

What Are Your Customers Thinking?

A store owner/pharmacist recently shared with me that he was shocked when hearing a comment from a very good customer. With a look of concern, the customer pulled the owner aside and asked, “Is everything okay with you and your business? We certainly do not want to lose you.” The owner, surprised by the question, replied, “No, everything is going great. What made you think something might be wrong?” Customer: “Your shelves look bare and it makes me think that maybe you are having a hard time staying in business.” It never dawned on the store owner that keeping one of each item on the shelf would make someone think that business was bad! That



day, a new policy was put in place. No more “ones” left on the shelves; at the very least, there would be twos, with all popular items maintained at an inventory level of four each.

You never know what people are thinking. What you believe to be innocuous things can make a person start thinking that things are not all that great with your business, leaving them to wonder if you will remain in business. Here is a list of things that you will want to keep an eye out for:

- Soiled ceiling tiles
- Burnt out lightbulbs
- Flashing ceiling lights caused by a bad ballast
- Worn or soiled carpet
- Soiled and hard-to-open entrance door
- Out-of-season holiday items still on the shelf at 50 percent off
- Cobwebs in the window
- Discolored product packaging and dust on items
- Outdated signs displayed in the windows
- And, of course, anemic inventory.

Remember, we don’t know what our customers are thinking, and only a precious few will tell us what’s on their mind. Let’s make sure that they don’t have to guess how long you will be around.

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