

Chances in Winter

Trend expert Ludger Schlautmann shows how coffee shops can create a comfortable and inviting atmosphere during this crisis winter, regardless of whether customers are able to sit in or only collect takeaway orders.

Münster, West Germany at 8.30 am. It's been raining for hours and there's a chill in the air. Four customers are waiting outside the coffee bar, the 1.5m between them is now routine. Two customers in the queue have their umbrellas up. The door of the coffee bar is open and only one person is standing inside even though there is enough space for others to safely wait inside at the same time. Two more potential customers come into view, the collars of their jackets turned up against the rain. On noticing the long queue outside, they hurry past the coffee bar with the words "let's go somewhere else, I don't want to wait in the rain".



A quick look revealed markings on the floor designed to show customers where to wait. But the next customer wasn't sure if she should enter or not despite the sufficient distance to the customer already inside. Judging by the nervous fidgeting of the other customers, it was obvious the situation was tense. The absolute opposite



of what you want for any shopping experience.

Keeping your customers in winter. These scenarios are common during the corona pandemic. You can observe everything from laissez-fair to hysterical behavior. Winter is here. The rain will stay with us and the temperatures will continue to drop. Here are some tips to help you secure your returning customers and so your income:

Tip 1: Invest in canopies or other types of weather protection at the entrance. The optical effect alone shows customers you're not going to leave them "standing out in the rain". You can use weights for light gusts of wind or, even better, ground sockets.

Tip 2: Create clear paths. Avoid markings like lines in the entrance area that make the customer stop. Simply stick an X on the floor in front of every counter. Rectify queues by having a take-away and an in-house counter. Make this distinction clear with signs above the counters at least 2.5m. It's best to use symbols for represent this, e.g. a take-away coffee cup with a snack and a bag on one sign and a

cappuccino mug with a snack on a plate on the other.

Tip 3: Avoid having too many demands and rules. Most people are so used to the social distancing rules by now that you should only need to insist people wear face coverings and disinfect their hands. If you're unsure about the rules, make sure to check with the responsible authorities.

Tip 4: Decide how you want to register the contact details of the people sitting in. To reduce the queues, you can give customers the forms to fill in at their tables and return when leaving. This is much more convenient for consumers too.



Tip 5: Always keep the bestselling snacks on the counter. This allows customers to make fast and spontaneous decisions.

Tip 6: Train your employees to serve customers efficiently and in a friendly manner. The perceived waiting time can affect customers' loyalty and make them lose their appetite.

Tip 7: Working on keeping your customers happy even while they're waiting. Have



music playing in the background and signs with promotional messages, e.g. "only a few steps away from the best chocolate muffin in town!".

Tip 8: Have loyalty cards. Reward your customers for their loyalty and patience.

Tip 9: Create an atmosphere that fits with an overall plan of customer welfare. This includes a comfortable temperature in store, cleanliness of the tables, enough space to put away used crockery, and clean toilets with hand disinfectant and single-use hand towels.

Tip 10: Advertise for the winter season with trend drinks. Spiced up varieties such as a "Winter Chai Latte" are good sales drivers and customer magnets. Take a Chai Latte, top it with plenty of cream, drizzle on some caramel sauce and finish it off with some brittle sprinkles.



Good luck and take care!

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