



# WE USED TO QUEUE IN THE OLD DAYS

We have five grandchildren and I can imagine some of the conversations we will have with them in years to come.

One of those conversations is that we will tell them we used to shop at the supermarket and then queue in a line to pay money before then leaving the shop. I can see the kids looking at us with puzzled looks saying, "Why did you queue?"

I realise some retailers will read this and will argue the queue is here to stay, but I beg to differ, the queue is becoming a thing of the past. In 2017 3.4 billion pounds are lost in the UK due to customers looking at queues in shops and leaving the product in the store and shopping elsewhere. The queue is becoming a thing of the past.

The queue is a relatively new phenomenon, it really started after the second world war in retailing when customers had to queue to get rationed foods or products in short supply. The new consumer is not prepared to wait, especially when they can go online to obtain the same product and get it delivered to their door.

The "Pain Point" will not be tolerated in the Future. In retailing the checkout queue is one of the worst "pain points" in the customers journey and research reported by Adrian Lee in the International Express July 12 2017 indicated that 25% of Brits will now leave a store without buying if they see a queue.

The 1960's invention in Sweden of the dispenser machine for numbers at deli's started the trend to stop queues, this was taken to the next stage with the zig zag line being introduced into some queue situations in the 1980's. The virtual queue has now arrived with the arrival of the text message.

According to the research brits queue for 52 days of their life or 333million hours a year as a population. This is like the queuing rate in Singapore and Canada. Australian's may queue less, but the trend is still to not queue

The research carried out by Adrian Furnham at University College London provided the "six" tips for mastering the art of queuing:

1. The average tolerance rate in a queue in the UK is 6 minutes
2. People will not join a queue of more than 6 people if they can avoid it
3. In the UK people leave a 6 inches gap between themselves in a queue.

The consumer of today is "Queue shy" and this factor alone will cause changes in the way retailing develops. I am sure my grandchildren will not tolerate the queue and have no need to in a modern retail world. ■

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