NEW STRAITS TIMES
THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 2017
klassifieds
www.1k.com.my | 1300 808 123 (Local) +603 2299 6000 (International)

SUBSCRIBE NOW!
digital edition
NST DIGITAL + DIGITAL BH + HM e-Paper
http://subscription.nstp.com.my
1300 22 6787

The "Yes" syndrome among salespeople

WHEN I moved to Malaysia in 2002, I was looking for items to purchase for my house, such as furniture, a washing machine, electrical appliances and linen. I therefore visited a lot of shops.

It came to my attention that the first word that came out of salespeople's mouths was the word "Yes". At first, I thought they were doing a promotion for a certain service, but it was not the case.

Being new to the Malay language, I grabbed my dictionary and look up the word "Yes". However, there was no translation for the word in English. I concluded that "Yes" was an actual greeting.

After a while, I started to learn that the word "Yes" stands for many things:

1. Good morning. How are you?
2. Can I help you?
3. How are you today?
4. Welcome to the shop.

It is simply the short version to all of the above to save the salespeople from uttering too many words.

"Yes" is commonly used as a national greeting.

I guess that makes it simple for customers to understand that they have the sales person's attention.

Once the word "Yes" is spoken, you can address the salespeople and ask them any question you need to ask.

Don't be hopeful that more words will come because you will wait in vain.

Sometimes, I think that the "Yes" syndrome is due to the lack of basic training that salespeople should receive.

Observe the body language that accompanies the "Yes" being spoken. This can go from rolling eyes, which means "You are annoying me", to a deep sigh, which means "You have interrupted me during my Facebook check". I have even seen salespeople crossing their arms to look more aggressive. Also, please note that the "Yes" greeting can be expressed in different tones.

Some salespeople even go so far as to, not even look up from their phones when they say "Yes". Do not be alarmed because these people can look in both directions at the same time.

You will also learn that after they say "Yes", the conversation is almost at an end. If you expect a fruitful conversation, I suggest you bring a family member or a friend.

Once you have managed to purchase whatever it is that you need, you must also not expect a "Goodbye" or "Thank you" for coming afterwards. Just quietly leave the shop and be glad that you have the items you were looking for.

It seems the situation is getting worse every day. I have been in Malaysia for 14 years, and being a customer service trainer, I monitor this situation closely. I have seen shops close due to the fact that the salespeople were not friendly, or even rude.

"Amazing Race Asia"

Lately, we have entered what I like to call the "Amazing Race Asia" (not to be confused with the actual television programme). The reason for that is that as a customer, you must go and seek what you need yourself.

If you expect a salesperson to help you, give advice on a product or help you make the right decision, you are grossly mistaken.

I have my own system, which works very well. If I'm in need of a product, I will go on the Internet and find out everything that I can and watch at reviews on YouTube. Then, I will proceed to the shop and asked the owner to sell me the item. There is a 50 per cent chance that they will tell me they don't have that particular product. But as I am already prepared, I will look around and try to find it myself. Usually, I do find it, and the salesperson would reply: "Oh, that one?"

Ergo "Amazing Race Asia"

Recently, customer service is a take-it - or - leave-it situation.

Sometimes, I see frustrated customers before me and I ask them, "Why do you accept it?" "Why do they just keep quiet". The answer is usually the same: We Malaysians are very tolerant. That's another thing that puzzles me. When people walk all over you, ignore you, are rude to you and, give you wrong advice, and you don't speak up, it is simply wrong. It will only make the situation worse.

Mobile phones

Another major problem is the use of mobile phones. The only thing I need to do is walk around in shopping malls and count the number of salespeople texting on their phones in the shops. Would you be surprised if I tell you it's more than 85 per cent?

It seems customers are getting used to it and that's scary.

Shop owners that have the cashier fills in the back usually staff hiding behind the counters texting away. When you enter the shop, there is no way that someone will get up and come and help you, unless you go to the back and ask for help. Then we start again with the traditional "Yes"?

I wonder how this financially influences the sales of these shops. An outlet that has active salespeople has a bigger revenue than one with salespeople hiding in the back.

This is also part of an article I wrote before, where I observe that employers are scared to inform or reprimand their staff that they need to change, so they will not leave/quit.

It is very hard to find proper staff these days, I agree. I can only imagine the life of a recruiter to finding the right people for the right job daily.

Online Businesses

A survey showed that people spend a minimum of five hours per day on their phones, texting, checking social media and making online purchases. Many customers have changed their tactics.

You can see that companies that want to be successful change their strategies. To minimise operation costs, the manpower and eliminate initial investments for the shop, they choose to open an online shop. That is a smart move.

Online businesses are booming. Statistics show that in 2015 an estimate RM5 billion was spent online. Last year saw an increase of 30 per cent.

The worst part is that many of these purchases are happening abroad, with online companies such as Amazon.com, Ali Baba.com and Lazada.com profiting.

What is this doing for businesses in Malaysia?

It is very sad to see, that due to the lack of customer service, online businesses are doing well. It seems that frustrated customers are getting heard after all.

We can only hope that in time, the system will be reversed and customer service will yet again get a chance to flourish.

Training people is the key point here. Without training, shops will disappear one by one.

Nikolas Cassimon is Consultant, Speaker and HRDF Certified Trainer. For more information, visit trainingkuantan.com.

INSIDE : SEARCH AND BOOK
Find now!
AUTO
Cars
Trucks
Bikes
Batteries
Mechanics
NOTICES
Financial
Tenders
General Notices
GENERAL
Services
Loans
Health
Renovations
PROPERTY
Land
Shoplots
Apartments
Room
Rental
APPOINTMENTS
Full/Part-time
Training
Graduate Scheme
GOVERNMENT
Jobs
Tenders
Legal
LEGAL/ AUCTION
Property
Vehicle
Legal