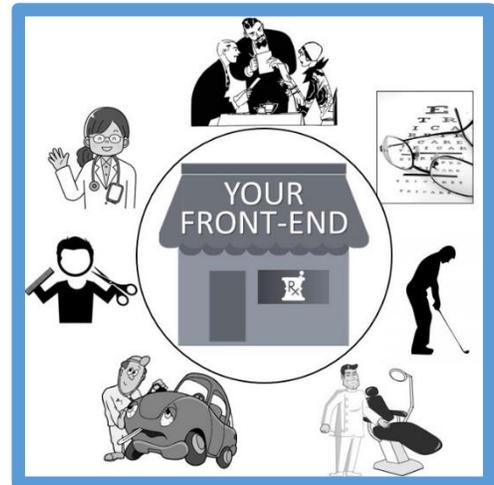


Please Confirm Your Appointment

Your front end called, it would like you to confirm your appointment. Along with your doctor, hair stylist, mechanic, dentist, golf partner, optometrist, and favorite restaurant, your front end would like to see you and see you on time. Don't have a seat; instead, walk around, take your time – your front end has set aside an hour for you.

Start by listening: Is the background music appropriate for your clientele and is the music at the correct volume? Do you like what you are hearing your staff say out loud (to customers and amongst themselves)? While you're at it, make a note of where everyone is standing; do you notice any unnecessary grouping of employees?



Now it's time to walk the aisles. Pay special attention to the product inventory control label on the bottom two rows of shelves of each section as this area is easily overlooked. Count the "outs" and "onesies." **Missing items on the shelf, even if expected in today's order, are still considered an out – and an out is a missed potential sale.** More than four outs per category is a red flag that OTC orders need to be placed more frequently. Ones on the shelf are just as dangerous – they are outs waiting to happen.

Next, ensure retail price stickers are not tagged on the front of product packaging. Examine product expiration dates and confirm product is being properly rotated so that short-date items are positioned to the front of the shelf. Do items at the front match the descriptions of the shelf tags found directly below? Are all of the items under one shelf tag the same price? Now check for price parity: are the Advil 50-count tablets and the Advil 50-count caplets the same price? (Side note: If your Advil 50-count is priced over \$6.99, you may not be competitive in your area.) Review your 30-count Halls Cough Triple Action Suppressants – are the Honey Lemon, Cherry, and Mentho-Lyptus flavors the same retail? (Side note: If the 30-count bag is more than \$2.19, your zone pricing may not be competitive.) **Keep an eye out for retails that end in 0, 1, 2, 4, or 8.** Items that end with anyone of these numbers are not priced by zone.

Are the shelves clean? Does the top rail cap of the fixture need a quick dusting? How about the aisles themselves, can two people walking from opposite directions meet each other in the aisle without brushing up against each other?

Now the big question: **Are you proud of what you see and hear?** Make an appointment with your front end. Do it today.

Your next appointment with your front end is: _____.

-- Gabe Trahan, NCPA Senior Director of Store Operations and Marketing
NCPA's Front-End Overhaul