



Matt Norgia

# The Weekly Retail Experience



Doug Fleener

## A Holiday Letter

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*“The surest way not to fail is to determine to succeed.” - Richard Brinsley Sheridan*

Dear Retail Employee,

With one week and a day before the “official” launch of the holiday season, I’d like to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing specialty retailers.

Unless your last name is Van Winkle and you just woke up from a long sleep, you’re keenly aware of the challenges facing retailers this holiday. Most of the holiday projections are indicating the weakest growth since 2002.

**The good news is that there should be at least some growth this holiday.** The bad news for most *Daily* readers is that most growth will likely happen at the discounters and online. I don’t think anyone can deny that it is going to be a challenging year for specialty retailers.

**But with every challenge comes an opportunity.** For every store that struggles there will be another that succeeds. For every store that fails before the doors open another will succeed out sheer determination. For every staff that throws in the towel another will grind it out.

**The difference this year is going to be you.** I’m convinced that the difference this year for specialty retailers will come down to the people in the store. It’s the staff that will ultimately decide the winners and losers this year.

**I have great admiration and respect for what you do because I’ve been there.** I know you work long hours at this time of year and often miss family events as a result. You have to deal with crowds and the occasional cranky customer. And after all that time on your feet you’re bone-tired at the end of the day. I know you give your all but this year it’s going to take even more.

**Here are some tips for you and your colleagues to make sure you’re one of those winning stores:**

**1. Stay positive.** Attitude could be the biggest difference between the winning and losing stores this year. Every employee needs to do his or her part in keeping a positive outlook. Take a leadership role and turn negative colleagues positive. The press will be looking to

cover how bad things are but your customers will be looking for stores that make them feel good. Make a customer feel great and a sale will follow.

**2. Succeed one day at a time.** If you have a bad day - shake it off. If you have a good day - do it again. You make your holiday by making your month. You make your month by making your week. You make your week by making your day. You make your day by making your hour.

**3. Maximize every customer opportunity.** You make your day by focusing on the needs of every single customer. Don't let your guard down and miss even one sale, because that one sale could be the difference in success or falling short.

**4. Don't pre-judge what a customer is going to spend.** Customers aren't a survey in the newspaper. Customers aren't a sales projection in some pundit's article. Customers are unique individuals who offer us a unique opportunity. Give them a unique experience and you're sure to be rewarded.

**5. Be a better salesperson every single day.** Push yourself out of your comfort zone. Keep showing products until the customer says they're done. Ask them if they'd like to also buy a gift card. Ask the customer who else is on their list that you can help them with. Focus on increasing your average sales and unit-per-transaction.

*It doesn't matter if you work for the owner of an independent store, a regional or national corporation; I believe you can make the difference this holiday.*

**Do you?**

Good luck this holiday.

Best regards,

Doug Fleener

*P.S. Please pass this letter on to as many retail employees as possible. Together we can have a successful and prosperous holiday.*

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