



2012 The Year of the “E”

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The Year of the Dragon, the Last Year of the Maya Calendar, the Year of Recession. 2012 has been given more tags as a year than any other this decade. In my mind this is the year of the “E”. So many of the business challenges and opportunities that face businesses this year seem to start with the letter “E”

The “E” Words

If you are planning to have a successful year, think about all the “E” factors that can help you and your team make a difference in 2012.

1 Enthusiasm

More and more consumers are shopping online. The Christmas of 2011 was the year when online shopping became part of the normal shopping habits for many consumers. One of the reasons for this shift was that in the eyes of the consumer many retail shopping journeys had become boring. They would walk into a store and be confronted by sales staff who seemed disinterested in them and the products they were selling. The retailers who did have a successful Christmas are the same ones that will have a successful 2012; they understand that enthusiasm is contagious. If they are enthusiastic about dealing with the consumer and the products that they sell then this will become infectious and the consumer will start talking about their store to their friends.

2 Experiences

This leads onto the next “E” word. The consumer is time poor and when they do go shopping they are going for the experience. Many of the products we sell can now be purchased a lot easier online. If they are going to come to your store to purchase the product they are looking for an experience. A memorable journey that they will want to repeat.

3 E-Retailing

Time limitations have become a major problem for our multitasking consumers. They have their favourite brands and stores and they do not want substitutes. They want to come to your store when they have time for the experience, but when they have limited time they want to go online and get the same product from the same store. E-Retailing is now part of the retail mix. The retailers who do not have an E store will start to lose market share.

4 Entertainments

Successful retailing has moved on from just selling “stuff”. The consumer now wants to be entertained. If they have a young family they also want you to entertain their children. The stores that provide the best all round entertainment will be the ones preferred by the savvy customer. Entertainment needs to be varied, this means working closely with a range of local entertainers to provide a variety of styles of entertainment that are in keeping with what you do and what the consumer will enjoy

5 Events

This means that to keep the customer coming back you will need to create events to keep your store “top of, mind” in the consumers mind. Events planning based on the seasons and local activities will become crucial. The American retail scene now relies on up to 13 events a year to keep the customer coming back to the shopping mall

6 Education

Consumers want to learn new skills. The new consumer is a “Do It Themselves” consumer and prepared to experiment. They want to look on you as their local expert who can teach them new skills. Your education programme can become a new profit centre for the business. Education can be developed on site and off site using social media to enable the consumer to learn from you at a time that suits them

7 Expert

Over the last few years the retail scene has got over crowded, there are too many retailers selling the same thing. The retailers who will take the high ground are those that become the experts in the consumers mind. There is only room for one expert in what you do in your community and this is a position you need to focus on obtaining in the consumers mind.

8 Evangelist

You need to become the advocate for what you do .Consumers are looking for leaders that are passionate, you need a team of enthusiasts, but as the team leader you need to be the Evangelist and sell the message to your team and to the community. You need to be recognised by the media as the expert, an expert s who is passionate and providing new ideas, solutions and understands the consumer’s challenges.

9 Experiment

In the year of the “E: you will need to experiment, try new things. The old way will not work; we will all need to find new ways of doing what we used to do. The winners will be open to experiment and to find ways of creating new journeys for the consumer.

10 Emotion

In January, William Taylor from Harvard Business School gave a talk at the ANLA Clinic in Louisville, Kentucky; he introduced the word Emotion a number of times into his presentation. He talked about the fact that emotion and social contact with your customers is more important than price. That to be memorable you need Passion+ Emotion+ Identity. He mentioned that there was a shortage of business that are delighting the consumer and that retailers needed to get a lot more emotional with their consumers if they were to survive the Age of disruption.

Think about how you will develop the year of the “E” and how you can make a difference in your consumers mind.

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