



## 5 Ways To Make Your Customers Trust You Enough To Buy From You

*By Bob Phibbs, the Retail Doctor*

Only time will tell what stores consumers actually visit or avoid, but the reality is, people are anxious to get back to normal. While stores with more open space may appear safest, they also have more foot traffic than smaller boutiques. Some customers may be more comfortable returning to those smaller stores before the malls.

Here are five ways local retailers can put their customers at ease in the months to come.

### **1. Reach consumers at home**

Retailers can start reassuring customers now, before stores actually reopen. Show empathy for the current situation and explain your proactive safety efforts via your store's website and social media accounts. Show what has changed and what hasn't. Here are two great examples the first from Third Rock Music <https://youtu.be/iF4Cse5JJd4> and Huthmaker Violins <https://youtu.be/Q6-yAMQeyRc>. Every retailer should do one on their own and post everywhere including on your Google My Business account.

### **2. Institute familiar signs of safety**

Look at what your competitors are doing and bring to your store. Have signs on your doors if it is "No mask, no shoes, no service." Don't assume anyone will understand just one sign. Place sidewalk tape and other markers to help limit shopper numbers, add floor decals where appropriate to maintain social distancing and add directional guidelines at registers to help space everyone out.

### **3. Make safety measures highly visible**

Plan on placing sanitizer stations at the door and throughout the store—and makeup shields for customers entering dressing rooms so they can protect their faces – and your clothes. Signage should explain practices such as limiting store capacity, encouraging appointments and preferring credit payments over cash. Ultimately, you want to make a show of your cleanliness so make sure it is done while shoppers are in your store.

If I was a retailer, I'd be carrying masks for sale. I've has seen branded ones being sold—even that match customers' dogs.

### **4. Establish employee safety protocols**

It's important to have all employees on board with newly implemented safety precautions. Now's the time for training crews in not just how to clean but how to develop rapport, especially in a mask. Avoid hospital-standard masks, choosing either branded ones or allowing employees to bring their own but make sure they are subject to your approval. You certainly don't want to see an employee in one with grim reaper teeth.

Consistency counts here too. Either all do or all don't wear masks but consumers don't want to see customers with masks and half of your employees without, saying, "our managers say we don't need them."

Employees may need reminders about how to care for and assist customers but not hover—plus a protocol for when a visitor doesn't practice social distancing measures.

### **5. Think through current and future realities**

Don't think about this as reopening or holding a "grand opening." You'll have a soft opening as you learn a lot of procedures that are going to change.

Yet there is hope. Retail industry insiders have taken note of "revenge buying" in some reopened places—with the "revenge" directed at the coronavirus. Pent-up demand is being released but it is uneven as to product category.

Some stores may have a slower start as consumers ease back in to shopping over the coming months. Even if a \$700 sale is typical, you have to think a \$7 sale is great. Be glad you have an opportunity for someone to come in.

You are going to have to sell your way out of this. Reopening a door is easy, rebuilding trust between you and your employees and your customers will take some time.

In the future it may not be the whole nation going through this, but it could be a city getting locked down. Whatever we learn from this is going to be a playbook going forward.

To learn how to retail during the time of Covid-19 including how to market, sell, and merchandise, check out this free 8-lesson course. No credit card required or commitment.

<https://www.retaildoc.com/en/free-course-on-reopening-retail-and-rebuilding-trust>

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Bob Phibbs, is the Retail Doctor; a speaker, author of three books and retail sales expert of choice for some of the most legendary retail brands including, LEGO, Omega, and Yamaha, regional chains as well as small mom and pops. He is bullish on brick and mortar retailing. With over 30 years' experience, beginning in the trenches of luxury retail and extending to senior management positions, he has been a corporate officer, franchisor and entrepreneur.

He and his work have appeared in the *New York Times* and *the Wall Street Journal*. He also performs business makeovers for the *Los Angeles Times*. He received the highest increase in sales from South Coast Plaza, the highest grossing mall per square foot. He is one of the top retail influencers in the world.

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