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Donald Cooper is respected by clients in over 40 industries as both a “thought leader” and a passionate visionary in the areas of marketing, service and business excellence.

Drawing from his real life experience as a world-class manufacturer, award-winning retailer and business speaker, he has helped thousands of businesses throughout the world to add more real value to their customers’ lives...and more dollars to their bottom lines.

To subscribe to Donald’s thought-provoking, idea-generating, **FREE** monthly electronic **Newsletter**, email us at newsletter@donaldcooper.com.

His website, www.donaldcooper.com also offers free articles and business tools.

Are you delivering a consistent, amazing, customer-owning “Brand Experience” in every part of your business?

There are lots of definitions of what a “Brand” is. Here’s mine...

Your “Brand” is your promise to deliver a consistent and compelling set of values, standards and experiences that your target customers want in their lives.

You need to create and communicate a compelling promise...and then keep that promise, every customer, every time.

So how is it that I report two vastly different “Brand Experiences” in Canadian Tire Stores here in Ontario over a period of just five days?

Note for our many non-Canadian readers: Canadian Tire is Canada’s largest retailer of automotive aftermarket products and one of the country’s biggest sellers of hardware, tools, sporting goods, electrical and plumbing supplies, small appliances and house wares. They’re huge and they’re a Canadian retail icon.

Each Canadian Tire Store is independently owned and operated and there is supposedly a rigorous system in place to ensure that only those operators who have proven themselves in smaller markets, get to open a store in a large metropolitan area.

Well, apparently that system has broken down somewhere along the line. Just before Christmas I walked into a Canadian Tire store in Toronto, advertising flyer in hand, and asked one of the staff where I might find a particular item on page two. This young man looked me straight in the eye and said, “*Mister, we don’t know sh_t around here!*” and he walked away. Hey, I don’t make this stuff up.

Who hired this guy? Who communicated the Brand Promise, the company history, culture and values in his first week of employment, before he was ever allowed within 10 feet of a customer? Where was the ongoing training on “where stuff is”? Which experienced employee was he partnered with for his first week on the job so that he’d know how things are to be done and how customers are to be treated? Where is his department manager who should be monitoring employees to see if they’re doing and saying the right things? And, where is the store owner while all of this is NOT going on? There’s an old Viennese expression, “*The fish stinks from the head.*”

Are you delivering a customer-owning “Brand Experience” ... (Cont'd):

And it wasn't just the staff experience that broke the “Brand Promise”. Half the plastic shopping baskets piled up just inside the front door had no handles and in the Tool Department there was no button beside the sign that said “*Press button for service.*” There were just two bare wires sticking out of the wall...and they sell those same buttons in their electrical department.

Fast forward to early Boxing Day morning (the day after Christmas for those who don't have “Boxing Day” in your culture) and the Canadian Tire store in the town of Bracebridge, two hours north of Toronto.

Staff who, theoretically, should be bloated with turkey and eggnog and grumpy about having to work the day after Christmas are lined up just inside the front door greeting customers with huge smiles and asking how they can be helpful. I thought I had died and gone to retail heaven!

The store was packed with Boxing Day bargain hunters and the staff were amazing, knowledgeable and helpful. What they didn't know, they quickly went and found out. They checked in the back for out of stock specials, gave out “Rain Checks” for items that were sold out, assured me that they'd call to let me know when they were back in stock...and they did.

So, there it is. Two stores in the same chain with the same “Brand Promise”...but with very different Brand experiences. How does that work in your business? Whether you're a retailer, an accounting firm, travel agency, wholesaler or manufacturer, what's your clear and compelling “Brand Promise” and what are you doing to deliver that consistently with every customer, every time, at every touch point? Something to think about.

For more information on how Donald Cooper can help you redefine and reinvent your business to create, deliver and communicate compelling, customer-owning Value, visit our website at www.donaldcooper.com, email us at sharen@donaldcooper.com or contact us by telephone in Toronto, Canada at 1-(416) 252-3704.