



Adelaide Advertiser
Tuesday 19/2/2008
Page: 58
Section: Business Owner
Region: Adelaide Circulation: 191,325
Type: Capital City Daily
Size: 201.12 sq.cms.
Published: MTWTFSS-

RETAIL | Make it a great experience, says adviser

Customer focus the key

FRANCES STEWART

BUSINESS owners need to view their company from a customer perspective to realise its full potential.

A visitor from Britain – customer experience expert Phil Corke – said Australian retailers were not doing enough to make the shopping “experience” enjoyable.

Mr Corke, a senior member of the customer experience division of innovation agency *What If!*, said Australia had fallen behind the rest of the developed world when it came to looking after its retail customers.

“This is quite surprising, especially when you consider Australia has a lot going for it,” he said.

“Australia is bright, prosperous and sophisticated, yet its nation’s supermarkets, department stores and call centres are dragging behind on the world stage in relation to customers’ experience.”

According to Mr Corke, retail businesses need to give customers

a “great experience from the moment they enter to the moment they leave the store”.

“Everyone has a current customer experience, it’s just a question of whether it is acknowledged and engineered to be the best possible one or not,” he said.

One way to achieve this was by looking at the business and its service the way a customer would.

Bizmetrics owner Steve Major, who specialises in strategic business advising and mentoring, said very few small to medium enterprises were generating the growth and prosperity they could because they lacked the customer perspective.

To address this, Mr Major said business owners should take time out to step back from the company and examine both internal and external operations.

“Businesses rarely realise how much the inner workings of the company affect its bottom line and productivity. Nor do they realise

how simple it can be to eliminate these problems and maximise company growth,” he said.

Mr Major said looking at the business from the outside could often be hard for owners to do.

“But once they do that, more often than not, it becomes very clear what they should do,” he said.

“The majority are actually shocked when they realise how clients see their business. They see it in an entirely different context.”

A good starting point was observing competitors, Mr Major said.

“That can often make it easier to start looking at things from a customer perspective,” he said. “But don’t limit yourself to just looking at competitors in your industry.”

“There is a lot to be learned from a wide range of businesses.”

□ **Steve Major will hold a seminar at the Mercure Grosvenor Hotel on March 4. For information, phone 1300 556 460.**