax refunds. To calculate realistic goals, use the percentage of the year's sales each month has historically produced to calculate the year's sales goals.

Review this every month.

Monthly Sales Goals												
Year's Sales Goal \$												
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Historical % of Sales (LY Month/LY)	8%	15%	8%	5%	6%	6%	5%	7%	5%	7%	10%	15%
Total Revenue (projected)	\$37,628	\$70,552	\$37,628	\$23,517	\$28,221	\$28,221	\$23,517	\$32,924	\$23,517	\$32,924	\$47,035	\$84,662
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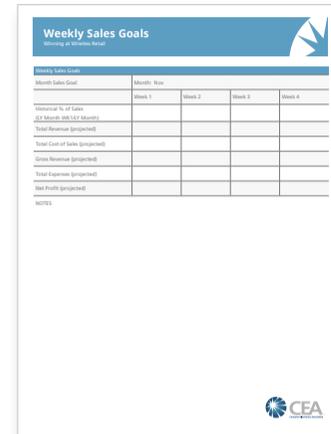
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GOALS: BREAK IT DOWN BY WEEK

By the beginning of each month, break it down further. What is the goal each week? This may not be an even week-to-week split. Events in the area or hosted by the store, festivals, coupons, marketing efforts, and holidays all effect the week-to-week sales. Historical data will allow a closer percentage

from week to week. Pay attention to added notes concerning each week as holidays and events from the year before may be different this year. If a school carnival was in the plaza’s parking lot, a boy band played in the mall or the street was flooded the year before, the sales results would be different than the next year.

Review every week.



 Weekly Sales Goals

Weekly Sales Goals				
Month Sales Goal	Month: Nov			
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Historical % of Sales (LY Month WK1/LY Month)	15%	15%	45%	25%
Total Revenue (projected)	\$7,055	\$7,055	\$21,166	\$11,759
Total Cost of Sales (projected)	\$4,206	\$4,206	\$12,618	\$7,010
Gross Revenue (projected)	\$2,797	\$2,797	\$8,390	\$4,661
Total Expenses (projected)	\$2,028	\$2,028	\$6,084	\$3,380
Net Profit (projected)	\$769	\$769	\$2,307	\$1,282
NOTES				

Daily Sales Goals

Weekly Sales Goal

Day	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
Total Revenue								

CEA



Daily Sales Goals

GOALS: BREAK IT DOWN BY THE DAY

Sales are made every day. At the beginning of the week, review where you are with your goals and break the weekly goal into daily goals. Monday sales are not the same as Friday sales. With daily goals, use the trend of the prior weeks to plan your next week. If you have increased sales on Wednesday by 5 percent from the year before each of the last three weeks, use that as a starting point.

Dave's Electronics usually did very well on Fridays in his small town. People in the community, especially the younger working customers, would get paid, browse through the gaming system accessories, new video games, headphones and MP3 players, and spend

some of their check. In the fall, for three months every year, everything changed. Because his store was located on the corner of the high school entrance to the football field, it was difficult to get in and out on Fridays before the game. His normal Friday night customers came in on Saturday afternoons for those three months. Dave changed his sales goals to accurately reflect what the football game and traffic did to his business.

It is necessary to be aware of how the community, seasons, and even traffic will affect the store's sales.

Review every day. By reviewing daily, immediate impact can be made on the numbers by adding incentives on increased sales, contests on multiple lines, and spiffs on accessories.

As just a few examples.

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Daily Sales Goals								
Weekly Sales Goal	Week: Nov Wk 1							
\$6,304								
	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
Total Revenue	\$883	\$693	\$820	\$883	\$1,261	\$1,135	\$630	\$6,304

GOALS: BREAK IT DOWN BY THE TEAM MEMBER

Just because the goals have been made, the devices, accessories, and plans do not sell themselves. It takes team members to sell. They greet, build rapport, ask qualifying questions, present the right solution, and close the sale. Set goals for each team member. Look at how their sales trend and how many shifts they have. Set their goals just above that. If competitive, they will exceed those goals.

Another option is to set an average sales goal per hour worked. If the store has 135 hours of labor a week and the goal is to sell \$9,000 for the week, you can set the goal on average at \$66 an hour. Make a greater impact by offering an additional spiff for averaging \$5 an hour more than the goal, more for \$7 an hour more than the goal. This allows your superstars to benefit from their skills and hard work while keeping everyone on a fair playing field.

COMMUNICATING THE GOALS

The goals should not be a secret. The team should know. If they believe in the store and its success, they will appreciate what is needed to keep the store succeeding. They will take pride in destroying the goal. The sales team has a direct impact on the top line sales. It is the leader's responsibility to coach them, motivate them and get them selling.

The sales team has little control over the labor and inventory variables. The leader must manage those. Do not make it complicated. Share the top line sales goals with the team. If they produce top line revenue, your leadership team should work to get it to the bottom profit line.

Focus communication on the immediate sales goals—day, week and month at most. The team will not think of the year ahead. It is overwhelming. Use these immediate goal numbers in meetings. Reward them when they blow them away. Bonuses, spiffs, extra commissions, money. The

goal is there for the store to make money. Making more should lead the team members to make more. Money is the great motivator.

If the team members' individual sales goals are based on their individual ability and trends, communicate the goals to the team member individually. To challenge a superstar and keep from becoming complacent, a larger goal may be needed just for him. But with great challenge should come a great reward. If there is a greater challenge to a superstar than the rest of the team, be sure they will be rewarded accordingly. Not doing so can build animosity instead of the challenge of growth intended. Let them know it is larger because of how great they are and how they are an example of what is wanted. When they break their goal, announce it to the team. Let them know you placed an extra challenge in front of them and they beat it. If others meet the superstar's goal, reward them at the same time. This will challenge others to demand a bigger goal.

**TO DO:**

Hang a goals chart in the break room. Make it big. A white board is a convenient way to manage changing numbers. Keep the board solely for these goals. It is that important. Update it. Keep it current. Knowing what the goal is three months ago does not help this month. If you have a sales-per-hour goal, post that as well. If there are sales incentives, post that. Make it a team member's responsibility to make it pretty, color the goal sheet. Use glitter, stickers, whatever makes it stand out and get noticed.

INFLUENCING SALES

Sales do not just happen. They do not automatically increase because they are willed to do so. It takes work, planning, and coaching. Coach the team and challenge them to do better. Plan the store's marketing to have the greatest impact. Coordinate events that can draw people in and provide the best return on the investments.

By having a sales goal, the right plan can be put together to reach and exceed that goal.

PLANNING MARKETING

There is no magic formula for marketing. There is no "follow step 1, 2, 3, 4 and congratulations, you are successful." You have to do what is right for you. What works in the store's community,

with the customers and media available? Experiment and record what works and improve it.

A good marketing plan looks at your store's core audience in a 15-minute drive or walk from the front door. A senior citizen discount would not be effective in a college town. Know the customer, identify their needs, and offer them the best plan to match those needs and get their attention.

Plan and budget the year for marketing and plan the details 60 to 120 days in advance.

There may be co-op marketing funds available for the asking. Talk to carrier and product reps and see what money might be available. A co-sponsored marketing campaign or event is still advertising for the store.

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Tie the marketing campaign with the carrier’s promos and get more bang out of the marketing budget. If the store and the carrier are promoting the same products and specials, the message is reinforced through multiple channels with more power than just store’s

marketing budget. Talk to the carrier and product reps to time their marketing campaigns.

Review the marketing plan monthly. What is the return on the investment? Is it working? How can it improve? If a campaign is scheduled to run for two months,

stopping it after five days in may not be enough time to see if it is working. Give it time to grab hold and gain momentum. There may be improvements visible in that time, but give it the time it needs. If it still is not working after time, change it.

Marketing/Advertising Plan Template					
Month/Quarter	Cost*	Event/Activity	Deadline	Promo Date	Result This Year (TY) – Last Year (LY)
January (Q1)	\$ 325	Direct Mail	Dec	Jan-Feb	5%
February	\$ 625	Valentine’s Day In-Store Rebate	Jan	Feb	Even
March	\$ 300	College Basketball – 2 for 1	Feb	Mar-Apr	12%
April (Q2)	\$ 250	Off Promo		Apr	2%
May	\$ 225	Grads and Dad’s Sweeps	Apr	May-Jun	7%
June	\$ 225	Grads and Dads Sweeps	Apr	May-Jun	-2%
July (Q3)	--	Off Promo		Jul	-2%
August	\$ 300	Back to School Promo	Jul	Aug	3%
September	\$ 250	Back to School Promo Carryover	Jul	Sep	3%
October (Q4)	\$ 300	Music Festival	Aug	Oct	10%
November	\$ 600	Holiday Extravaganza	Aug	Nov	46% of annual sales occur in Q4
December	\$ 1,200	Holiday Extravaganza Carryover	Aug	Dec	

*Your marketing expense budget should support your annual goals.

TRADITIONAL ADVERTISING AND THE TWIST

Look around the area, what is working? Talk to the carrier to find out what is working for others. It is ok to steal good ideas, but do not get stuck in a plan because you feel you have to do it that way. A lot of traditional advertising has been around for a long time because it works, but it does not always work for everyone. Continue to review and revise to get the best results for your budget.

RADIO AND TELEVISION

Radio and television ads can be effective depending on the area, but can also be quite expensive. Local cable television can be more cost effective. The same ads can be broadcast across the Internet using social media and video sites, then link your updates and in store ads to reference them. Use QR codes to demonstrate on the devices in the store as part of the presentation.

Press releases are a way to get free advertising. Announce to the local media an event or the store's community involvement. A local news story can be a positive reinforcement of the great things the store is doing. The Internet has

dozens of how-to sites on writing a press release, but it's best to employ help, as needed, and do it professionally.

TRADITIONAL AND VIRTUAL PRINT

Print advertising can be costly. Area newspapers reach a broad customer base. Look at different outlets and decide if they would be more effective. School papers and community newspapers have a lower cost, can more directly target your customers, and show community involvement.

Many apartment and townhouse complexes place a welcome bundle in a newly leased or sold home. They will place an advertisement in free or for prizes they can give away at their own events, resulting in more recognition.

Direct mail can be effective if targeted. An unfocused blast of emails can waste a lot of marketing money without a lot of return. Target where and who gets the direct mail and keep the message simple. Collect and record the returns to judge the effectiveness.

Email lists can have the same result as direct mail with much less cost and no licking stamps. Emails also need to be

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**TO DO:**

Make a list of all the traditional radio and television outlets in your area: community and college papers, radio stations, television stations and leaflets. Now list the circulation and customer types each reach and how much it is to place different size advertisements. When deciding on advertising placement, refer to this list to reach the right return on the investment.

focused. Get email addresses in the store and request email addresses on the website. When emailing customers and potential customers, be sure the opt-out option is simple and easy to find. It is easy to turn a great opportunity into an impression of annoyance.

Go to virtual printing. Write blogs on your website to announce promotions, new products and community involvement. Use SEO (search engine optimization) words and phrases to appear in Internet searches. The goal is to appear as close to the top of the list as possible. It is beneficial to pay to be the first on the list. Search "Samsung Repair" and hundreds of sites and blogs will appear. How far down is your store's site? What can you do to get it higher? The more often that phrase appears in the blog and on the website, the higher your site becomes. The more traffic your site gets, the higher your site will appear on the list.

LOYALTY PROGRAMS

Loyalty programs are a way of saying thank you to your existing customers. Get their email and mailing information at the register and send promotions for additional discounts, products and special VIP events. They feel appreciated and more likely to become your store's advocate. Referral programs, giving the current customer a new accessory or money toward their monthly bill, can bring new customers.

COUPONS

Coupons can be created for all types of discounts and VIP services. Think outside of the normal. What will get your community's attention? A coupon for free training on their new device or redeemable for a donation to a community or school organization may be better than 20 percent off their purchase.

With all promotions, they must be easy to understand with an expiration date. Keep it simple. The more complicated the promotion is, the more likely it will go in the trash.

SPECIAL EVENTS

The goal is to get customers in and for the team to sell. The first part is to get them in the store. Creating and sponsoring events are great ways to build awareness of the store. There is an increase of sales that day, but look long term. These same customers will return when they need a new phone, an accessory, or an add-on. It is difficult to see an immediate result in an event, but you will see an upswing in your sales over time. It is better to have a stabilized increase in traffic and sales than basing success on a onetime event.

Steal good ideas. What kind of events have worked in your area?

Take what worked best and make it better.

Radio events, school events, live music, a motorcycle rally, classic car show, pet adoption, environment awareness fair, farmers market, art/craft event. Judge how well it worked and redo the event, change the approach, or change the event.

EVENT SALES

Sales are not locked in the store's four walls. The community has miles and miles of open space. People are gathering somewhere. Event sales can differentiate you from the competitors. The store goes to them. Look at the organized events in the community. Setting up a booth with limited inventory, a computer, and an Internet hot spot creates a portable store. The team goes to the customer with new phones and accessories. Cases to keep their phone safe at the event and backup batteries for when their phone dies in the middle of their day out are great sales.

Have a few power cords available and offer to charge people's phones. There is the greeting. The customer has stopped. Now the team can build rapport and qualify any needs they might have.

Like the four walls, the portable store should be professional and inviting. Invest in a tent and table clothes printed with the store's name and logo. Use the same branded colors to create an extension of the location the customer knows and trusts.

Examples of events in the community:

- School events
- Farmer's markets
- Tradeshows
- Motorcycle shows/rally's
- Marathon/race events
- Fundraising events

MANAGING CARRIER COMMISSIONS

You treat the customers right, you tell the right story in the store and with the store, you have a phenomenal team, and get the right devices with the right plans in the hands of the right people, but when the commission check comes in from the carriers, it's not right. And it was going so well.

Commissions are missing, charge backs are counted against, and incentives are not there. These add up to a lot of dollars out of your bottom line. It is important to keep an account of these. Know when

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Completed chargeback adjustments												
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Commissions Earned	\$15,000	\$18,750	\$22,500	\$25,000	\$30,000	\$35,000	\$20,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$17,500	\$20,000	\$22,500
Monthly Chargebacks	(\$710)	(\$710)	(\$2,126)	(\$3,263)	(\$4,633)	(\$5,964)	(\$6,009)	(\$6,236)	(\$5,985)	(\$5,565)	(\$4,910)	(\$4,476)
Reserve Account Details (25% withheld)												
Placed into Reserve Account	\$3,750	\$4,688	\$5,625	\$6,250	\$7,500	\$8,750	\$5,000	\$3,750	\$3,750	\$4,375	\$5,000	\$5,625
Months 0–1 CB	\$710	\$858	\$1,165	\$1,150	\$1,580	\$1,680	\$1,030	\$750	\$690	\$925	\$960	\$1,105
Months 2 CB	\$355	\$429	\$583	\$575	\$790	\$840	\$515	\$375	\$345	\$463	\$480	
Months 3 CB	\$533	\$643	\$874	\$863	\$1,185	\$1,260	\$773	\$563	\$518	\$694		
Months 4 CB	\$888	\$1,072	\$1,456	\$1,438	\$1,975	\$2,100	\$1,288	\$938	\$863			
Months 5 CB	\$533	\$643	\$874	\$863	\$1,185	\$1,260	\$773	\$563				
Months 6 CB	\$533	\$643	\$874	\$863	\$1,185	\$1,260	\$773					
Net Remaining	\$200	\$400	(\$200)	\$500	(\$400)	\$350	(\$150)	\$563	\$1,335	\$2,294	\$3,560	\$4,520

(Highlighted area represents Jan actual chargebacks applied to the appropriate previous commission period)

the reports go to the carriers and when the checks should arrive. The carriers send commissions up to 90 days, and sometimes later, after they are reported. This makes it difficult to track what is owed and the mistakes. The carriers make mistakes, but they are not going to search for them.

POS systems are integrating these functions into their reports, filing to carriers automatically and allow tracking of what is being sold, by whom, and with what accessories. This allows both a way to investigate any incorrect withholdings but also forecast product sales.

Compare the carrier report with the point of sale report and locate the reasons why the devices' and accounts' commissions are being withheld. It may be as simple

as filing incorrectly, with a new reporting solving the issue. The carriers may have an upgrade recorded versus a new account. These create a very different pay scale.

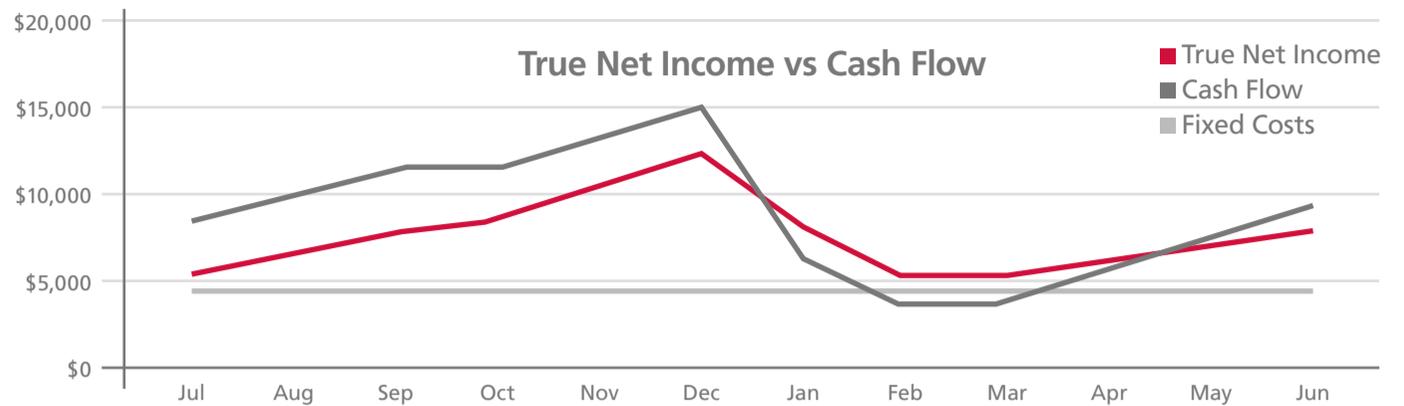
Companies specializing in commission reconciliation help businesses with subscription based services. The carriers are a maze, how they want things filed, how the reports read, and where the money goes. These experts on commission have specialized in translating that information and comparing it with individual store's reports. They file for commissions and co-op dollars to each carrier's specifications the right way for the right amount the first time, find the mistakes the carriers make by comparing the reports and handle the appeal process.

This can add up to several decimal points on the bottom line each month.

CHARGEBACKS

Businesses have closed their doors due to poor planning of chargebacks. A chargeback is money returned to a carrier or held from the retailer for broken contracts. It is a double loss. The store loses the cost of the phone subsidy and the carrier commission. Sometimes it is a triple loss if there is no chargeback for the individual team member's commission, the store can lose that too.

First, know when that chargeback period ends—60 days, 90 days or six months. When is the last moment the carrier can touch your money for that contract? No one



Chargeback Dangers

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
TRUE Net Income	\$5,250	\$6,563	\$7,875	\$8,750	\$10,500	\$12,250	\$7,000	\$5,250	\$5,250	\$6,125	\$7,000	\$7,875
Cash Flow	\$8,290	\$10,038	\$11,374	\$11,737	\$13,367	\$15,036	\$5,991	\$2,764	\$3,015	\$4,935	\$7,090	\$9,024
Fixed Costs	\$4,250	\$4,250	\$4,250	\$4,250	\$4,250	\$4,250	\$4,250	\$4,250	\$4,250	\$4,250	\$4,250	\$4,250

wants that money taken. If there are no chargebacks, everyone makes more money. It is in everyone's interest for customers to stay with your store.

If the commission money has been spent on bills, improvements, maintenance, or incentives before the end of the chargeback period, a chargeback can be very damaging. Stores have closed with one report.

Hold money for chargebacks. Put it aside until the 60, 90, six months of the chargeback period ends. Use historical data to decide how much. What has been the typical chargeback percentage in the past? If 8-10 percent of contracts have cancelled their contracts in the past month, six months, or a year, use that to be safe. Add a little more to be safer. It is your decision for your store's future. Have a plan for all surprises.

PREVENTING CHARGEBACKS

The best way to battle cancellations is to prevent them. Customers leave contracts due to regret of purchase—due to need or budget—or feeling they were misinformed or lied to. Prevent a cancellation before starting a purchase. Present the right device, the right products and the right plans to the customer at the beginning. Do not sell the one with the highest commission or the highest value if it does not have the right value for the customer. They will feel lied to and conned by another typical salesperson. Tell them everything attached to the phone and the bill. Full disclosure. Most of the time a \$50 plan is not \$50 when the bill comes in. Explaining the bill, add-ons, and government taxes will get their approval and save the shock value when it arrives in the mail.

"The sales rep said \$50, but they lied; the bill says \$75."

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The customer does not see the government fees as different than the store's fees. The store told them \$50, now the store is requiring \$75. The information at the beginning gets agreement, not a future shock and feeling of distrust.

It is easy to get caught in the buying moment. Flashing lights, bells, whistles, a couple phone games, and a sales rep talking about all the cool things it will do is hypnotizing. People make bad decisions every day. Decisions they do not need or cannot afford. Get agreement for the right device. Telling the customer a device is not the right one for them can build trust. If they still want to buy it, let them. Use the "you said..." statements to emphasize the right decision for them.

Call the customer in the charge back timeframe to be sure they still love their purchase, that it was everything they hoped it would be. Welcome them to the family. Offer additional help and training for their new device. Ask if there is anything else they might need and if there is anyone they

may know who would benefit from having a similar device or plan. The customer's satisfaction is being reinforced and they are being asked for referrals at the same time.

A cancelled contract in the chargeback timeframe is still lost money. You have eliminated the commission for the store and for the sales rep, and you've lost more customers than just the one line item on the report. How many people have they told about the con artist salesperson and poor decision?

SUBSIDY MANAGEMENT

A customer leaves the store excited about their new device, they have exactly what they need and want, and within the chargeback period, they cancel their contract. There's the loss of a customer, but they have kept the device after breaking the agreement. They only paid the promotional price. The carrier will not pay the subsidy with the broken agreement. That can be hundreds of dollars in the former customer's hands.

Prevent the problem first. Make the follow-up phone calls to be sure the customer is satisfied and they will less likely cancel their contract.

Some dealers have a second agreement specifically focused on the device costs if the agreement is broken. The agreement contracts costs to the customer if they break their contract in a certain time period. Check with the individual carriers as some do not allow second agreements.

If available, bundle services. If the contract includes their wireless device, cable and Internet services, studies have shown people are less likely to cancel services. They would have to find multiple new carriers instead of just one cell phone.

Even with follow-up calls to be sure they love their phone, people can still break contracts. To gain the money back for the subsidized phone, call. A few phone calls may recoup hundreds of dollars. Explain with the breaking of the service agreement the subsidy of the phone is also cancelled and ask how they would like to pay for the remainder of the phone.

There are people who cancel contracts for a living. They will start new contracts with false information, take the subsidized phone, break the contract, and never be heard from again. Do not become a victim. Ask for valid IDs before beginning the activation process. Check for expiration dates and if the picture and names match. By overlooking the basics for a short term sale, the store can be out hundreds of dollars. Good information is key. If garbage information goes in, usually garbage comes out. Customers understand they need valid ID to start service. If they get offended about not starting the service without it or make a scene, be alert. The people most offended about showing their ID at the bar are usually too young to drink.

day will be clear and sunny, and likely will remain the same for the rest of the week. You grab your duck floaties and head for the boat.

The weatherman forecasts—makes an educated guess by all the information and reports he has and prepares you to stay dry or have fun in the sun. The same must be done for business.

Not forecasting can get you soaked in the rain or sweating in a winter coat in the sun. The consequences for business are stress, failure, and loss of customers, team members, and money.

Forecasting is built on the history of the store and an educated guess. Knowing history helps prepare for the future.

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FORECASTING IS FOR MORE THAN THE WEATHER

A weatherman stands in front of a green screen in a soundproof studio with a pointer, a hand gesture, and a smile. He explains how the storm front is sweeping through the middle of the state and straight for you. You grab your umbrella and head out for the day.

The same weatherman, same smile and different tie, explains how the

PREPARING A FORECAST

Gather all historical information for the store. What was done yesterday, last week, last month, last year? How much was sold? What was sold? How many people were scheduled and how successful were the shifts?

Form a spreadsheet. Each category can have different spreadsheets. To get the simplicity of it, look at the top line sales to forecast what the sales and labor will be in the near future.

In a spreadsheet, label one row Last Year Sales (LY Sales) Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. Change the days of the weeks by what your store's first day is considered. This should be consistent on all forecast sheets and schedules. On the second line, label Forecast Sales Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. Below that, label Actual Sales and then the difference between forecasted and actual. Do the same for Labor Last Year, Forecasted, Actual, and difference. Repeat for the remaining weeks of the month. Using the historical data, complete the last year's sales and labor hours or dollars spent. In the example below, labor dollars will be used, because bills cannot be paid in hours, but can be paid in dollars.

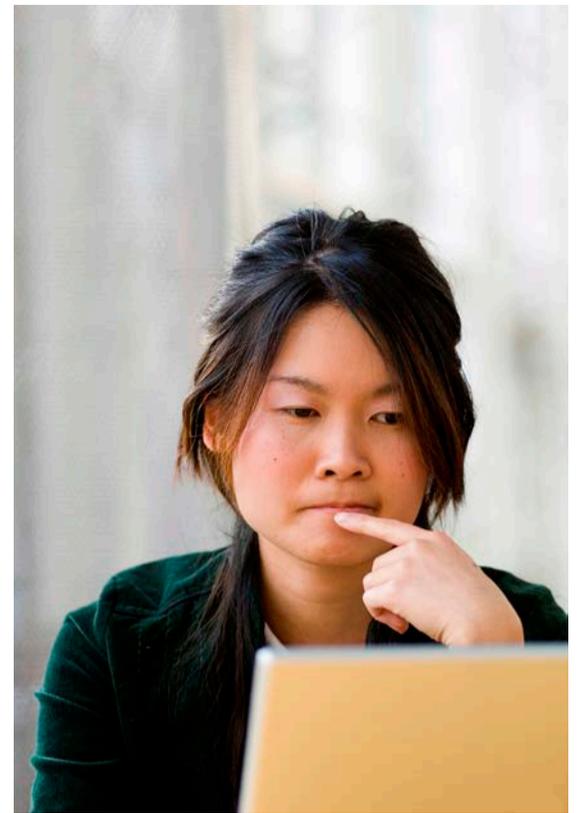
When forecasting, look at the previous week and month. How much more or less has the store been doing than the year before? Now look how the store has been trending compared to the week before and the month before. Are sales up or down? Find the percentage up or down and use

that as a forecast for how the store will do next week and month.

Use a "Notes" section to record any anomalies to record for the next year. If there was a large event in front of the store, the sales and labor may have been abnormally high and not what can be expected this year. If the road flooded and no one could get in or out of the parking lot, the sales would be abnormally low. Special events, product launches, seasonal sales, and weather can all affect sales and labor. Write in the notes and use as part of the historical. You would not want to forecast sales or a schedule using abnormalities.

Look at the current events and forecast accordingly. Is there an event in front of the store this year? You should expect and forecast additional sales and labor than would be the normal trend. Is there a shopping event or sale, a race, a party you would normally not see? These would cause an addition or decrease to the normal trend.

Make the adjustments according to the trend and forecast. If too



many people were scheduled on a \$3,500 sales day, do not schedule additional people when forecasting a \$2,000 sales day. Losing money with unnecessary labor is still losing money. Be sure the sales per man hour is appropriate and realistic to the expectations.

Do the same for inventory. Look from week to week and month to month. What is selling? What is trending? Order those items. When more customers are expected, plan accordingly.

Just "doing fine" does not tell if you should hire more people, ramp up marketing or evaluate the entire workings of the store.

Forecasting Worksheet							
WEEK 1	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
LY Sales	\$1,151.19	\$904.51	\$1,068.97	\$1,151.19	\$1,644.56	\$1,480.11	\$822.28
LY WTD	\$1,151.19	\$2,055.70	\$3,124.67	\$4,275.86	\$5,920.42	\$7,400.53	\$8,222.81
Forecast Sales	\$1,266.31	\$994.96	\$1,175.86	\$1,266.31	\$1,809.02	\$1,628.12	\$904.51
Forecast WTD	\$1,266.31	\$2,261.27	\$3,437.13	\$4,703.45	\$6,512.46	\$8,140.58	\$9,045.09
Actual Sales	\$1,250.00	\$1,010.00	\$1,255.00	\$1,252.00	\$1,899.00	\$1,599.00	\$965.00
Actual Sales WTD	\$1,250.00	\$2,260.00	\$3,515.00	\$4,767.00	\$6,666.00	\$8,265.00	\$9,230.00
Actual Sales - LY +/-	\$98.81	\$105.49	\$186.04	\$100.81	\$254.44	\$118.89	\$142.72
Actual Sales - LY +/- WTD	\$98.81	\$204.30	\$390.33	\$491.14	\$745.58	\$864.47	\$1,007.19
Forecast +/-	(\$16.31)	\$15.04	\$79.14	(\$14.31)	\$89.98	(\$29.12)	\$60.49
Forecast +/- WTD	(\$16.31)	(\$1.27)	\$77.87	\$63.55	\$153.54	\$124.42	\$184.91

LY Labor	\$200.00	\$150.00	\$150.00	\$175.00	\$425.00	\$425.00	\$175.00
LY WTD	\$200.00	\$350.00	\$500.00	\$675.00	\$1,100.00	\$1,525.00	\$1,700.00
Forecast Labor	\$204.00	\$153.00	\$153.00	\$178.50	\$433.50	\$433.50	\$178.50
Forecast WTD	\$204.00	\$357.00	\$510.00	\$688.50	\$1,122.00	\$1,555.50	\$1,734.00
Actual Labor	\$201.00	\$165.00	\$150.00	\$175.00	\$435.00	\$430.00	\$175.00
Actual WTD	\$201.00	\$366.00	\$516.00	\$691.00	\$1,126.00	\$1,556.00	\$1,731.00
Actual Labor - LY +/-	(\$3.00)	\$12.00	(\$3.00)	(\$3.50)	\$1.50	(\$3.50)	(\$3.50)
Actual Labor - LY +/- WTD	(\$3.00)	\$9.00	\$6.00	\$2.50	\$4.00	\$0.50	(\$3.00)
Forecast +/-	(\$3.00)	\$12.00	(\$3.00)	(\$3.50)	\$1.50	(\$3.50)	(\$3.50)
Forecast +/- WTD	(\$3.00)	\$9.00	\$6.00	\$2.50	\$4.00	\$0.50	(\$3.00)
LY sales per man hour	\$5.76	\$6.03	\$7.13	\$6.58	\$3.87	\$3.48	\$4.70
Actual sales per man hour	\$6.22	\$6.12	\$8.37	\$7.15	\$4.37	\$3.72	\$5.51

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Daily Labor Forecast							
WK 1	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
LY GR	\$489	\$385	\$454	\$489	\$699	\$629	\$350
Forecast GR	\$638	\$501	\$592	\$638	\$911	\$820	\$456
LY Labor	\$200.00	\$150.00	\$150.00	\$175.00	\$425.00	\$425.00	\$175.00
Forecast Labor	\$204.00	\$153.00	\$153.00	\$178.50	\$433.50	\$433.50	\$178.50

LABOR

The store will not run itself. Unless there is a self-help kiosk in the front, team members must be involved to run a successful wireless store. The right team members with the right labor controls.

PLANNING A SCHEDULE

A schedule is needed each and every week. What time the team member must arrive, take breaks, and leave should be written in stone. The stone can be moved if needed, but without a plan, the plan cannot change.

Big plan. Using your forecast, plan how many labor hours or labor dollars it takes to successfully run a shift. Use the Gross Revenue to forecast labor. This will give you

a more accurate number to go by, having factored in payments, which are labor intensive with no product cost.

There are a minimum and maximum number of people that can work in the store at one time. If you need two people in the store at all times to run the store successfully on the slowest days, two team members is the starting point. Even if you sell \$50,000, 10 to 20 times your normal maximum, the store can only fit so many team members in it. Lining the walls with logo shirts will be more in the way than helpful. If five employees would fill every zone in the store, the maximum team members on any shift will be five. Every shift will fit between those two numbers. In the example, the store

will have a minimum of two and a maximum of five team members on every shift. Your store may be one minimum and 10 maximum. You must review how many zones each team member can handle and provide fantastic service.

Use the forecasted sales and the historical labor to find the appropriate number of team members to schedule for each shift. Break it into days.

Now break it into shifts. Normally there are two to three shifts each day. Overlapping shifts allow for breaks. Schedule how many team members it takes to open. Schedule the most team members at the busiest times. Schedule the number of team members needed to successfully run each time of the day. If the busiest hour

is between 5 and 6 p.m., a single team member cannot be scheduled for one hour. Stagger schedules for two of the afternoon team members to be in store until 6 p.m.

Schedule breaks. Breaks should be used as a way for team members to rejuvenate. Require breaks in the middle of their shift. You can ensure there is appropriate coverage during their break and they take their time when they need to relax and regain energy to finish their shift strong.

For example, on Monday, according to the forecasted gross revenue sales, to most successfully staff the store, 22 man hours are allotted. According to a typical Monday, the busiest times are in the middle of the morning and later in the day. Only needing one person to

open and get the store ready, only one person is scheduled. A second person is scheduled to arrive right before the normal morning business arrives at 10 a.m. The first team member will leave at 2 p.m. The second person is there until 5 p.m., while a third has arrived at 4 p.m. The hour overlap allows any communication of the day's events to be transferred. The closer arrives at 5 p.m. and closes all paperwork at 8:30 p.m., having said goodbye to the evening partner at 8 p.m. The busiest times are scheduled with overlapping team members without a loss in coverage for breaks or standing around.

This is subjective to the store's needs and sales. In your model, you may have an hour where three team members would be effective.

Time	8:30 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	11:00 a.m.	Noon	1:00 p.m.	2:00 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	6:00 p.m.	7:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.	8:30 p.m.
Mon	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1

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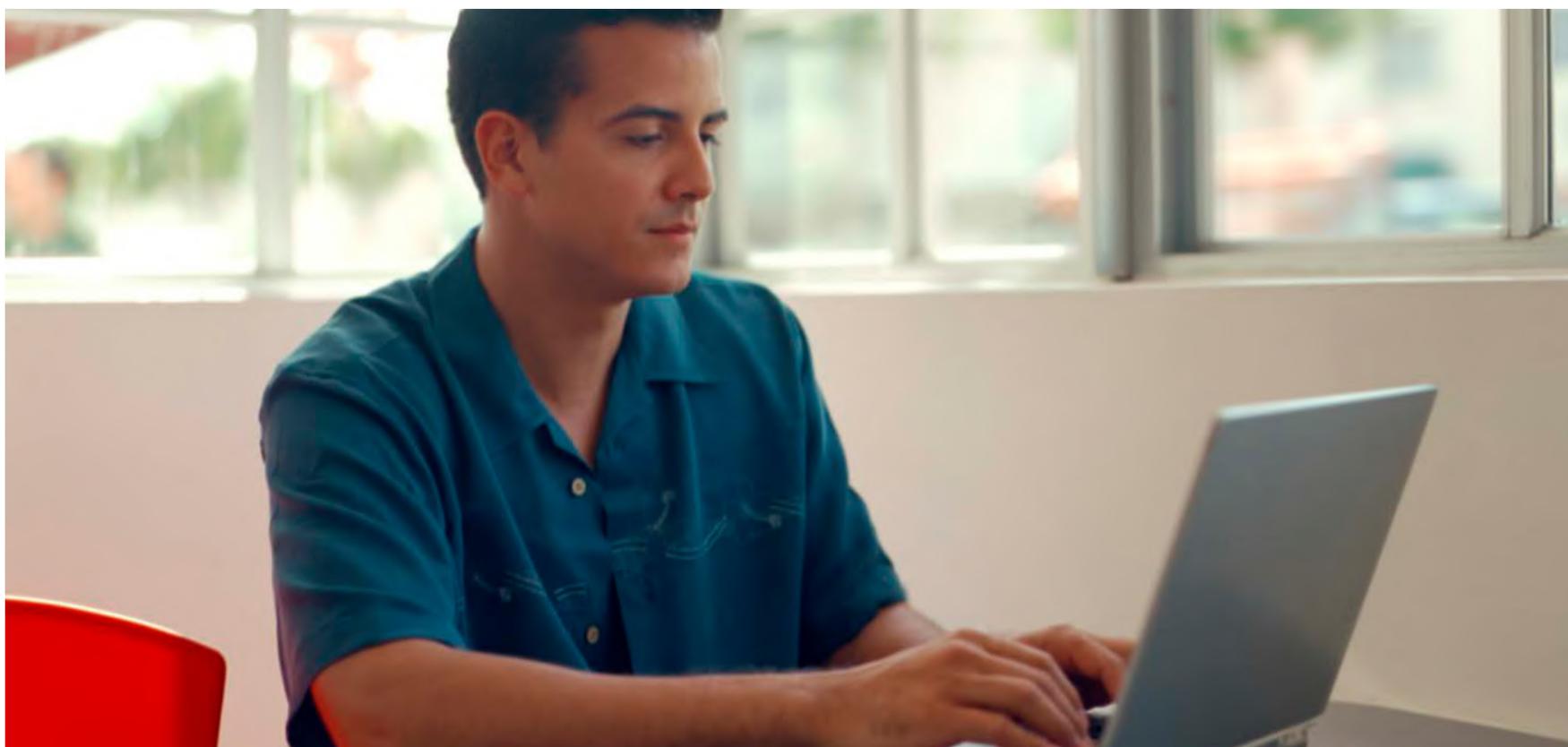
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SCHEDULES ARE SCHEDULED

No permanent schedules. No shifts are entitled. All shifts are the store's shifts and a certain number of team members must be on shift to run a successful shift. The schedule may be similar from week to week, but changing shifts can bring a fresh approach to a different time in the store and a different attitude from the team member.

The leader must know scheduling conflicts. Team members may have classes or childcare criteria. Respect these requests and know they change every semester. To respect the store's schedule, the store must also respect team members' schedules. The store's requirements and the team member's schedule availability must be agreed upon at

the interview and hire. This is a business.

Do not let the team members dictate the schedule. The store must run. The leader manages the store. Use the schedule to place superstars next to new hires. They will learn more. Shake the shifts up so everyone knows how the busiest shifts feel and have the opportunity to make money. The leader can better evaluate everyone. A lower sales maker may or may not be due to slow shifts. High sales makers may or may not be due to busy shifts. Do not penalize superstars by seeing how newer hires perform on busy shifts, but you can lose a potential superstar if you do not have the chance to see how they can perform.

MANAGE THE SCHEDULE

Review labor to watch for potential overtime and emergency call-outs. Overtime can wreck labor plans quickly. If someone is closing in on overtime, first check sales and see if it is justified. Request they leave after the rush to fall below the red zone.

If a team member calls out sick, there should be a plan. Know who can be called each shift. Always have a plan. It is always when there is no plan that something goes wrong.

INVENTORY

Look on the walls, in display cabinets, in the storage room, on the order sheets. There are thousands of dollars tied into inventory in store and in shipment.

Do you know where it is, what is the most popular, and what the next hot thing will be?

COUNTS

How often inventory is counted is a tricky balance. It takes additional man hours of preparation, recording, and evaluating to ensure it is done accurately, but having an accurate count is incredibly important to read trends, prevent and/or investigate theft, and track changes.

Daily counts of the most expensive inventory and comparing them to the sales is a great way to manage sales and team member's sales techniques, but will also help when investigating missing product. If a \$500 phone is missing, do you know when exactly it went missing, who was working, and how busy the day was? Knowing right away may lead to finding the thief or the misplacement, coaching the lack of detail in the team member's count, and scheduling appropriately to avoid a lack of coverage. If the disappearance isn't discovered for a week or month, investigating who and how it went missing becomes difficult or impossible. Even one \$500 device a month becomes a \$6,000 loss by the end of the year. That could be an additional

10 hours a week of labor, a lot of team incentive bonuses, or a fantastic vacation.

A full inventory count weekly helps with ordering, sales tracking, and trending products. If ordering by a guess, there will be bags and bags of unusable covers, car cords, and a stockpile of unpopular devices. Use a spreadsheet or other organizational record and compare the inventory counts to the sales. Do they match? Match them to the month before. What is popular? If all of a sudden zombie decorated phone covers are flying off the shelves, it would be beneficial to check the stock room for enough inventory and order more as needed. If they are not selling, purchasing more would fill the shelves, but not the register.

If you had a stack of hundred dollar bills spread through the store and in the back room, you would know exactly where each bill was. Inventory is no different. They are your stacks of cash. Each one appears on an invoice you must spend stacks of cash on. Missing or overstock cuts into that money.

ORDERING JUST IN TIME

Having a room full of chargers, cabinets filled with covers, and a closet stacked

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with devices will tie up a lot of money. This industry is peculiar. Guess at the next big thing and you may be right. You may be wrong. Order three dozen of everything per store of the “newest and hottest,” or because it is a fantastic price, and you may be stuck with a room full of devices and accessories you cannot give away. But you also do not want to be caught without the newest and greatest when it does hit it big.

Having inventory available just in time is important. The just-in-time (JIT) philosophy can decrease waste by receiving goods only as they are needed. To do so, alert points must be set. If inventory is completed on a regular basis and sales reports are being observed properly, orders can be made on what is being sold, instead of guessing at trends. Forecasting correctly is essential to ordering the right amount of the right products.

Optimally, the store should stock a maximum of 13 to 30 days of inventory. Devices, technology, and “what is hot” changes fast. The store could get stuck with shelves of outdated or “last week

it was the coolest thing” items. By keeping a lower inventory, cash flow can more easily be managed and inventory can be updated.

Ordering JIT can cost slightly more per unit, but you must factor in the lack of waste associated with purchasing large numbers. Deliveries may be more frequent as well. The cost can be offset by negotiating a monetary minimum per month with a purveyor versus a minimum amount of a given product or ordering for multiple locations with one order.

Kmart, a onetime retail giant, filed bankruptcy in 2002. Many experts attributed part of their troubles with customer loss on their late adoption of a Just In Time inventory strategy used by many of its competitors. Customers would enter the store, get a bag of popcorn and an Icee, pass the rows of merchandise, a blue light special or two, and when they would get to the item they came in to buy, the shelf would be bare. Knowing there are other places to shop, they left. And becoming a regular occurrence, people would stay gone. Kmart would sell out

of an item and instead of having systems in place to order additional inventory, the order would be placed late, the item would not be in the store and people would go elsewhere to shop. Kmart has since emerged from bankruptcy, but has not won back all of their past regulars.

Your store needs to be the place to go. If the customer knows the store will have what they are looking for, they will keep coming back. The store will not fall the way of Kmart, still struggling to return.

WHAT'S NEW?

New products are launched all the time and it is hard to know which will be the next superstar. Toys are a great example. Who would have expected chubby baby dolls that supposedly grew in a garden, a talking fur ball, or a digital pet would send customers into hysterics and unbelievably long lines? You are the retailer; you should have a plan to be prepared for the wireless version of this same frenzy. On rare occasion, there will be a line at a

device's launch, dozens of people camped outside the door waiting for a key to turn. But normally, it doesn't happen. But a popular device that leads to popular accessories is realistic. There are ways to predict.

Look for the marketing. What is being hyped by the media? Look through the trade magazines and see what devices keep appearing. Manufacturers send thousands of devices to be reviewed by magazines, newspapers and Internet blogs. This is not cheap. To spend that type of money, they expect big things from it. Ask the manufacturer and carrier reps what the next hero product is, what the devices are that are being pushed in their training and sales incentives. These are the ones they will push with advertising. Be sure to have those devices

and the accessories to go with them. The customer will find it somewhere else if not in your store.

Know the launch dates. It is not helpful to have the phone cases for the newest hero product two weeks after everyone has them. Be prepared on day of launch to promote the device and the accessories to go with them.

Sell down the devices and accessories that will be impacted by the new models. Use specials for the customers and spiffs to the team to get the impacted models off the shelf before the newest model gets to the shelves. Once the newest model arrives, it is more difficult to sell the back stock of the previous model, no matter how many or how few improvements are made on the device.

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TO DO:

- Review the store's sales mix and look for trends. If older, durable flip phone designs are the top seller, review the plan and add more. If small smart phones are low sellers, do not carry seven different small smart phones. If durable cases are the best-sellers, feature them on a wall.
- What are the top five sellers? Look for what they have in common—design, customer base, function—and order more like them.
- What are the bottom five sellers? Look for what they have in common—design, customer type, function—and phase them out.



MONITORING INVENTORY

Have an investment plan. Know which vendors will extend credit and how much the budget allows for inventory. Manage to that number. Order more often to stay stocked without extending over the plan.

Do not order based on one team member saying one customer asked about a product. Several requests are worth looking into. One request may be worth the research, but ordering may not be the right decision for the store and the area.

Monitor and manage the assortment in the store. The store may not need to have every device on the market and every accessory for every device. The shelves will be full, but the goal is to fill the register. Order the right devices and the right amount of different

devices for the area. Monitor what sells and why and order for those customers.

VENDOR MANAGED INVENTORY

Vendors will come to the store and inventory their products, placing orders to meet the store's needs and your designated requirements. They come in every week, count the inventory they provide, and replenish according to the pars you set. This service may cost a little more but there are advantages. The vendor can track trends with your store. They can see what is selling and what isn't in each location. They can ensure the newest hero products have the accessories in store at the launch date. In many contracts, they will buy back products that are not selling well in the store. And by

the vendor taking that piece off of your to-do list, it leaves you more time to conquer the other issues.

CASH FLOW

Learn to manage cash flow that fits into your business model and schedule. A balance sheet is important, but cash flow is essential to running the business. Create a schedule to review the books every week and the details every day. Measure against the numbers from the year before.

Look at the store's P&L monthly; the sales, labor and inventory weekly; and sales metrics daily. If a close eye is not kept on them, they can get away from you quickly. Knowing how the business is doing immediately allows action immediately.



Use the following reports to review

- Operating Statement—fixed expenses and variable expenses
- Profit and Loss Statement—revenues received against associated costs
- Cash Flow Statement—revenues received from multiple sources
- Accounts Receivable Reporting—commissions due to you

Whether you use a simple Excel spreadsheet or sophisticated software, keep track of aging receivables and follow-up as needed.

BUDGET

Whether you have years in the books or 90 days of open doors, begin forecasting sales patterns. The more data and time you have, the more accurate your forecasts should be. Review and revise often. Your forecast should then be able to drive goals, inventory and profit. There will be anomalies—new product launch, maintenance emergencies—but having a plan is needed before revising the plan.

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Income-Expense Statement with Chargeback Adjustments

	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Revenue												
Activations	60.00	75.00	90.00	100.00	120.00	140.00	80.00	60.00	60.00	70.00	80.00	90.00
Retail Revenue	9,000.00	11,250.00	13,500.00	15,000.00	18,000.00	21,000.00	12,000.00	9,000.00	9,000.00	10,500.00	12,000.00	13,500.00
Commissions Earned	15,000.00	18,750.00	22,500.00	25,000.00	30,000.00	35,000.00	20,000.00	15,000.00	15,000.00	17,500.00	20,000.00	22,500.00
Reserve for Chargeback	(3,750.00)	(4,688.00)	(5,625.00)	(6,250.00)	(7,500.00)	(8,750.00)	(5,000.00)	(3,750.00)	(3,750.00)	(4,375.00)	(5,000.00)	(5,625.00)
7th Month CB "roll-in"							200.00	400.00	(200.00)	500.00	(400.00)	350.00
Total Revenue	20,250.00	25,313.00	30,375.00	33,750.00	40,500.00	47,250.00	27,200.00	20,650.00	20,050.00	24,125.00	26,600.00	30,725.00
Expenses												
Equipment Cost	15,000.00	18,750.00	22,500.00	25,000.00	30,000.00	35,000.00	20,000.00	15,000.00	17,500.00	17,500.00	20,000.00	22,500.00
Total Expenses	15,000.00	18,750.00	22,500.00	25,000.00	30,000.00	35,000.00	20,000.00	15,000.00	17,500.00	17,500.00	20,000.00	22,500.00
Net Income	5,250.00	6,563.00	7,875.00	8,750.00	10,500.00	12,250.00	7,200.00	5,050.00	6,625.00	6,625.00	6,600.00	8,225.00
Chargeback Adjustments												
Reserved for Chargeback	3,750.00	4,688.00	5,625.00	6,250.00	7,500.00	8,750.00	5,000.00					
Actual Chargeback	3,550.00	4,288.00	5,825.00	5,750.00	7,900.00	8,400.00	5,150.00					
7th Month CB Adjustment	200.00	400.00	(200.00)	500.00	(400.00)	350.00	(150.00)					

P&L

The profit and loss statement tells you whether or not you are open for the next month, year, and decade. Are the numbers increasing in the right place? Are the numbers decreasing in the right place? The goal is to move as much of the top line to the bottom line. A careful eye and not being afraid to make changes to the sales, labor, and inventory management will keep a smile on your face when reviewing this every month.

Most managers have plenty of experience reviewing and completing a P&L statement, but

it is important for the team to understand what it takes. It is not necessary to make this public or have them review it, but a general understanding of getting the store successful is needed. It is simple to tell the team to watch security or increase sales or turn the right lights off at night, but understanding operations make them a partner in the well-being of the store.

More importantly, you and your leaders need to understand how the individual pieces of the P&L statement affect the store. If the P&L is not reviewed each month, corrections cannot be made.

Below is a sample P&L for review and to compare with the one the store currently uses.



 Profit & Loss Statement

GET IN A RHYTHM

A routine is important when looking over the business and the numbers. Getting into a daily, weekly, and monthly rhythm of reviewing the numbers and business is key to building consistent success and growth.

Every morning, afternoon, and evening should have the same checklist, the same reports, the same meetings. Once you have created a rhythm, it will be more difficult to miss something. Finding a mistake, a theft, an opportunity for growth immediately allows action immediately. Sales goals—reached, exceeded or missed—should be noticed immediately. A marketing plan not working should be acted on quickly. Missing product becomes difficult or impossible to investigate after a month or even days.

As a baseline, get in the rhythm of reviewing the following, but add to it to meet your needs:

Daily

- Sales metrics
- Sales goals
- Daily meetings

Weekly

- Sales
- Labor

- Inventory
- Cash flow
- Weekly meetings

Monthly

- P&L
 - Marketing
 - Monthly meetings
-

HOW DOES THE CARRIER SEE YOU?

The carrier is looking at your business for its long term value. It is being judged how it represents the carrier and how it treats the customer. Your store is also a reflection of the carrier. At one time, the authorized dealer was the bloodline for the carrier, but they now have the know-how and backing to open their own corporate stores and control them successfully without having to share in its profits. As a result, they have eliminated the dealers not providing a value to the brand and raised standards.

Stay on the carrier's good side. The carrier has expectations in the appearance and business sense of each dealer. If you are at the top of the list with the customer, you should be at the top of the carrier's list. They have similar expectations.

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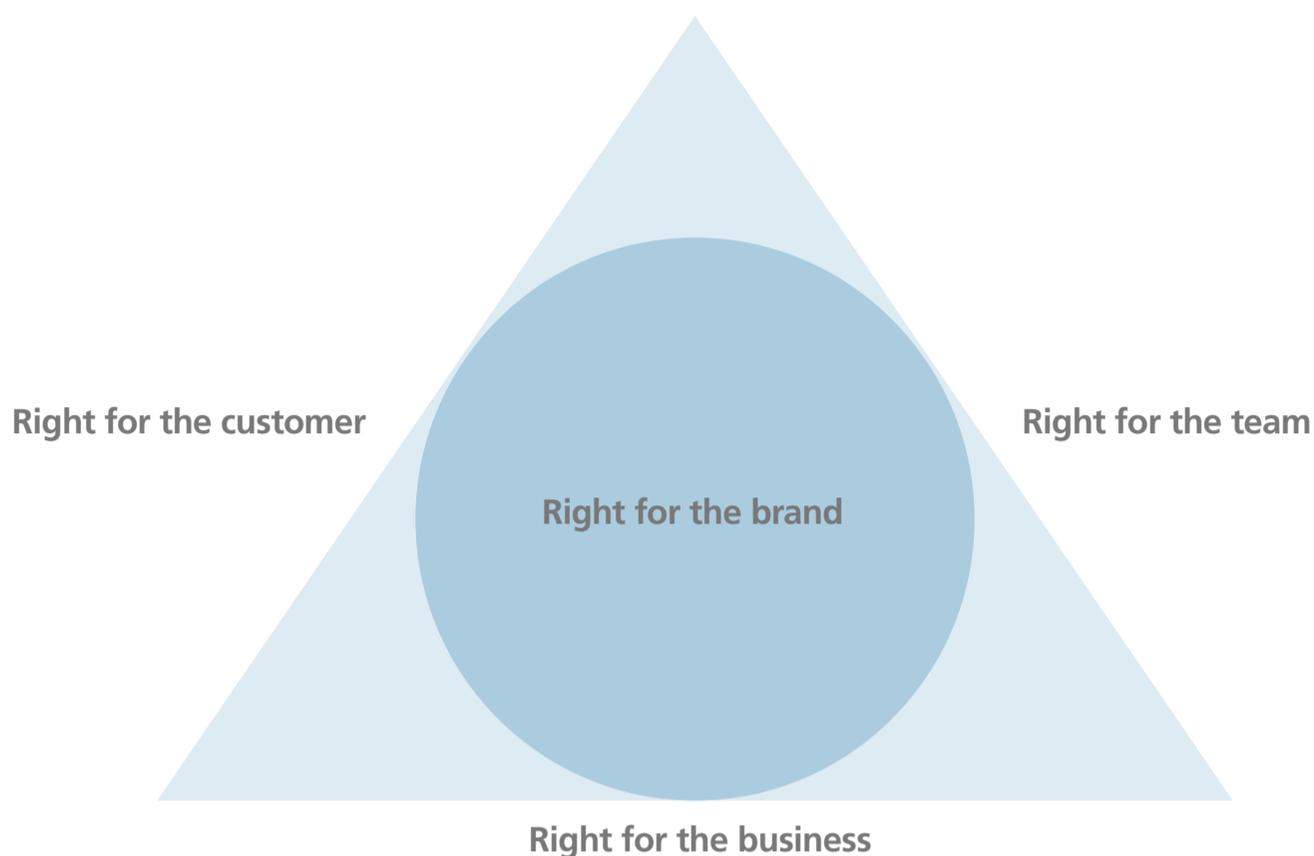
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Think of the decision-making process as an equilateral triangle. The three questions are equal in value. Before making a decision, ask:

1. Is it the right decision for the customer?
2. Is it the right decision for the team?
3. Is it the right decision for the business?

If you can answer “yes” to all three, it is the right decision for the brand. If you cannot answer “yes” to all three, revisit the decision. Find a way to make it work for everyone.

BUSINESS MIRROR

Look at the business—give it a long, hard look. “I’m doing ok” and “It’s going all right” tell nothing. A lot of stores have closed their doors while “doing all right.” You must know how you are doing. Make a plan and monitor it. Share it with the store leaders and give them ownership of its success. Let them know when they do so successfully. This is your business, but this is also their living. They have a vested interest in making sure the store is run well, that the budget is met, and the goals are exceeded.

Review the reports daily and make plans to adjust as needed. The numbers are there. The team is in the store. Use them to find the right story to tell the customers. Take the dollar and bring three quarters to the bottom line. If the three quarters take a dollar spending to get to the bottom, the store’s story will soon be over.

SALES GUIDE

The section is designed for you to share with the members of your sales team. It outlines the basic components of a successful sales transaction and will be useful to novices and superstars alike.

SALES TECHNIQUES

The rent cannot get paid, the payroll checks will bounce, the lights will get turned off, and the store will empty if something does not get sold and money put in the register. How the team does this sets the entire base for the store.

PEOPLE LIKE TO BUY, THEY DO NOT LIKE TO BE SOLD TO

There is a big difference between hard sales and consultative sales. Customers have seen *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Boiler Room*, and possibly even *Cadillac Man* and *The Goods: Live Hard, Sell Hard*. Watch them and have your team watch them, though not as instructional videos. The quick talking, tell you anything you want to hear true or not, sell a lemon to their own grandmother salesperson is the center of all these movies and even though entertaining and some award-winning, is not the way customers

respond today. The real estate, Wall Street stocks, and cars from the movies and wireless service all have something in common. They are all products customers want and/or need and there are multiple people and businesses to provide them. The goal is to become the team to do that, creating a returning customer and an advocate for your store. The hard sell “one and done” closes store doors quickly.

Carmax has created a Fortune 500 company out of the friendly buying experience. Their car lots are no-haggle pricing with sales people helping and answering questions as needed. No high pressure, no lies, all power to the customer. It has also been on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For list for the last several years.

Carmax’s strength lies in realizing the entire decision making power lies with the customer. People like to buy. They have come into your store because they are interested in the products and

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services you offer. They are looking to purchase. They are looking to buy. They are not looking to be sold. To be sold suggests the customer did not need or want a product and it was forced upon them. Even if it is the exact thing the customer needed and wanted, they did not have control over the purchase.

Sales is not a bad word. Bills are paid by sales. The customer knows the store is there to make money. They know the team member's job is to sell items. They are there to purchase something or at least consider it. Today, the customer is looking for a consultant to help them through the process, not shove them through.

THE 7 SALES STEPS

Sales is a process. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Some will claim four steps, some 12. They are similar. They have many of the same concepts and all agree that sales is a process that must be practiced to be mastered. Mastering Wireless Sales (masteringwirelessales.com), an online training system specifically

for the wireless industry, uses a 7 Steps to YES! Wireless-centric approach to get to the sale without micromanaging the process with 15, 20, or 35 steps.

Step 1: P.R.E.P.A.R.E

Step 2: Engage the customer

Step 3: Establish rapport

Step 4: Ask the right questions

Step 5: Make the pitch

Step 6: Close with confidence

Step 7: Handle objections

STEP 1: P.R.E.P.A.R.E

The sale starts before team members open their mouths. In order to make the best impression, they must P.R.E.P.A.R.E themselves for the day.

Personal appearance

Review the product

Equipment in stock

Plans, pricing and promotions

Accessories to add on

Readying the store

Energy

Personal appearance. If a customer refuses to listen because of the team member's appearance, the sale has been lost before they open their mouth. Running out of the house after a night of partying does not make a good first impression. How much care the team member takes in themselves tells the customer a lot about how much care they will take in their job and their service. Personal hygiene, clean and pressed uniform, minimal makeup and fragrances, and fresh breath checks are high on the list.

Review the product. Before you can sell the product, you should know the product. The customer has certain needs and wants. Every product has reasons to purchase it. Some feature cutting-edge technology, with more bells and whistles than a holiday parade. Some are easy to use. Some have a great combination of features. Some are simply the low-cost choice. The choice your customer makes is based on their needs and wants and how that product addresses them. The more you know about a product, the better you will be at matching it to

the right customer. Use manufacturer sell /product sheets and manufacturer websites for additional information. Learning does not end after new hire training. Products are constantly changing and training is needed to keep pace.

Equipment in stock. Look at the inventory on a regular basis. Make it a part of the daily routine. Then recommend to the customer only the wireless devices and accessories in stock. You always want to make a sale today and never want a customer to leave because you recommended something not in stock. They will still buy it, but from somewhere else, making another salesperson very thankful for all your hard work.

Plans, pricing, promotions. The plans are a product. To make the right choice for the customer's needs and budget, you must know the plans, pricing, and promotions being offered. Not knowing can hurt the customer's confidence in you and possibly cost the sale. Review each day for pricing and sales. If there is a difference in a price from the day before or from the website, the customer should not be the first to know.

Accessories to add on. Look at the shelves. There are accessories for everything. Some add function to the product and some are for fun. Like the

rest of the products, know what is in stock and what accessory goes with what product. Be prepared to present accessories with confidence. "Well, I think we have something like that over here, maybe" does not show confidence.

Ready the store. The store needs a good brushing, shower, hair comb, and breath check, too. Stocking, cleanliness, and organization is everyone's responsibility. Look at the store like a customer. Walk in the front door from the parking lot, mall entrance, or dark alley (wherever the entrance is) and look as if a customer. Is there dirt on the floor? Bags and purses on the counter? Water spots on the ceiling tile? Fingerprints on the glass? Toilet paper in the bathroom? Go beyond the obvious. Are the prices right? Is the marketing material up-to-date? Are posters on the wall in good repair? Are they tacked, taped or framed? Take a fresh approach with new eyes. The same things can be easily missed because they are always there. Manicure the store like you would want to see it.

Energy. Your performance on the store floor affects your paycheck in the bank. A good attitude and actually enjoying what you do can always be seen by the customer. A great attitude is everything. Even if an old lady backed into your new

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car in the parking lot, you broke up with your boyfriend/girlfriend/wife/husband, or your pet mouse of 15 years just peacefully passed away in its sleep, leave it at the door. Smile!

Picture a time when you have walked into a store or a restaurant. The employee who does not want to be there, the one that has been contemplating severing a pinky finger just to have an excuse to leave, is obvious. It can be seen before they open their mouth. How much did you want to stay? What was your impression of what your experience was going to be? Do not be that miserable, pinky-less employee. Leave your troubles in the parking lot. Smile!

STEP 2: ENGAGE THE CUSTOMER

First impressions count. Old saying, but still stands true.

Get out from behind the counter, make eye contact, and smile. Use open body language. More is said from nonverbal communication than through the vocal chords.



TO DO:

Try the following greetings and add ones that work for you. It is important to greet with energy and sincerity.

- How can I help you?
- What brings you in today?
- How is your day doing?
- Compliment attire or accessories. Be careful to only compliment safe topics—sports attire, purses, jewelry, shoes.
- Good morning/afternoon/evening.
- Beautiful day today.
- Finding any good deals in the mall?
- Have you heard about (our great deal) (our promotion) (the new device/product)?

Do not cross your arms or stand with hands in your pocket. It looks closed and suggests you have no desire to talk to others. Think of a big hug. Do not actually hug the customer, not without prior permission, but imagining a big hug will lead to great open body language.

If in a kiosk or high traffic location, the customer may be going 45 to 50 miles an hour. Your goal is to get the customer to stop and to make a memorable impression. Getting their attention for just a

moment can be difficult, but doing so well is not impossible. It can be as simple as making eye contact, smiling, and saying hello.

The greeting is your way of welcoming the customer to your store. There are many ways to greet customers. Some are good, some bad. Regardless of what type of retail environment you are in, be genuine and say something compelling.

Beware of the dreaded “Can I help you?” It evokes an automatic “No, just looking.” It is taught in customer school. It has become an ingrained response. The customer may have come in very specifically for help for a specific item. They know they need help. They know the employee in the store can help them, but when asked, “Can I help you?” it comes out without thinking. The answer can be heard when it doesn’t apply. Greeting: “How are you today?” Response: “No, just looking.” Stay away from it.

**TO DO:**

Build rapport with the customer while gaining additional information you may use during qualifying and presenting the right products.

- How is your day going?
- What have you been doing today?
- Compliment something visible—car, shopping bag, children.
- Compliment team attire.
- Where did you get your (jacket, shoes, sweater, purse, watch, necklace)? My girlfriend/wife/mom/aunt/cousin/boyfriend/husband would love it.
- Is this your first time here?
Or, welcome back.

QUESTIONS V STATEMENTS

Questions are more effective than statements. Statements are easily dismissed. And when asking the question, make it an open-ended question, one that cannot be answered by a simple “yes” or “no.” Get their attention, get them talking, get them thinking.

Be aware of the surroundings and the type of environment the store is in. A mall location has different challenges than a standalone store. It is unknown if the customer is there to browse, wander, or buy. Treat them the same. They may not buy today, but may later.

In a standalone location, the customer has made an effort to get there. They have chosen to go to that location. Greet a customer as soon as they walk in. It could be a simple, “Hello, I will be right with you,” but never ignore the customer.

As in all parts of the sales process, greetings should be practiced. Find what greetings may work for others and try those.

STEP 3: ESTABLISH RAPPORT

Many of the concepts of making friends and building rapport with a customer are the same. The key here is to take what you already understand about getting someone to trust you and apply it to your customer.

Part of the sales process is asking the customer questions. In order to get useful information and not simply a “yes” or “no”, they must feel comfortable answering your questions. They must feel comfortable with you. Ask and listen to their answers.

Unfortunately, most salespeople skip this step, going right from the greeting to asking questions about their product and service needs. Sometimes they go

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from greeting to making their presentation, skipping multiple steps.

Introduce yourself and get their name. Use their name in the conversation. People love hearing their name. Use it at least three times. Ask them questions they know and feel comfortable with. By doing this, they will trust you in answering questions about the products and services you offer and suggest. Ask them about their life.

PEOPLE BUY FROM PEOPLE THEY TRUST

People buy from people they trust. And they recommend people they trust to other customers. You want them to trust you. That trust is built through finding common ground. They need to feel connected to you and you to them. Be sincere and talk from the heart. Do not lie. One lie, and anything else said, regardless how truthful and open, is destroyed.

STEP 4: ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Qualifying a customer is one of the most important parts to making the sale. You have a shelf full of products and plans but for you to get one of them into your customer's hands or into their shopping bag, you must find the right one for them. If you suggest something without gathering information first, you are no longer the superstar you presented yourself to be and you will appear to be another pushy salesperson

Qualifying Question	What to listen for	Possible solutions
What phone do you use now?	The technology they are comfortable with.	High-technology or Low-technology depending on comfort
What do you like and not like about it?	The features they want to repeat and those they want improvement on	Device(s) that have the best of what they like and the solution for what they did not like
What do you use your phone for now?	<p>Presentations, spreadsheets, conference calls, business cards, schedules/calendars = Mobile workplace/ business user</p> <p>Games, Internet research, video chat, apps, instant social media updates = Innovator/cool customer</p> <p>Watch movies, stream video, listen to music = Mobile entertainment center customer</p> <p>Children use it = Family customer</p>	<p>Business user = heavier processing power for spreadsheets and presentations, larger data and minutes plans for conference calls; additional device for group Wi-Fi tethering or plan/device ability to tether multiple users. Presenting video conferencing may be a bonus.</p> <p>Innovator/cool customer = more processing speed for games; higher resolution for pictures and instant updating of social media sites; plan/ device that allows tethering of Internet or second device; larger memory for videos, pictures and music; Bluetooth accessories.</p> <p>Family customer = multiple devices backup battery accessories; waterproof/durability case for children incidents.</p> <p>Mobile entertainment center customer = high resolution screen and camera; higher processing speed for videos and games; good battery life or additional backup battery accessories; Bluetooth accessories for music/video; large memory for videos, pictures and music.</p>

Qualifying Question	What to listen for	Possible solutions
What does your current wireless plan include?	Minutes and data plan specifics of current plan. What they may actually need	Choose the right minutes and data plans needed
Where do you live? How is your wireless signal at your house? At work?	Signal strength	If multiple carriers are offered, which is the best in their area
Do you use your phone for work? What kind of work do you do?	If they are a business user	Device(s) with heavier processing power for spreadsheets and presentations, larger data and minutes plans for conference calls; additional device for group Wi-Fi tethering or plan/device ability to tether multiple users. Presenting video conferencing may be a bonus.
Do you travel often? Where?	Where they travel. If they use the wireless device as a work station or entertainment hub when in airports, etc. If they use their wireless device as a GPS navigator	International travel = international plans. Using as a mobile workplace or entertainment center could mean higher resolution screen, heavier data usage and backup battery accessories.
Do you host meetings outside of the office?	How many people on one device	May need an Internet device that can tether several team members and a larger data plan
How often do you watch videos or listen to music online? What do you usually watch or listen to?	What type of media do they watch and listen to	Device(s) with high resolution screen and camera; higher processing speed for videos and games; good battery life or additional backup battery accessories; Bluetooth accessories for music/video; large memory for videos, pictures and music.
How many phones do you have on your plan? Do you have a husband/wife/children on your plan? What do they use their phones for? Any gamers in the family?	Multiple users with different needs. Questions about each users preferences is needed. See types of users above for individual uses	Additional devices. See types of users above for individual solutions
How often do you update your social media sites (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, etc.)?	The type of user and media usage they use	May need larger data plan. Device with higher resolution camera and video
Do you take a lot of pictures/video with your phone?	The type of user and media usage they use	May need larger data plan. Device with higher resolution camera and video
What are your favorite apps?	The type of user and media usage they use	Device with larger processing speed, higher resolution screen (depends on apps) (team member must be familiar with most popular apps)

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stereotype trying to make a buck. Find out their needs and wants and supply those.

People usually know what they want and need. Even if they don't understand the latest technology or what is on the market to fill those needs. They may not know how it works and what it can do for them. The way to identify those needs is to ask the right questions.

OPEN AND CLOSED QUESTIONS

There are two types of questions: open-ended questions and closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions cannot be answered with a quick "yes" or "no." They open the customer to reveal an entire answer. They have to think. It becomes more conversational. Many times, the customer will reveal all the information you need to make the right suggestions if asked the right couple of questions. Then listen. Salespeople get so excited when they think they know what the customer wants and needs, they forget to listen for what the customer wants

and needs. Ask and pause. Let them answer. And listen.

Have a genuine interest in what they have to say, to what their needs are, to how you can help them. The sales process becomes a conversation and the customer will feel more connected to you, creating a trust in your suggestions later.

- What phone do you use now?
- What do you like and not like about it?
- What do you use your phone for now?
- What does your current wireless plan include?

Closed-ended questions can be answered by a simple "yes" or "no." At times, these are effective in getting information quickly, but ask permission first and if possible, follow up with an open-ended question.

- Do you mind if I ask you a few questions to get a better idea of your needs?

The customer has now given permission to ask quicker, needs based questions.

- Do you use your phone for

work? What type of work do you do?

The closed question was followed by an open question to better explore the work needs of the device.

ASK AND LISTEN.

Many of the questions below can be answered by asking a couple open-ended questions and listening. Let the customer answer and open up. Writing down answers to help form product(s) choices will demonstrate you are paying attention.

STEP 5: MAKE THE PITCH

Now the solution to the customer's needs and wants. Do not skip the qualifying questions and go straight to the pitch.

"Hello. You are looking for a new phone? This is my favorite. The Acme 1,000,000 is the newest and the greatest. It can virtually see into your brain and react without you saying a word. Internet searches, phone calls and ordering your favorite coffee from Starbucks all with just a thought. I know you are going to love it."

How does the salesperson know any of this is important to the customer? Without qualifying them, the presentation is just a bunch of words. And does the salesperson know if the customer

is going to understand the words? Are they tech savvy? The presentation must match the customer's comfort level with technology and their needs and wants.

The worst item they can be sold is the salesperson's "favorite." It is great if the customer's needs match the salesperson's, but most of the time, they will not, making their "favorite" too much or too little for the customer.

You said...

The customer has revealed their needs and wants by answering qualifying questions. The salesperson has put together the right products and plans to meet those needs. The most powerful presentation is repeating the same needs and wants the customer just said.

"You said you are on the road a lot. And you said you need to be able to access the Internet on a fast connection across the country. This phone has one of the fastest processors on the market and the plan has the largest 4G coverage in the country, so you can get online fast and stay fast wherever you travel."

BENEFITS NOT FEATURES

Use benefits not features. Features are listed on the side of the box or on spec sheets. Benefits are how they affect the customer. Not everyone understands camera megapixels and processor gigahertz, but they do understand "really sharp pictures when transferred to your computer" and "programs will load incredibly quick." Tell the story about how that feature translates to fulfilling their need.

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LIVE DEVICES

Live handsets and products are powerful through the presentation. No matter how old, customers become big kids when there are toys, especially high tech ones. Get the device in the customer's hands to launch functions and start programs. They will more easily see how it will benefit them.

CONFIDENCE

The number one tool in any step, especially in the presentation, is confidence. Be confident. If you listened to the customer and based the recommendation on their needs and not just making it up, there is no reason not to be confident. Let the customer know you are confident.

"I am sure this fits all of your needs."

"I am confident you are going to love this tablet."

STEP 6: CLOSE WITH CONFIDENCE

Sixty-two percent of all sales people will not even ask for the sale. It is shocking a salesperson will research the products, greet a customer with enthusiasm, build rapport, ask the right questions to form the right suggestions, and present them with confidence, and if the customer does not say "I'll take it," they will let them walk out the door with only a sales pitch and a brochure.

Ask for the close and be sure you have asked. Many salespeople believe they have, when in fact they only suggested or hinted at the customer buying. Why does a salesperson not ask for the close? Fear. They are afraid the customer is going to say "no." It's not the girl/boy next door you have had a crush on for years. It shouldn't break your heart if they say no a sale.

A big secret in sales: Customers expect the salesperson to ask them to buy. They have come in, answered questions to get to their needs, listened to the presentation, tried the device...they are interested. Ask for the sale. They expect it.

BUYING SIGNS

Brad worked in a kiosk at the mall, selling laptops and USB Internet devices. A customer walked directly to the kiosk, walking past store after store, the USB Internet device the obvious destination.

"I really like this," the customer informed Brad, pointing at the Internet device.

Brad informed the customer of all the technical specs on the USB stick, the requirements the computer needed, where it worked and didn't work, how fast it theoretically could upload and download the material, how the industry has changed and the difficulties the customer might have with loading the software needed for the USB to work on the computer and the glitches that might happen while in motion.

The customer looked defeated and walked away, no bag, no mobile Internet in hand. He was ready to buy, but Brad talked him out of it.

Do not talk the customer out of a sale. The sales process is over when they are ready to buy. A store full

of Brads may know the products and all the features attached. A store full of Brads may be able to inform every customer of every spec on the box and may even know how it can benefit them, but that store, full of Brads, do not know when to close. Bills are paid on sales, not on a never-ending presentation.

Know when to close your mouth and ring the sale. Look for the buying signs. They may have done their research, know exactly what they want and are ready with their credit card in hand. They may have been convinced by the first few questions. Listen for the buying signs, stop pitching and close the sale.

Common buying signs:

- "I'll take it."
- "I like this a lot."
- "How much is this one?"
- Turns to a friend or family member, "What do you think?"
- Looks very absorbed in using the device.
- Customer is smiling a lot at using the device or agreeing with the salesperson's suggestions.

The five most effective closes

1. The direct close
2. The soft close

3. The assumptive close
4. The either/or close
5. The bonus close

THE DIRECT CLOSE

The direct close is exactly what it sounds like. Just ask them to make the purchase. The "You said..." statements are a powerful tool with the direct close. Repeat what the customer stated as needs and wants and then ask for the sale. Make it direct so the customer is clear you are asking for the sale. It's really part question and part statement. Ask the question as though the expected answer will be "Yes."

"You said you're on the road a lot for business and need to access the Internet. This one does all that, so shall I write you up?"

THE SOFT CLOSE

The soft close is not really a close, but more a verification they were shown the right product. When they verify they like it, they are closed more directly with one of the other closing types.

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“Would you like to access your client data no matter where you travel?”

“Yes.”

“This does just that. Shall we ring you up?”

THE ASSUMPTIVE CLOSE

The assumptive close assumes the sale. The assumptive close signals to the customer they have been offered the perfect product for them and that it is time to buy. The only questions are, “how many?” and if they “want all the accessories with it?”

“Let’s get you rung up.”

“How many do you need?”

“Would you like the case with that?”

THE EITHER/OR CLOSE

The either/or close is one that seems less like a close and drives the customer to say “I’ll take it.” The customer is shown two different products during the presentation, but at that time is

not asked for a choice. The close asks them which of the two they prefer.

The either/or close lets the customer feel like they were not closed, but that they are making the purchasing decision.

“Which one do you want?”

“Would you like the first one or the second one?”

“Shall I get it for you in white or red?”

THE BONUS CLOSE

The bonus close is not always available, but when it is, it’s a powerful one. Manufacturers or the company will make a bonus available when the customer buys a certain product. These are usually in the form of an additional mail-in rebate or a gift with purchase. Either of these can lower the cost or increase the perceived value for the customer. Offering the customer a bonus to buy can clinch the deal.

“Today, I can offer a free case for starting new service.”

“Buy today and I can offer a \$100 mail-in rebate.”

“I have a no-activation-fee special happening.”

STEP 7: HANDLING OBJECTIONS

You followed the steps, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and you made sure that you asked for the sale, but the customer does not take out their wallet. The customer hesitates. The customer calls for a timeout. They throw out an objection.

An objection is not a “no.” An objection is a statement of interest. They just need a little more information to close the sale. Be happy for objections. It means they are still interested. If they weren’t, they would have walked away already.

Most of the time, the objections are the same.

- Spouse—I have to ask someone else (spouse/family member/girlfriend/boyfriend).
- Money—I don’t think I can afford it.

Activities/Lifestyle	Accessories
Watch videos, listen to music	Headphones/ear buds, backup battery, wireless charger, case
Have children	Durable case, screen protector, backup battery, wireless charger
Travel	Case, extra home phone charger, car phone charger, backup battery, wireless charger, car mount for easier GPS view, Bluetooth headphone
Like to be unique	Unique case, device pouch, car cord
Run out of battery	Backup battery, wireless charger, extra home/car chargers
Drop device(s) often	Durable case (possible waterproof), screen protector
Play games, lots of apps	Headphones/ear buds, backup battery
Take pictures	Case, lens/screen cleaner
Outdoor activities	Durable waterproof case, screen protector, backup battery

- Competitor—I am looking around/ shopping around.
- Time—I don't have the time right now.
- Credit—I have terrible credit. I would never get approved.

them correctly. You do not want to answer the wrong question.

Empathy is powerful. "I understand" will go a long way. It will show the customer you care and you understand their concerns.

- Spouse—"You want to talk to your wife? I can understand. I'm married, too. The queen needs to be happy."
- Money—"You are concerned by the cost? I understand, money is tight everywhere."
- Competitor—"You are looking around right now? I get that. I want you to make the right decision for you and your family."
- Time—"You are on a tight schedule? No problem. I do not want you to be late."
- Credit—"You are a bit worried about the credit check. I wish I did not understand. Your credit cannot be worse than mine."

HAVE A PLAN

To handle objections, you must have a plan. Do not plow through it like a bull at full stride. Handle it with the customer.

To handle any objection, use these four simple steps:

1. Restate and cushion
2. Find the true objection
3. Respond
4. Close

1. RESTATE AND CUSHION

Restate the customer's objection and empathize. This will show the customer you were listening and verifies you heard

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2. FIND THE TRUE OBJECTION

The objection stated is not necessarily the true objection. Customers usually only have one issue stopping them from making the purchase. They may not have to ask their spouse, it may be a money objection or a time objection. They may be in a contract now or planning to shop around. Find out which one matters most to them. How do you do this? Take the easiest route. Ask and listen.

- Spouse—“Letting your wife know about this great deal is that the only thing holding you back right now?”
- Money—“Fitting this into your budget? Is that the only concern holding you back right now?”
- Competitor—“Is making sure you are getting the best deal your only concern?”
- Time—“Having enough time to get this in the system and getting you to the movie to meet your friends—is that the only thing holding you back?”
- Credit—“Is your credit the only thing you are questioning right now?”

3. RESPOND

Now that you fully understand what is holding the customer back from the purchase, it is time to respond to the objection.

The most important thing is to respond confidently. Prepare your answers. Ninety-eight percent of the objections will be the same handful—Spouse, Money, Competitor, Time, Credit. You will have heard them before. You will have answered them before. You will be prepared and confident. But just because you have answered them before, do not argue with the customer. They will automatically become defensive and close you out. If you have clarified and isolated the correct objection, you are answering the issue they have and not answering the wrong objection.

You may need to extend your qualifying questions to find what additional information they need.

- Spouse—“What questions do you think your wife might have I can help you answer?” or “Is she with you or can we call her to make sure she has all the information you need to make

the right decision for your family?”

- Competitor—“Who else are you looking at?” “What else are you finding?”

Address the questions and concerns, then respond. Most responses can be formed by using the value proposition. How does your service add value to the customer? How does it save them money and give them added convenience and luxury to their life?

“I can get you out of here today with no money out of pocket. Just remember with our special right now, you get free activation and this great price will be locked down for you for the entire year. Plus you save money because you won’t be paying extra fees for your data usage. And as you stated, the added benefits are perfect for your business needs on the road and for keeping you connected. No money out of pocket today, better product for less money, and the right data plan for your needs. So let’s save you some money.”

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4. CLOSE

You answered the objection, ask for the sale again. If another objection comes after asking for the close, follow the same steps to handle it—restate and cushion; find the true objection; respond; close. If they have another objection, restate and cushion, find the true objection, respond, and close. Repeat.

How many times do you try and close? Until they walk away. If they keep objecting without saying “no” and walking away, they are still interested. They are usually convinced, but need to know how to sell it to someone else, like a spouse, or justify the expense to themselves. Handle the objections and keep asking for the sale.

SELLING ABOVE AND BEYOND

Stores are making less money on phone sales. Creating bigger, better, faster devices cost the manufacturers more. Stores are getting less in commissions, making it essential to the bottom line to look beyond just device sales to be profitable.

ACCESSORY SALES

Too many stores will sell the devices and then the accessories. Work them into the conversation as the accessories benefit the customer. If the customer travels a lot, place an extra charger in front of them. If they put their tablet in a purse or backpack, a cover would be beneficial. If they use the tablet for presentations, a cover with a built in stand would help. Take them off the wall, out from behind the counter and place in front of or on the device. Showing the customer how it can benefit them in a real setting is more effective than just describing it.

INSURANCE AND EXTENDED WARRANTIES

Devices break. They are compact with a lot of components, glass, and buttons. Insurance or extended warranties, covering items beyond the manufacturer defects, can benefit the customer in how they help with the repair or replacement when the device jumps off a table, gets child- or dog-attacked, or caught in the rain. Different insurances and warranties cover different percentages of different

accidents. Knowing the differences is important.

Selling it becomes easy. First, ask everyone. Best Buy has created an entire industry for adding a two year extended warranty for just \$x.xx. Ask if they have ever cracked the glass on their phone, dropped it, spilled water on it. Almost everyone, at some point, has, even if they do not want to divulge the actual details of how. Tell a story of how someone you know—whether it is actually you or not can be a secret—broke, dropped, flushed, or mangled their phone, tablet, or wireless device. If the customer has not done the same thing, they know someone who has. Now explain the price difference between purchasing a new, no manufacturer rebated device and the extended warranty. It's much easier to come up with \$100, than \$500, \$600 or \$700 to replace the device.

STAY WIRED IN

The wireless retail industry is ever changing. It is up to you to stay current and stay in tune. Apply the business knowledge and determination you have built and tell the store's story. Build a team to do the same.

FALLING BEHIND

Do not fall behind. Technology is changing fast. In only 30 years, the industry has gone from suitcase-sized analog wireless phones to multi-functioning computers that fit in a pocket. Smartphones are getting more advanced, tablets are fully functioning laptop computers, mobile hot spots are faster and reach further. It is essential to stay current on technology, the new product launches, and the rumors in the industry. Customers should not be the first to inform the store of a new phone, a release of a phablet, or naming

something a "phablet."

For a long time, Circuit City had the most educated and up-to-date team. They required, during work hours, for employees to shop other stores, catalogs, and trade magazines to find the newest and greatest in consumer technology. They would then share their findings in their department through internal news or gossip. The result was a place for customers to ask questions about not only what Circuit City had, but what else was in the area or coming on the market.

Your store can become a place for customers to find out the latest

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TO DO:

Create a white board for the back of the office, out of sight from the public. Have sections for new products and their launch dates, rumors of new devices and products and technology events in the area. Include the competition's take on the newest and greatest in devices and promotions. This is then updated by the Technology Gossip Guru.

information on new products and rumors. Showing the team's passion about technology and the wireless industry can make the store the "go to" for information. Name a team member the Technology Gossip Guru. They should be an innovator, someone interested in the newest items and the first to introduce and/or purchase an item. They can post updates, confirmed and rumored. Use a board in the back of the store and give them time during weekly and/or monthly meetings. Make it a challenge for someone not in the Technology Gossip Guru seat to outdo the found updates or rumors. Make it a rotating position, where one can win over the position. Friendly perks help encourage friendly competition.

Places to find technology updates and rumors:

- CEA.com—Consumer Electronics Association

- [Wired](#), [Mashable](#) and [Wireless Week](#) - Technology blogs
- iqmetrix.com—IQ Metrix
- [Wireless Retail Magazine](#)
- Technology Review magazine
- Manufacturer websites

CEA is your resource to build a life in the wireless industry and to give back. The best practices are there. *Winning at Wireless Retail Success Guide* is just a point in the process. The real world practices to create a superstar team, sound wireless retail strategies, tips from the field, true life examples, and ways to add more to your bottom line starts here and continues with your application and evolution. The wireless industry is a beast, but with CEA, and a lot of work and determination, the monster is yours.



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