

Know What You Can Be Famous For

Everyone knows that The Warehouse is famous for low prices, and that Harvey Norman is famous for the best range of furniture and appliances. These businesses have created a strong awareness of what they stand for through their advertising and promotions and they have reinforced this by consistently delivering on this promise with the experience in their stores.

The instore delivery of this experience is the most important part of positioning a brand in customers' minds. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said "What you DO speaks so loud I cannot hear what you SAY."

We've all heard the saying "You can't be all things to all people" in business yet most retailers are still trying to deliver a number of unrelated product offers and then wonder why their customer base is less and less loyal.

Even more incredible are those retailers who promise best range and best service AND lowest prices. It simply can't be done profitably!

My advice is to:

1. Identify what you can be famous for (no more than two things).
2. Prepare a strategy that focuses on these strengths in everything you do, from shop location, design and fit-out, to staffing, product selection, pricing and promotion.
3. Remove all peripheral products that do not support these strengths.
4. Ensure that you employ staff with expertise in the key categories or at least staff with a passion for service and learning. Knowledgeable staff should always be available in the front of shop.
5. The store should contain multiple consultation areas (away from POS counters).

If these changes were made would your customer be left in any doubt about what you were famous for?

Until retailers decide to differentiate themselves by knowing what they are best at, they will continue to disappoint their customers and they will struggle to build profitable, secure, easily managed businesses.