



The Female Factor

By Katie Haymes

A Gateway Greeting

As I entered a shop, I was greeted by a few racks of camouflage clothing followed by muddled rows of product and, in the distance, a wall of neatly hung bows. As you can imagine, the silence in which these items muttered their greeting left me welcoming myself to the store. In the back left corner, I spotted an L-shaped counter equipped with a few branded stools and a couple gentlemen who looked to be intrigued by the work being done on one of their bows. The employee behind that counter took note that I had arrived by glancing up for half a second before continuing his work on the bow. Not wanting to interrupt, I just kept to myself and weaved my way around until I found the 100 grain field points I was after. It wasn't until I was waiting at the register to make a purchase that the employee first spoke to me.

As I had just relocated to the area, this was my first venture to a nearby archery shop and I didn't exactly get the feeling I fit in there. I was reminded of why it was upsetting to leave the pro shop I had become acquainted with behind. It was always nice walking in to a "Welcome!" from the employees and feeling as if I belonged.

In a world where we seemingly strive to be more impersonal through our interactions with each other thanks to texts, emails and various other technology-generated avenues, retail settings are following suit by creating convenience



Quick timing of your greeting when a customer enters your store will improve that customer's experience. Even if you aren't able to offer the customer your full attention, acknowledge them when they walk in. This will assure them that you are there to assist with questions if needed and decrease any potentially awkward feelings for those less familiar with your store.

tools such as self-checkout. Though these tools serve a useful purpose, function and level of customer service for both the customer and store, they decrease face-to-face human interaction and subsequently any emotional connection someone has with a store. This offers today's archery retailers an opportunity to make a lasting impression through only the little effort required to greet someone. As daily operations become more streamlined by the opportunities technology provides, remember this simple yet meaningful customer service practice, which might encourage a purchase or, better yet, return business from customers.

Before I dive in further, a brief introduction of myself and this column may prove beneficial. This article is in fact addressing the importance of greeting customers. That said, welcome to the Female Factor Column! I'm Katie: a wife, new mom and hunter. I'm an educator with a degree in wildlife science, a passion for bowhunting and a desire to help others find their way to the great outdoors. I was approached about contributing to this column to bring my perspective as a female bowhunter to the forefront in hopes of helping retailers engage and appeal to the increasing number of women customers. Be it women archers, bowhunters, moms, wives or others new to the sport, pro shops must learn how to navigate interactions with these



Imagine an in-person greeting like this as you enter a store. With so many technology driven interactions in our lives, You and your staff have the chance to make a lasting impression with your customers just by greeting them in person: goodbye emojis, hello real person!



Katie Haymes offers a quick greeting and warm smile to a couple of 2017 ATA Show attendees who stopped by the area devoted to the Explore Archery, Explore Bowhunting and Explore Bowfishing programs.

non-traditional customers in order to win their business. As you tune in throughout the year, I hope you'll find value in the tips presented and see the passion I have to help you succeed behind them. Now that you know a little about my background and how this column came to be, let's get to it.

We have all heard the sayings "You'll never get a second chance to make a good first impression" and "You only have seven seconds to make a strong first impression." Those have some weight to consider when thinking about your store's impression, too, not just you as an individual. I'll be honest; I wasn't very impressed with the greeting described above and I don't know many other women (or men for that matter) who would be. However, it wasn't until this column came about that I took a closer look at the recent scenario from another perspective. I thought to myself, "What kind of impact might a similar greeting or lack thereof have on new customers ready to take the leap into archery?" There are many programs out there working to create new archers or hunters with instructors and educators referring them to their local retailers, like Explore Bowhunting, Explore Bowfishing and Explore Archery. I know because I'm one of those educators. What about all the moms who are out shopping and know little to nothing about archery equipment but have an archery enthusiast's birthday coming up? If they received a similar welcome to mine, would they have even lingered in the store long enough to be helped?

You can find some useful tips to help generate greetings worthy of good impressions simply by taking note of how you welcome friends into your own homes. I have drawn from my past experiences to highlight a few of these elements in hopes that this will encourage some thought and potential improvement to how customers are greeted in your store.

First up is the timing of the greeting. When someone

you're expecting over for dinner rings the doorbell, the response is typically a prompt answering of the door with an invitation inside. A guest might find it a bit awkward if they had to mill around on your porch for 10 minutes after alerting you of their arrival. So why is it that customers are left to wander around rows of product without acknowledgement of them even entering? This is especially important for new customers, as the awkward feeling might also be mixed with a bit of fear of the unknown if there is unfamiliarity with the products. Even for me as an experienced bowhunter, a well-timed welcome to a store provides a feeling of assurance that there is someone to help when I conjure up a question or two. If an employee is busy at the moment, the extending of a quick verbal acknowledgement or friendly smile and gesture of "I'll be with you in a minute" is all that's needed.

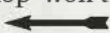
Next is the delivery. If you welcomed your friends into your home with a lethargic expression that might suggest "I could care less if you were here but you are, so hello,"

I'm pretty sure the first time your back turned on them, they would be rolling their eyes and plotting for an early exit (and maybe that's what you're going for). I have a hard time fathoming a time that the goal in any retail store would be to have people walk out. However, if the delivery falls flat, that might be just what happens and unfortunately for you, the customer's money leaves with them. Even on difficult days, if you can deliver a friendly "Hello" with a smile, it will go a long way in the eyes of your customers.

Last is courtesy. Say you're awaiting the arrival of friends for a cookout. As they start arriving, would you greet only those you knew best or felt more comfortable with while overlooking their spouses or tag-along friends? Likely not. As a woman, I have unfortunately encountered this more times than not over the past decade. Customers, whether experienced or novice, woman or man, shopping for themselves or tagging along, all earn acknowledgment by walking through the door and all should be greeted. It's becoming more apparent in the archery world these days that you can't judge a book by its cover. The next woman that walks in your shop may have more archery or bowhunting experience than the guy wearing a camo jacket who walked in before her. Putting in the effort to make everyone feel welcomed to your shop won't go unnoticed, believe me.

Now, I'm not typically one for quotes but I came across this on forbes.com as I did a little research on this topic. So I'll leave you with this final thought:

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did but people will never forget how you made them feel." – Maya Angelou

Make customers feel welcome and your shop won't be forgotten. 

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