

# Town Centre Customer Experience Shopping Audit

## Introduction

As part of the Town Team initiative the Economic Development Department commissioned a local Mystery Shopping firm to undertake an audit of town centre retailers and cafes.

By undertaking the work EDD hoped to:

1. Benchmark independent local retailers against larger UK franchises trading in St Helier
2. Identify product and service provision gaps
3. Identify staff training gaps
4. Identify gaps in selling opportunities
5. Measure the 'customer ordering experience' i.e. the ability for customers to order items that are not in stock
6. Understand if there is a difference between the weekday and Saturday experience

## Methodology

- The audit was carried out between 21 October and 4 November 2013
- A sample of 55 town centre establishments were audited - 47 retailers and 6 cafes and 2 take away outlets
- The sample was selected randomly to ensure a good geographical spread across the Town Centre retailing area
- It was broken down into groups as follows:
  - Small businesses (1-5 staff) - 31
  - Medium businesses (5-10 staff) - 19
  - Large business (>10 staff) - 5
- 8 of the sample were UK franchises and 47 were local businesses
- 50% of the audit was carried out on a Saturday and the rest during the remainder of the week (Monday to Friday)
- The audit was undertaken by 12 people of different age ranges using a common marking and appraisal system.

# Town Centre Customer Experience Shopping Audit

The Audit focused on three areas:

1. General Approach
  - Shop first impressions
  - Acknowledgement
2. Sales Opportunity
  - Establishing Needs
  - Product Knowledge
  - Selling Skills
  - Customer Ordering
3. Service
  - Café (for selected)
  - The Member of Staff
  - The Check Out Process

## High Level Results

The results for the sample ranged from 22% to 84%. The overall score for the 55 units surveyed was 68%. This would be below what might be considered good and below what UK mystery shopped stores would consider as acceptable.

It is suggested that Jersey should set a performance target of 80% as a benchmark for mystery shopping performance, and future audits.

## Summary

The overall St Helier experience could be described as average, certainly not great.

- Shop first impressions are positive
- Nearly 60% of shoppers were not acknowledged when first entering the shop
- Only 40% of interaction used open questions to establish needs
- Product knowledge was good
- Selling skills were poor
  - Only 17% of the opportunities talked about price matching
  - 70% of opportunities did not offer any additional products / up sale
- Cafes
  - 3/8 cafes visited did not have clean tables

# Town Centre Customer Experience Shopping Audit

- Members of staff generally helpful and ‘eventually’ engaged but not delivering exceptional service and missing the opportunity to build relationships and upsell.
- Check out - big room for improvement
  - refund communication
  - ‘Anything else I can help you with today’
  - Positive comment on exit

The good news is that there is room for improvement and a clear opportunity to drive up performance.

## Saturday v Weekday

The average result for a Saturday visit was 70.69% compared with 67.66% with a weekday visit. Therefore suggesting that the current Saturday experience is not affected by part-time or Saturday only staff.

## Business Size

Content	Average result (%)	Branch count	Reviews count
Medium	73.92%	18	18
Small	67.78%	32	32
Large	60.10%	5	5
Average/Sum	69.09%	55	55

## UK v Local

Content	Average result (%)	Branch count	Reviews count
Local	69.21%	47	47
UK Chain	68.40%	8	8

## Town Centre Customer Experience Shopping Audit

### Average Sector performance

Content	Average result (%)
Toys	95.67
Food takeaway	94.32
Cycles	91.64
Cars	88.50
Foods	88.02
Jewelry	86.38
Fragrances	82.68
Health Foods	81.94
Clothing	74.19
Shoe Shops	72.29
Refreshments	70.06
Department Stores	68.55
Electrical	68.54
Cafes	55.67
Cards	51.02
Home Stores	49.61
Gift Shops	48.54
Flowers	41.13

# Town Centre Customer Experience Shopping Audit

## Areas highlighted for future business support programme

- Initial engagement
- Maximising the sales opportunity
- Making the experience more interesting
- Interaction with staff more fun

## Sample of the Overall Comments

### Lowest performing

“The visit was awful. The store was clean and nicely kept but looked untidy with items piled on the floor and high up. This makes it hard to browse and take time to look. The unfriendly staff members made it difficult to ask questions and get the sale completed. I felt I was time wasting and not welcome. The lack of pricing on items also made it hard to see how much items were and I had to keep asking. The advertisements and posters were eye catching inside and very clear for ideas of looks happening in store, both windows were kitted out in newest lines available too which is inspiring. Generally the sales pitch isn't there for a gift buyer as there was any not guidance by the team.”

### Below average performance

“Whilst the shop was attractive and well merchandised the attitude of the assistant and fact they don't do individual orders would mean I'd be unlikely to recommend the store to friends and family.”

### Average performance

“Although the assistant was not particularly approachable at first as he was talking to his friend his attitude in dealing with my query would score above average. He was both friendly and helpful looking on the system to see whether he could order the item.”

### Above average performance

“My overall experience on this shop was excellent I would 100% visit again. \*By the end of the shop we were focused on a particular product. She advised me that the sizes were funny. I was going to buy this product and bring it back for a refund at a later date but it was the assistants advice to do more research into what version and what size of this product that I needed.”

## Town Centre Customer Experience Shopping Audit

### Best Performing

“The shop was clean and tidy, well laid out with clear pricing. The assistant was friendly, engaging and smiley. The assistant was happy to help and make me feel very welcome. There was lots of products to choose from and the assistant helped narrow down my decision.”

“A fantastic shopping experience! I left with the item I was hoping for, along with a smile. It's really very satisfying when you get the correct help along with receiving fantastic customer service. I believe this shop has not only great staff but a fantastic range of products too.”