

Top Strategies to Create a Frictionless Retail Customer Experience

No matter what kind of retail business you may be running, the one thing that they all have in common is that you want to have a friction-free customer experience. Look at it from the customer perspective: if you were to have to choose between two retail stores that have roughly the same cost and products, but one has so many hoops to jump through in order to get the product...wouldn't you want to instead choose the store that is easy to shop at? Consumers are so used to being able to do and get things with minimal effort, so bringing that into their shopping experience is the next logical step. In today's article, we will be covering what a frictionless customer experience is and how to create one for your business.

What is it?

What exactly is a "frictionless customer experience," anyways? The idea is basically about creating a smooth and simple buying or signup process. You want your retail business to be convenient and easy for customers, otherwise, you may not be able to keep them. A big part of this is due to the advancement of digital technology. With all of the ways that you can learn more about your shoppers and what it is that they feel should (or should not) be part of their shopping experience, creating a frictionless customer experience can be much easier than you think!

The reason for having this easy breezy shopping experience is as we mentioned above: an easier customer experience will lead to more customers. Did you know that 44-55% of consumers have told researchers that they would pay more money for a better customer experience, whether that means friendlier or more efficient? Yes, having a good customer experience is that effective. Companies that invest in creating this frictionless experience for their customers can earn much more revenue. Now, let's talk about how you can get this started.

How can I implement this?

Now we get to the most important part of this article. We're going to give you some great tips to set your business up for success in frictionless customer experience, whether you have a physical store or an online store.

- The first thing to do for any type of store is to identify your customer touchpoints. This just means that any point in the customer shopping experience you interact with them. This can range very widely, and it should if you are putting in the effort. Included in these touchpoints can be things like email subscriptions, live chats, testimonials, social media profiles, store signs and so much more. Put plainly, any place where you have customer contact is a touchpoint. Once you've got those identified, you can leverage those to see what customers want in a shopping experience by asking them.

- Make getting your customers in and out easier. Look into online ordering with in-store pickup. Studies show that roughly 41% of consumers would rather just not purchase an item they wanted if they have to wait in a long line, with about 74% saying that they would go to a competitor's store if it's a shorter line.
- You can also explore mobile payments, where customers can pay from their phones rather than wait in line. This can be done by either having an app that they pay through or a system where they create their cart before coming in, then shop and scan their phone as they leave. There are plenty of options for this, you'll just need to find the one that works for your retail business.
- Make chatbots more accessible and of better quality. If you have an online store, then chances are that you have a chatbot for the beginner level of customer service. Take stock of how well your chatbot is doing by having satisfaction surveys, then look at how you can improve the performance to make the process easier for your customers and take it to the next level.
- Speaking of customer service, be sure to have an easy-to-use customer service program. This means ensuring that customers can easily find customer service and that they can get in touch with someone to assist them quickly. You need to make sure that you have options for how to contact customer service, as not everyone has the same access or wants and speed is very important with this.
- Make sure that you are keeping a consistent level of quality at every touchpoint. Brand quality is a big deal to customers. They want to be able to have the same type of experience at every step of their shopping journey. This will help build up a loyal consumer base, as you will be giving them what they want and hopefully making their experience nice and smooth.
- For your team, find out how to realign them when it comes to how to handle day-to-day operations. Focus on strategic items and how to tackle them, which will help limit how often they have to chase down issues and fix them on the fly. This can include things like assigning specific tasks or touchpoints to each employee, which can make roles much clearer.
- Keep track of how things are going! Once you implement these tips and get the ball rolling, you can't just assume that it's all going to work perfectly. You need to be continually checking in with your customers and your team to make sure that things are working smoothly. Technology is always advancing, as are the needs of the customers. Evaluate at regular intervals to check for any friction at your touchpoints, then correct as needed.

Now, let's do a quick recap of everything we've covered. A frictionless customer experience in retail is the best way to keep customers happy. No one wants to have to do more work than necessary to shop. As a retail business owner, you need to identify all of the touchpoints for your store that might have friction, and then find ways to smooth them out. Introducing automation, staying in contact with customers, and keeping your team organized are all great ways to start this process. Now get out there and remove any friction!

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About the Author:

Elias Amash, President of GRIP, is an industry veteran with more than 30 years of experience in global sourcing, manufacturing, distribution, retail merchandising, fulfillment, marketing, technology, and operations. He is a trusted partner to hundreds of retailers and has “leveled up” the industry with GRIP’s undying commitment to offering only the highest levels of service to its customers. Amash has published several books: 8 Skills That Pay Off Forever, The Top 10 Most Important Lessons, The Retail Advantage: How to Win the War with Amazon, Retail Survival: Who Lives, Who Dies and Why, The 50 Most Important Lessons in Life, The Future of Retail, Importing from China: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly, and 101 Bright Ideas: Winning Tactics to Increase Retail Sales.

About GRIP:

GRIP was incorporated by Charles Amash in 1980 and has grown into one of the nation’s top suppliers of innovative products to the retail industry. Located just south of Grand Rapids, Michigan, GRIP features a 200,000 sq ft state of the art warehouse facility including a 2,000 sq ft product showroom. GRIP carries a product line of over 1,000 specialty tools, tarps, automotive, cargo control, cleaning, LED lighting, magnetics, outdoors, household items, impulse and general merchandise. GRIP has a proven track record of excellence in supplying retail clients with innovative products, timely fulfillment, and world-class customer support. At GRIP, everything is about earning your business...one customer at a time. It’s about building relationships and fostering business partnerships that will last long into the future. Our goal is to have Customers for Life. The future at GRIP is exciting and we’re hoping that you can be a part of it as one of our many Customers for Life.

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