



INVEST EAST RIDING

RETAIL SECTOR **GUIDE**

Even the best retailers want to be better











FOREWORD

As East Riding of Yorkshire Councils Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth and Tourism I am very proud to introduce our Retail Sector Guide.

The council is committed to supporting the long-term future and sustainability of our high streets. Fully funded through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Welcome Back programme, this guide has been produced to compliment the comprehensive range of services already offered by the Councils Business Support Team including the Love Your High Street project.

Whether you are a start-up retail business or an established operator, this guide has something for everyone. All businesses want to acquire and retain new customers so with tips on social media, merchandising, customer service and shop layout; you will find a wealth of practical tips and advice to help you succeed.

May I also take this opportunity to invite you to speak to a member of business support team who would welcome the opportunity to discuss your business needs. Details can be found in the Useful Contacts section at the back of the guide.

Councillor Jane Evison

Portfolio Holder Economic Growth and Tourism

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CO-ORDINATION OF THE GUIDE

Lucy Abbott Business Support Assistant Project Manager

Dawn Hall Business Support Services Manager

AUTHOR

James McGregor Managing Partner, Retail Remedy

DESIGN

Mark Waudby Freelance Graphic Designer, Wauds Design



No business wants to be the world's best-kept secret!

Increasing footfall and traffic to your business is the first step to success, put simply, without customers you don't have a business.

There are endless opportunities to drive additional footfall to your business, the following examples illustrate some of the key things you can focus on to give your business the best chance of increasing footfall.



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The approach to your business is often the first perception a customer has of your brand, make sure it's the right one.

Maintenance

The front of your property always needs to look as good as the day you first opened.

Messaging

- What message are you giving to your customers as they pass by the front of your establishment?
- Do potential customers instantly know what you do?
- Are you giving them a reason to enter your shop?

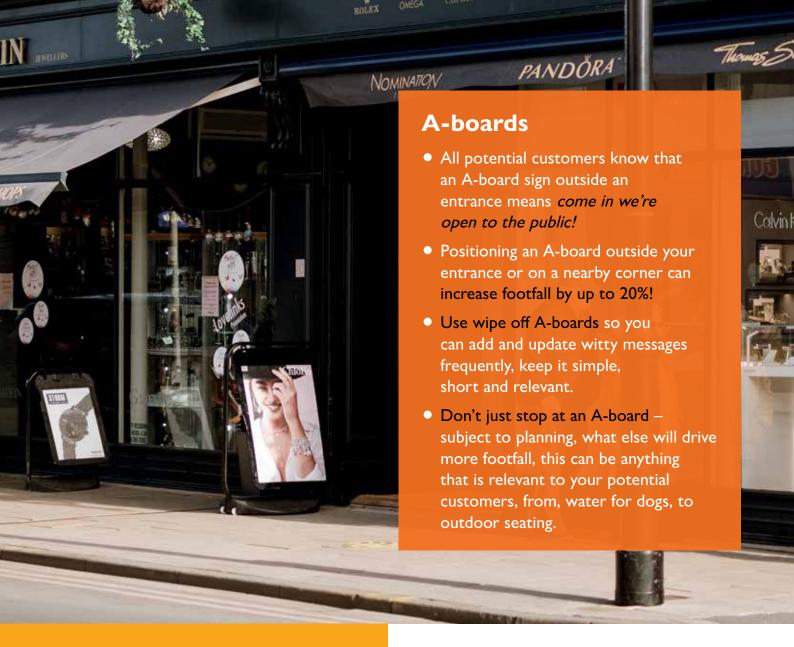
Hygiene

Regular checks of the property need to take place throughout trade, checking for litter, weeds, fingerprints on glass, dust in windows.



Hints & tips:

- Review your shop front 2 or 3 times per day, checking for litter and general kerb appeal;
- Link up with other shops and ask them to provide a 'critical' review of your shop front, what are their likes, concerns, and suggestions;
- Deep clean your shop front on a regular basis;
- Don't leave redecoration too long, regular shop front maintenance is the key.



Do your employees look busy and welcoming?

Even if you do not have any customers on your premises, you should always look busy, potential customers can be put-off entering your business if they see employees who look bored and disengaged.

Employees always need to appear welcoming, the hardest thing for any business is to get a new customer over the threshold, don't let your employees be the barrier that prevents customers from entering your establishment.

Keeping your doors open

It might be difficult in the depths of winter but the more frequently you can **keep your doors open** when trading the better.

Closed doors are a psychological barrier to potential customers entering your business.

WINDOWS

Your display windows can draw shoppers in – or drive them away.

A good window display is like a book cover, it should give you a taste of what to expect inside. If your establishment has a customer-facing shop front you should use it to create interest and appeal to customers.

Windows should be:

- Seasonally relevant
- Changed frequently
- Fun and inspiring
- Eye-catching
- Clean and clutter-free

The objective of a good window display is to:

- Provoke interest
- Make people think
- Stimulate memory recall
- Display windows are not there to display every item that you sell





Branding

Less is more when it comes to display windows. A cluttered window is less appealing to the eye, and featured items can get lost.

Once you start working on your actual displays, go outside often to get an idea of how the display looks from the outside. Does it grab your attention? Is your theme clear?

The time you invest in creating the best possible shop window displays will quickly pay off in terms of increased customer traffic and increased sales.

Storytelling



Build an event calendar for the year so you understand when the right time to change your widows will be and what you will focus on.

Choose the **events that are relevant** for your business and will create interest and footfall.

Place items in the window at **varying heights and depths** to catch shoppers' attention and make the overall display inviting to the eye.



Inspiration

Window displays should be changed a minimum of ten times per year.

Take inspiration from other major retailers/businesses and see how you can adapt the concepts they are using in your own windows.

Review online trend guides to determine what the key trends are for each season (colours, shapes, concepts, etc.).

Communication



Remove notices from windows and doors, apart from your opening hours / promotional graphics.

Draw in drivers, if your potential customers drive rather than walk, make your display larger and use more colour to draw the attention of passing motorists.

Use large items for window displays – small items have no impact from distance.

If you don't feel confident with your own 'in-house' visual merchandising expertise, hire a freelance visual merchandiser to help you build the key seasonal window displays.

MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS

If you have a product or service that you believe in, it's time to shout about it!

Marketing isn't difficult, nor does it have to be expensive. In its simplest form marketing is sharing with potential customers the benefits they will experience by interacting with your brand.

Every brand has a unique selling point (USP) as the brand owner your role is to understand what it is and communicate it to as many people as possible.

Referral

The most valuable of any marketing activity is **word of mouth**. Put simply people trust the views of other people far more than advertising and marketing.

Online

One of the easiest and most adaptable marketing channels available to independent businesses. Having a digital presence is a must for any business, however large or small.



Offline

Traditional methods of marketing your business (think, leaflets, magazine adverts, radio, etc.) are great for creating brand awareness but are often expensive with little direct sales impact and limited flexibility.

REFERRAL

Referral covers word of mouth marketing and word of mouth advertising. Marketing relies on your customers sharing their experience of your brand, whilst advertising requires the careful selection of influencers to actively promote your brand and associated products and services.

Over

90%

of consumers believe suggestions made by **friends & family** over all other forms of marketing. Whilst

70%

of consumers say they trust a brand more if they can read positive reviews written by other customers.

Hints & tips:

- Give customers a reason to share their experience through great service and great quality products;
- Don't be afraid to ask customers to share their experience with their social network;
- Make your premises and products Instagram-able, we live in a world of social sharing, make it easy for customers to do it;
- Allow (and actively encourage) customers to leave reviews on Google My Business and your website;
- Incentivise customers who actively share posts and leave reviews;
- Respond to EVERY review that you receive;

- Connect through social media with influencers that are likely to be interested in your brand;
- Create a group of followers that will actively share your social media coverage;
- Encourage all employees to share your social media coverage on their social platforms.



ONLINE PRESENCE

More than 80% of customers conduct online research before making a purchase decision.

Is it time to extend your reach beyond your premises?



If you think you could benefit from a stronger online presence then give the business support team a call for advice and support on growing your digital presence.

Website

More than 30% of small businesses still don't have a website despite most consumers thinking it makes a business more credible.

Gone are the days when website building could only be completed by specialists.

Today, if you know how to switch a computer on, you can build a website for your business in a couple of hours.

Social Media

Over 50% of consumers learn about brands from social media.

Businesses often push content to every available social media platform, but it can frequently be seen as a blanket message and turn into wallpaper. Narrowing down your choice to key channels allows for focused content that will deliver direct engagement.

Search engine

Whether you choose to directly market your business through organic Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) or paid SEO Ads the one thing that every business should have is Google My Business (GMB).

With more than three-quarters of all searches taking place through Google, being visible on it is a key priority for any local business. GMB is a free to use tool that will give your business a first page ranking and allow all potential local customers to see your offering.

Collaboration

The rise of 3rd party collaborations has opened up more opportunity to extend your reach to a whole new customer base. Just Eat, Uber Eats, Deliveroo focus on food delivery, but the desire for customers to get things instantly and conveniently will continue to grow. Is there an opportunity to grow footfall through 3rd party collaboration?

Hints & tips:

Direct mail

Make it personal and handwritten, this may seem old fashioned, but that's the point. Unlike social media and junk mail the reader has a far greater personal connection to it. Readership of handwritten notes are stated to be at +90%.

Printed media

Local media, parish magazines, county fair magazines are always looking for content writers and relevant content. Engage with target customers by writing informative articles that will be of benefit to them.

TV and Radio

What are you doing for your local community or to raise money for local charities? This level of community involvement will always be news worthy and gain you airtime on local media channels.

Events

Stalls and displays at trade shows, farmers markets, and other relevant events are a great way to gain increased brand awareness and engagement with a wider customer base. Be sure to communicate your brand and base location effectively so you are able to get longer term benefit from these events.

Leaflet distribution

Subject to local authority conditions, off-site leaflet distribution is a great way of creating immediate awareness of your business with consumers who may not be aware of your existence.

See Useful Contacts at the back for details of the licensing team.

OFFLINE PRESENCE

Many independent retailers achieve great, cost effective success, by adapting traditional methods of marketing to specifically target their core customers.



EXTENDING YOUR REACH Here are some of the key things larger businesses are focusing on to drive additional footfall and traffic to their physical sites.

App development

Having a mobile friendly website is a must, but having a mobile app alongside it, is taking it to another level.

Building loyalty and a personalised relationship with customers is so important in today's marketplace and having a business or local community app will help you achieve this.

Apps allow you to directly communicate with customers; tailor promotions just to them; allow them to pre-book, order and pay all via their phone.

Collaboration

You are not alone! Increasing footfall as an independent business can be difficult, so, why not link up with other commercial enterprises to drive additional footfall to the whole town/village.

By creating and promoting local community events and attractions everyone will see an uplift in footfall.

If you don't have a commercial business group that focuses on this, then why not create one!

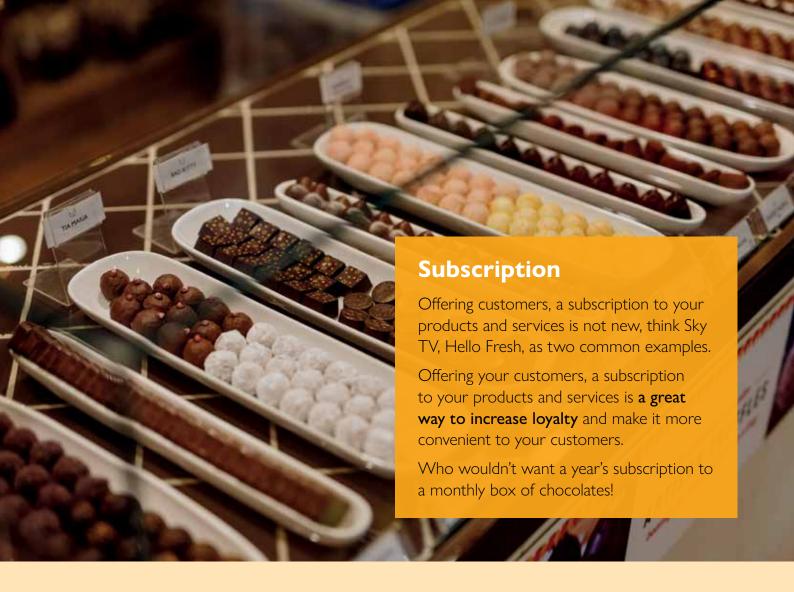
Click & Collect

Offering a 3rd party Click and Collect service is a great way of driving incremental footfall. Engaging with potential new customers which can often lead to an impulse purchase or up-selling of your products/services.

Almost 90% of retailers that offer click and collect experience an increase in footfall.





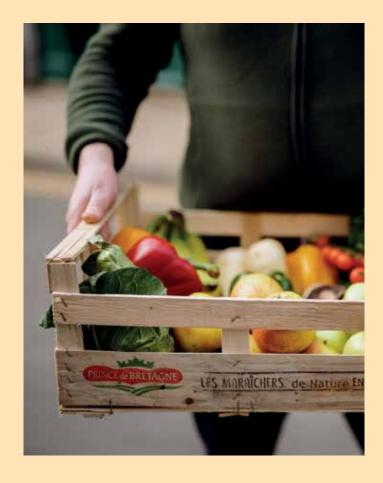


Home delivery

Home delivery is a great way to make shopping with you even more convenient!

You can even link up with other businesses to offer customers a 'total' shopping solution. Butchers, bakers, greengrocers...

Home delivery isn't just limited to traditional retailers, pubs, restaurants, clothing retailers and even hairdressers can offer at home services.



Range extension

Many retailers and service providers look to develop complementary ranges that will increase visit frequency to them.

Obvious examples of this would be takeaway sandwich shops who have great footfall at lunchtimes, often extend their range to include breakfast items to capture an early morning customer.

Every business has an opportunity to deliver some form of 'complementary' product or service.

Transactional websites and marketplace selling

eCommerce platforms have made it possible for small independent retailers to offer their products and services to a global audience without the establishment costs and complexity of physical retail.

If you already have great local demand for your products and services, then there is likely to be an online demand to chase.

Event calendar

Building an event calendar in line with your annual sales plan is a great way of driving additional footfall.

Don't just look at the big events e.g., Summer or Christmas when there is natural traffic and footfall, what about the quieter periods? How do you drive footfall out of season? All your marketing channels whether it is your website, app or social media can help connect with your customers and engage them to continue to visit outside of when they would naturally.



Getting customers to buy into your brand

Converting browsers into buyers is not as easy as changing the sign from closed to open. Maximising sales and customer conversion takes great effort and starts from the moment your potential customer enters the business.

There are endless opportunities to convert footfall into sales for your business, the following examples illustrate some of the key things you can focus on to give your business the best chance of increasing sales.



CUSTOMER **JOURNEY**



CONVERTING

PLANNING YOUR CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Customers need to be able to navigate your business easily. An effective layout will deliver an understandable, logical, easy-to-navigate environment for your customers.

Customer path

Planning your customer journey and how you want your customers to navigate your premises is key to delivering a great first impression.

A good floor layout always begins by plotting out the key locations within your business and determining how your customers will flow from one area to the next.

This might sound easy but even large businesses get this wrong, creating customer bottle necks, U-turns and underutilised areas of their business.

Transition Zones

The Transition Zone (clear space inside the doorway) is one of the most important customer spaces within a business. It encourages customers to change their mind-set from 'pavement' mode to 'buying' mode.

This area should always remain clear, allowing customers to gather their thoughts and gain their bearings before proceeding to engage with your brand!

Always resist the temptation to fill this space. At best customers will miss things placed here, at worst it will lead to a feeling of clutter and disorganisation and a long-term negative impact on your brand.

Sightlines

- Have you created visual blockers that prevent customers seeing important aspects of your offer?
- At any stage of the customer journey, customers need a clear sightline, so they understand where you want them to go next.
- Where possible prevent using fixtures and items that block key sightlines.
 By working with the footprint and physical constraints of your premises, plan your layout to give customers maximum visibility.

Newness and theatre

Customers have high expectations and the ability to give their business to competitors who are more innovative and exciting. You are no longer selling products and services you are selling experience!

Digital technology and media are driving a more informed customer who is looking at you to deliver new experiences and innovation. If you want to stand out and be relevant, being aware of trends and changing tastes within your industry is key to ensuring you remain the first choice to your customers.

Seamless customer journey

For most businesses, the customer journey begins before a customer ever enters the premises. The growth in omnichannel retail now extends the customer journey way beyond the interactions experienced within physical premises.

Most customers believe that businesses need to do more to deliver a seamless proposition across channels. Driving brand consistency across all service and communication channels and understanding how your customer wants to interact with your brand is key.



Engaging all your senses

When planning your customer journey consider how you can engage all the senses we use to interact with brands; sight, sound, smell, taste and touch.

Sight

Clear visibility, seasonally relevant displays, strong point of sale (POS), relevant lighting.

Engaging this sense is the most common focus for most retailers.

Sound

Is your background music reflective of your brand, is your team talking positively? Customers are always listening make sure they hear what you want your brand to be known by.

Smell

Scent will always trigger recall for customers. Does your business scent trigger a positive reinforcement of your brand?

Taste

You don't have to be a food and beverage business to trigger these senses. A glass of wine at the hairdresser or clothing boutique whilst browsing, not only leaves a lasting memory but increases customer dwell time.

Touch

The more you can encourage customers to physically engage with your brand and products the greater the chance of purchase. Think enhanced fitting rooms and interactive product demonstrations.



Point of sale

Communicating with customers through the use of point of sale (POS) can be extremely effective when you remember to stick to basic principles.

Many established retailers get their POS strategies wrong and try to communicate everything to their customers at the point of sale. Ultimately, customers find this frustrating and it actually has a negative impact on communication and sales.

Delivering a professional look and feel across all communication channels is critical if you want customers to view the items you sell as quality and great value for money.

Displays

All areas of the shop can be enhanced with carefully thought-out display areas and dressings. Use carefully thought-out and coordinated displays in all areas of the shop.

Areas of display should be balanced with areas of calm space around it.

Use pyramid displays for smaller products. Stack items in threes for maximum appeal. Use colour in displays to give them visual authority.

Position displays centrally (in the middle of the wall) or symmetrically (on either end of the wall) for best presentation.

Product stories

Part of delivering a great shop floor is having the ability to build destination departments that customers feel you have real authority in.

In order to deliver such destination departments, it is important to define these areas clearly for the customer by delivering the correct product mix and integrating the products into linked 'stories'.

Utilising space

The more space you can free up in your shop and dedicate to retail, the more products you can get out on display and, therefore, the greater revenue you can generate.

Space will always be at a premium, the balance between overfilling your business and under utilising your space is a fine one.

When planning layouts consider wall space and how you can use it to create focal points to draw customers further into your business.

Tips and questions to ask yourself:

- Will the customer immediately understand product departments?
- Can you group small logical product ranges together to create bigger departments?
- Are there lead-in displays to each department, facing the customer approaching from the main shopping path?
- Are there clear visual sight lines – as far as the back of the shop?
- Review your block plan on a regular basis – perhaps once every 3–4 months.
- Don't be afraid to evaluate periodically, to make sure you have the best possible selling space for your customers.
- Consider seasonal variations on stock and create specialist seasonal displays when thinking about layout.







Up-selling

Motivating a customer to buy at a higher price point, is the key principle of upselling. Effective up-selling is not simply about making more money,

but, delivering greater value to your customer. By listening and understanding their needs you are able to make suggestions and recommendations on how certain products/services can best meet their requirements.

In order to grow your average transaction value (ATV), you will need to have different price point options for your customers to move to, commonly known as, good, better, best options.

Think, mixed fibre jumper, wool jumper and cashmere jumper in a clothing retailer. Or in a restaurant 8oz sirloin steak, 8oz locally reared Aberdeen Angus sirloin steak, 30-day dry aged locally reared Aberdeen Angus sirloin steak.



Cross-selling

Recommending related products to a purchase that a customer is about to make is classic cross-selling.

Similar to up-selling you need to understand your customers wants and needs and be realistic with recommendations. A customer looking to purchase a portion of French fries is unlikely to purchase a fillet steak to go with it, however, the customer ordering a fillet steak is likely to add-on fries and a sauce with their order.

You and your team

Consumers can buy products and services from an endless list of competitors so why choose you?

Understanding that what you sell is secondary to the experience and interaction that a customer has with you and your brand is key.

Whether customers are browsing, enquiring, or buying, the personal or emotional connection you have with them needs to be sincere and positively memorable.



Impulse sales

Impulse selling is often delivered at the checkouts and can be effective in high traffic areas of your premises. Getting the balance of impulse products right is critical to protect your brand. Always remember to keep it simple and relevant to your brand.

Get the price point right for your target customer and don't confuse them by offering too many options.

Social

Are you setup for the generation of customers who love sharing their experiences over social media?

How can you create areas that actively promote social sharing and act as a great 'free' advertisement for your brand?

More and more businesses are focusing on 'Instagram-able' experiences/ products to generate free coverage and extend their customer reach.





Payment methods

Extending the breadth of payments options available to customers not only makes it easier for them but can often allow them to increase their basket spend with you.

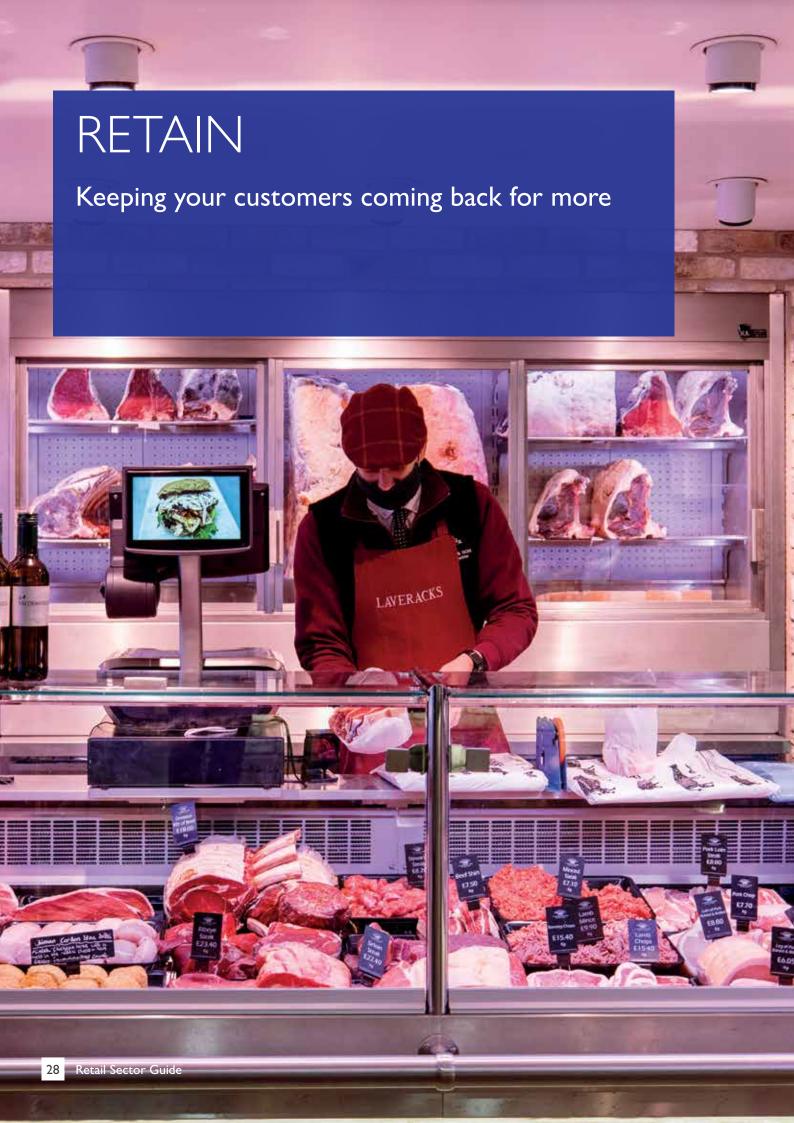
Apple Pay, Google Pay, PayPal are the obvious payment extensions, whilst Klarna, Clear Pay and other buy now pay later providers are making it easier for customers to increase basket spend.

Out of stock

Consider offering customers free delivery for products that may be temporarily out of stock.

Incurring the postal costs may be far less of an impact than losing a sale completely.





Repeat customers come for your product, but stay for the experience

With so much competition for your customers, how do you ensure they keep coming back to you? Customers are only loyal if you give them a reason to be.

Any brand can become indispensable to their customers when they invest in their experience and prioritise their relationship. Put your customers first, and repeat sales are sure to follow.



KEEPING CUSTOMERS





Be authentic and genuine

Nobody wants to be 'sold to'.

Businesses (and their employees) that are authentic and genuine will win the loyalty of customers.

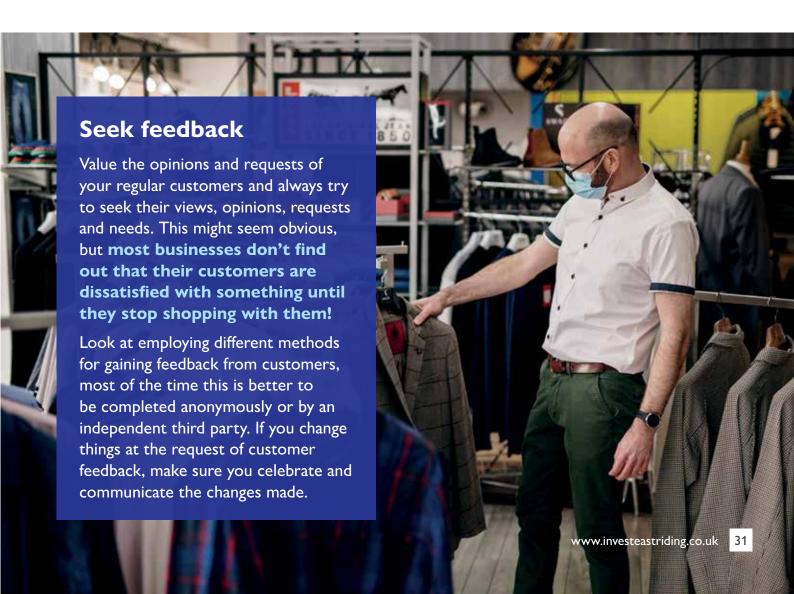
Sales are the output of offering customers personalised service, not just when they are buying but at every stage of interaction.

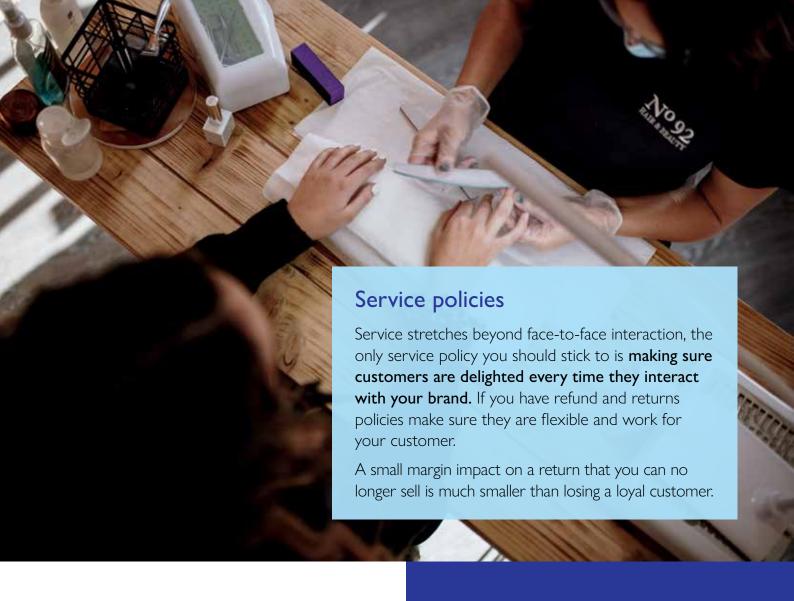


Communicate what makes you unique

Customers will want to align with you more if they understand what your brand stands for and represents, especially when it resonates with their values and beliefs. Try to define your brand proposition with things that resonate or even better involve the local community.

Think about local product sourcing, community involvement, community sponsorship. Most large organisations recognise that independent businesses have a competitive advantage over them by being able to demonstrate and deliver localness.







Keep in touch

Keeping in touch with customers through, newsletters, emails, social media, and personal calls is a priority, but if you make these interactions purely sales-focused you will lose interest and potential customers.

This level of communication is about giving back not selling to.

Make all your correspondence relevant, informative, and useful to your customer base.

Targeted approach

Take time to personalise your approach with your best customers and personally recognise the support that they give you and your business.

An unprompted handwritten thank you note posted to your customers is of much greater value to them than discounts and promotions.

A small non-business-related gift on their birthday is a great way to personally recognise the value you have for them.





Reward loyalty

Hold relevant exclusive events for your core customers, pre-season launches, pre-launch private dining taster menus, or anything else that your customers will value and feel emotionally engaged with. Not only does this show your customers you value them it will also act as great word of mouth marketing from your biggest advocates.

Whether you choose to deliver a structured loyalty scheme, 'buy 5 coffees and get the 6th free', or take a more ad-hoc approach, it is important to regularly reward your customers with something that will personally resonate with them and make them feel rewarded.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Useful contacts:

Business support

Telephone: 01482 391622

Email: business.support@eastriding.gov.uk

Website: www.investeastriding.co.uk/business-support

Business rates

Telephone: 01482 394748

Email: business.rates@eastriding.gov.uk

Website: www.eastriding.gov.uk/business/business-rates

Business waste

Telephone: 01482 395580

Email: business.waste@eastriding.gov.uk
Website: eastridingbusinesswaste.com

Food services

Email: food.services@eastriding.gov.uk

Website: www.eastriding.gov.uk/business/food-services

Licensing

Email: licensing@eastriding.gov.uk

Website: www.eastriding.gov.uk/business/

licences-and-registrations

Planning

Website: www.eastriding.gov.uk/planning-permission-and-

building-control

Trading at a market

Telephone: 01482 395904

Email: markets@eastriding.gov.uk

Website: www.eastriding.gov.uk/business/trading-at-a-

market/#Can-I-trade-at-a-council-market

Other links:

Antisocial behaviour

www.eastriding.gov.uk/living/crime-and-community-safety/anti-social-behaviour

Highways/road closures

www.eastriding.gov.uk/environment/roads-streets-traffic-and-parking/roads-pavements-and-traffic/highway-maintenance-schemes

Rural partnerships

www.eastriding.gov.uk/council/working-with-our-partners/rural-partnerships-and-forums

Trading standards

www.eastriding.gov.uk/business/trading-standards

Visit East Yorkshire

www.visiteastyorkshire.co.uk

YORSwitch - Cheaper Business Energy

www.east riding.gov.uk/housing/energy-efficiency/yorswitch-cheaper-energy-together/yorswitch-for-businesses

East Riding of Yorkshire Council Switchboard

01482 393939





