

THE
crackle
FACTOR

We've noticed that there is definitely something missing in retail stores lately. It's almost as if every store we visit looks and feels the same way: stale, uninspired and staffed with people who look like they'd rather be somewhere else, doing something else. Now, you might read this and think, "not my store," but if you're honest with yourself, then maybe it's okay to admit that a feeling of sameness has blanketed your store as well.



It's time to put the thrill of shopping back in stores – the Crackle! That wonderful feeling of anticipation you get every time you visit Disneyland. That “you never know what cool thing is around the corner” kind of feeling that builds in the pit of your stomach. Crackle isn't the merchandise you sell, and it's not the four walls of your store; crackle is what your customers feel each time they walk inside your front door.

by Rich Kizer and Georganne Bender

Now That's Entertainment

Crackle begins with Shoppertainment – the combination of shopping plus entertainment that equals fun. Shoppertainment makes coming to your store an exciting adventure, and when shopping is an adventure customers stay longer, spend more money and return more frequently. Are your in-store events and promotions causing commotions? If they aren't, call us. We'll be happy to share an event or two that's guaranteed to spin the doors on your store. And definitely lift your Crackle Factor up a notch or two.

Now, making your sales floor crackle is going to take planning and effort and research. Research that's not limited to just other retailers, but also includes visits to hotels, theatres and community events – the places customers go for fun when they are not shopping.

You'll be surprised at the threads of ideas you'll find that you can mold into crackling services that are just right for your own customers. This isn't boring research, and it certainly can't be described as your basic research and development. This time R&D stands for “Rip Off and Do It Yourself!” Starbucks didn't invent coffee and McDonald's didn't invent hamburgers, they just did it better than everybody else. And their stores definitely crackle.

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Go Teamwork!

If your Crackle Factor has fizzled out then you need to seek professional help – from your own team of professionals. Ask your store associates what they'd do if they owned the joint. Ask what they've enjoyed at other establishments, and challenge them to come up with unusual marketing and promotional ideas. No holds barred!

With a few tweaks, an off-the-wall idea just might become your claim to fame. You can invite customers to brainstorm ideas too, when you ask your best customers and biggest fans to sit on your "Idea Generation Board." Invite all kinds of customers: women, men, children, collectors and design professionals. Can you just imagine the great ideas flowing, creating crackling ideas to thrill your customers and leave your competition in the dust?

You can help raise your Crackle Factor each day by asking customers who've made a purchase one simple question: **"How did we do today to reach our goal of making your day?"**

Ask customers to respond on a scale of 1 to 10 (a score of 10 equals "Incredible"). Most customers will give you an explanation along with their score. Tabulate their answers and review the results each week in a meeting with your associates, discussing ways to raise your scores if necessary.

Don't wait another minute to increase your Crackle Factor. Do It Now! Make the commitment to become the one store in town customers just can't wait to visit again and again!

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