E-tailing the way to Net profit

30% of Internet users here bought at least 1 item online last year, many local firms offer services on the Web.

My bricks and mortar store has real human interaction and products for trying. Your online store has just words and pictures. How are you going to win customers?

No overheads + No middle man = Lower prices

By Serene Luo

CLICK it. Cart it. Card it.

Dealing with the invisible customer

JUST like Internet sales and services, customer service staff at call centres serve people they may never meet in real life.

Here, two award-winning call centres give tips on helping the invisible customer.

LISTEN well. Concentrate on the conversation. Do not interrupt the customer. Take note of pauses and listen between the lines.

CUSTOMERS like to talk to friendly call centre representatives. Treat each customer like a friend while still maintaining professionalism.

PERSONALISATION is a technique that is not used enough. Nothing sounds better to the ear than the sound of your name pronounced by someone else. So when you receive or make a call, use the other person’s name occasionally.

When dealing with a difficult customer, show empathy and listen well to his side of the story.

Analyse the situation and propose a solution. If the customer refuses, agree to the solution and make sure you get back to him within an agreed timeframe.

Ensure your tone of voice is appropriate and consistent with the message you are communicating.

Equip your staff with in-depth product and service knowledge, and update them on industry changes. Attach newbies to experienced seniors.

Tips provided by Mr. Laurent Junque, chief executive officer of Telereact, and Ms Alice Ho, call centre manager of TNT Express Singapore. Both these call centres won numerous awards at the recent Singapore Call Centre Awards and Regional Call Centre Awards.

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