

The 8 Things Not To Ask Retail Managers



Tony Curl

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Anyone who has worked in retail for any period understands the frustrating questions they get asked every day. How they deal with the answers help make the retail manager. I recently spent some time with two national -role colleagues and had some fun working through some of the most asked questions that we had as retail managers and how we dealt with them. Being asked the same questions may be frustrating, as retail leaders it's our role to ensure that frustration was not shown. Read on to discover more.

The 8 things retail managers hate hearing.

- Do you work here?

A perennial favourite. Was the corporate uniform not a giveaway? The name badge? The amount of times I was asked this was incredible and I am sure it's the same for every retail manager. An opportunity to share your personality with the customer and always answered with a smile.

- Can I see the manager?

What? Doesn't this confident air I display not give you the impression that you are already talking to the manager. A question that hurts the ego, no doubt but one that when answered correctly should give you some respect.

- Is that your best price?

Working with Every Day Low Price retailers, this was always a favourite one to answer. Retailers that had best price guarantees are others that enjoy answering this one. "Yes actually, that is our best price, but if you can find a cheaper price anywhere we will beat it by 10%"

- Does your store always look this messy? OR Is your store always this quiet?

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Yep, we have moved from the customer and now we have moved onto those questions our area managers asked. When they start with this question, you knew this visit was not going to be a good one. It's very hard to recover from a store that isn't presented well when your area manager walks in. Swallow your pride, don't get defensive and do your best to recover.

- Where can I find someone to serve me?

Rosters and coverage. Two of the biggest challenges that retail managers face operationally. This question was always like a dagger to the heart. "Do you know how hard I work on the rosters" you feel like saying. "I don't have enough wages to cover everything" may be another retort. But we don't, we usually answer with, "well I am here now, how can I help you?"

- Is this all you have?

Unless you run a poor operation, it's odds-on that what you have on the shelf, is all have. But to make you feel better, I'll walk out back to the stockroom and have a look and come back and let you know. Seriously though, I am happy to check the computer and see which of our closest stores have more stock.

- Is this price correct?

Another dig at my operational ability. Of course, this price is right, I must fully check scan the store every fortnight. But you know what, I will check it on the computer to give you some assurance.

- Have you done my roster?

Moving onto our team, the question we always hated was this one. Mainly because it usually smacked of our own inabilities. Why is that often the most important things, like letting your team know when they are working, is often the thing we don't prioritize. Just get them rosters done and you don't have this issue.

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Other questions were put forward by my former colleagues that didn't make the list.

- Where's all the clearance?
- It says up to 50% off?
- Can you get me somewhere who knows what they are talking about?
- Can I speak to someone higher than you?

Retail is an attitude. If you choose your attitude you become a master at answering these questions, but if you don't choose your attitude, get ready to become frustrated.

And, it's a choice.

Our Choices

In retail, you can go two ways. You can join the #fmlretail brigade or you can choose to be the professional you are employed to be. I know the retail managers I continue to work take the latter approach, as they work on becoming the best leader they can be.

How do they do this, day-in, day-out?

I work with them to truly understand my front-line leaders model.

LEAD – ENGAGE – CONNECT.

And it starts with understanding the LEAD aspect. To lead others, we must first lead ourselves. To be the best retail leader, you must be able to lead yourself. Be the best role model, be the best in choosing your response, and be the best retailer you can be. And when you master your self-leadership, you answer all those questions in the right way.

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Retail will continue to be a big employer of people. I fell into retail when I left school, while all of my mates went to university to become professionals. Along the way (30 years), I completed my Bachelor Degree, lived in other cities, travelled extensively and became a respected senior leader developing other retail leaders. My gifts and experiences are now shared with many other retail managers.

So while I saw my mates become professionals, it's hard for me not to acknowledge that I was as well. Retail managers should always see themselves in the best possible light and see themselves as professional leaders, but this can only start when they learn how to lead themselves.

Tony Curl has always been a communicator. A leader of large teams of up to 300 team members, he had to be clear, concise and consistent with his message to achieve success. His messages motivated his teams to reach out and achieve results over and above, and supported the journey of those yearning to be leaders. He now speaks widely at multiple levels. He is an accomplished keynote speaker and has a knack of closing out conferences and seminars to leave people energised for the journey ahead. He also shares his wisdom to the youth and small business start-ups. His communication now extends to writing and he is the President of A Better Today Australia, a writing community designed to showcase aspiring Australian writers and empower their readers.. His work has also been published at Simple Reminders Network, Leadership Inspirational, Realizing Leadership, Ezine, A Better Today Media and A Better Today Australia. He recently published his first book, "Seriously Simple Stuff to Get You Unstuck" available on [Amazon](#) and all good online retail stores. He can be contacted at coachcurl.com or by ringing 1300 866 928