

OPINION & COMMENTARY

Sex and The 'Sity: Merry Frickin' Christmas



Kimberley Johnston
Reporter

Well, the Great North Atlantic Fruitcake exchange has drawn to an end and those who did not participate in the relentless swapping of baked goods this year may have overindulged in other ways. My crystal ball says they are many people out there making enemies of their bathroom scales in an attempt to flatten the spare tire formed around their midsections during the most festive of holidays.

Is it just my imagination, or are people getting a little less festive over the holidays and a little more full of the bah-humbug mentality? It could just be my own experience in the customer service industry and my annual plight to find heartfelt gifts on a shoestring budget while trying to avoid the assistance of my trusty friend, Mr. Visa.

While I was forced to "downsize" the number of receivers on my list this year, I was still able to be merry and bright during the holidays - though it is my expressed opinion that individuals should treat others with respect all year round.

It's just odd that the time of year where people are supposed to be "extra nice" to each other and good will should flow like free rum and eggnog, most of the customer service workers I've spoken to found it difficult to spread merriment after dealing with impatient and cranky customers.

Perhaps someone should tell certain individuals that the supposed merriment of the holidays extends to cashiers and sales associates as well. It would be a pity for them to miss that festive memo.

While lines are long and tempers become shorter with every passing price check, consumers should realize that long lines have become an expected part of Christmas - and if you don't want to deal with them, perhaps you should start shopping earlier in an attempt to avoid them. I was very careful to avoid the long lineups this year and only partook when I was keeping my guy company with his yuletide shopping spree. It was a bit more bearable knowing I was not the one who would have to shell-out all that coin to a cashier who had the charisma of a speed bump - poor thing. I was just taking up space.

So, I hope you all had a happier holiday than some of the people I've spoken too - and if you didn't ... well... there's always next year.

All the best in 2005!

Come see what your future has in store.

Steele Campbell
Contributor

Future Shop is one of those few places that you will always feel welcome — a feeling that is certainly lacking in today's distant, large-franchise market.

While some may raise an eyebrow at such a bold statement, the fact of the matter is it is true. Allow me to expand: whenever I pass through the threshold guarded by those automatic doors (that, in such an energy efficient manner, kindly do not open until my nose is leaving grease on the glass) I am greeted by literally tens of sales associates all asking me different variations of "can I help you with something?" It is refreshing to feel so wanted; Wal-Mart's employees won't lift a finger to help me. Future Shop however, is more than willing to remove the burden from my back and the bulge in my wallet.

Of course, being the consummate gentleman that I am, I

kindly dismiss them, not wanting to distract them from their valuable work with the young couple looking at the plasma screen TV on display. In a truly friendly manner though, it seems like I always have a little guardian Future Shop employee looming over my shoulder.

That isn't the end of Future Shop's amazing service. They also seem to send every one of their employees on an intensive training course covering everything they sell, for when I ask one of those guardian angels perched on my shoulder:

"Do you carry any copies of Mandrake, RedHat, or Debian

They sagely point me to the software section and tell me: "*no but we have copies of Windows XP and it is so much better than Mandrake!*" Ahh, I see why all their technicians are Microsoft A+ Certified.

But the wisdom of their sales tactics does not end there. For they also foresee that I am an oafish lout (I am a male after all) and upon purchasing anything, whether it be a printer, a pair of speakers, or a JVC digital camera, I am offered the "unique opportunity" to include an extended sales warranty for only a few (hundred) dollars more. In the event something happens to it, I can return it and exchange it for a new one! Such perspicacity! What foresight! How kind!

In today's cold, detached, big-budget corporations it is truly refreshing to see a company that truly cares for its(elf) customers. Whether it is through attentive sales tactics, informed sales advice, or intuitive warranty programs, Future Shop is a company that cares!

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