

## FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE: Mastermind

Customer Service in Aurora -- Round VIII: Mastermind

By Stephen Somerville

A couple of weeks back, I wrote about the fact that corporate loyalty programs have been proudly trumpeted by organizations as a great way to recognize and financially reward long-term customers.

In that column, I presented two local companies ? one with a façade of a loyalty program and the other one with a real and straightforward program.

Omars Shoes in the south part of Aurora are the latter.

Their loyalty program is a simple one. You have a card and every time you buy something they sign it. On your tenth purchase you receive a ?free? pair of shoes. (They take the average price of your previous nine purchases, so you will most likely not get the shoes for free, but the cost will be, in most cases, very minimal.)

Today, I want to simply describe a local, positive buying experience that made me happy and exceeded my expectations.

I have a good friend who now lives in Plano, Texas. I am the godfather to his son.

I always send his now thirteen-year-old son a present at Christmas and for his birthday in early August.

I invariably go to the local Mastermind store because I like their selection, the service is great, the pricing seems reasonable and they do free wrapping.

A couple of Friday nights ago I went looking for something to send Spenser. I noticed right away that the setup of the store had been changed since I was last at the store.

A young lady promptly greeted me as I came in and asked if I needed any help. I said, ?Thanks, but I am fine right now.?

In addition to searching for a present, I am always intrigued by what new Lego or scientific toys that they have. I have purchased both a model wind turbine and a solar array model as gifts as well as buying a plastic car engine model for myself (that took forever to build and ruined part of our dining room table due to ?glue? issues, but that is a story for another day).

After searching around for potential toys for me, I found a couple of items for Spenser.

The lady behind the cash then asked if these gifts were for a couple of children and I said ?No, just one.?

The staff then began to wrap the gifts for me.

I then took a chance and asked if they had a box to put the presents in. Most times when I ask this question ? without them even looking ? I am politely told that they do not.

In this case, the lady said that she was not certain if they had one, but she would go out back and look.

A minute later she came back with an appropriately sized box.

She then put the wrapped presented into the box, put some wrapping paper (that she had turned inside out) around the box to make it look better and then proceeded to encase the box in lots of transparent tape so all that I needed to do now was put an address on the package and pay for postage.

This lady's effort saved me a bunch of time, effort and maybe a couple of dollars.

I thanked the team who helped me and left the store with the box that was now ready for shipping.

All I can say is that a happy customer means a customer that will be coming back. And I am a (very) happy customer.

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