

DFWC monitor underlines the importance of sales staff

Duty Free World Council's (DFWC) latest KPI Monitor highlights the importance of high quality customer service and well-trained staff in duty free shops.

The quarterly report for Q1 2019 reveals that service level has climbed to second place among all criteria measuring impact on the overall level of satisfaction among global duty free shoppers.

Value for money remains the number one criterion for shopper satisfaction.

Produced by Swiss research and consultancy agency m1nd-set for the Council, the report is compiled through interviews with over 4,000 international travelers across all world regions during March.

Staff are not only a key contributor to the shopping experience in airports, but also influential in converting browsers into buyers, according to the report.

On average, fewer than half of global shoppers (48%) interact with staff in airport shops. Of those shoppers who do interact, 45% are positively influenced and purchase following the interaction.

Europe sees the lowest level of staff interaction (40%), while engagement is highest in the Middle East and Africa.

The interaction with staff is more influential among men than women, according to the KPI Monitor (48% vs 42%) as well as among millennials, compared to older generations, namely seniors (49% vs 39%).

Staff influence on the purchase decision is also greater among shoppers from the Middle East and Africa region.

Categories that benefit the most from successful engagement between staff and shoppers are jewelry and watches (55%), fashion and accessories (50%) and beauty (48%).

The quarterly KPI Monitor also illustrates which aspects contribute to the overall perception of the duty free shopping experience. Among the top criteria, the perception that duty free provides a "truly different experience" has been gaining importance consistently over the past few quarters.

According to DFWC and m1nd-set, the differentiation of duty free shopping compared to downtown - with new products, travel retail exclusives and the different experience - is an area where staff can play a significant role in influencing the decision to purchase and increasing basket size.

Frank O'Connell, President, DFWC, commented: "Given that less than half of shoppers globally interact with staff in duty free shops, there is huge potential for the industry to make a concerted effort to train staff to be more proactive in engaging with shoppers and positively influence the sale.

"Complementing brand and product knowledge, sales staff understanding the specific needs of traveling consumers better and having the knowledge and skills to cater to those needs is the key."

The opportunity to raise standards in our industry has prompted the DFWC to create the DFWC Academy dedicated to offering accredited, online training programs created for people in the industry, he added.

The Academy's first course – a Certificate in Duty Free and Travel Retail – will start in September this year, with student enrolment already under way.

"I would encourage all industry stakeholders to get in touch with us about this exciting initiative," said O'Connell.

Peter Mohn, CEO & Owner, m1nd-set, added: "While online information sources and digital tools are indispensable to reach shoppers in travel retail, personal interactions are still fundamental in the marketing mix. The sales team is a major player alongside all other communications touchpoints.

"Travel generates experiences and stories and travel retail needs to be more focused on the stories behind the brands and their heritage. This, together with knowledge on new product launches and unique offerings in the store, should be a key area on which brands and retailers should focus in their staff training and employee engagement programs. Engaged employees will thirst for more stories to seduce the shopper."

"It is also vital to ensure monitoring and evaluation processes are well established with staff," Mohn continued. "Well-trained, engaged staff are vital, not only for their potential to impact sales, but also because of their influence on the shoppers' overall perception of the airport shopping experience and long-term customer loyalty."

For details on the KPI Monitor, contact info@m1nd-set.com.