



## Leading Across Divisions: The Perils of Stovepipe Retailing



One of the reasons I like JCPenney is because their marketers and advertisers work in conjunction with the front-line retail store managers.

When JCPenney runs a promotion with special and coupons, they mail them to residences, and those same coupons are available in the store. It makes good sense. As anyone in advertising knows, the purpose of direct mail marketing is to position yourself as a place where people want to go to do business.

When buyers (or potential customers) receive the JCPenney coupon, they get the idea that they want to shop there, and they show up at the store. They choose items to purchase, which is generally more than what they would have purchased if they had not been to the store at all, and the store uses the coupon to render the discount. The system works. People respond to incentives. The store makes profit. People buy things. Everyone wins.

This all seems very basic, even to a first year advertising student. The purpose of advertising is to generate buying behavior. JCPenney knows this and does it well. Not everyone does.

Sadly, some stores drop the ball.

I was at a retail store this week that enjoys nationwide recognition. I selected items for purchase. When I arrived at checkout, I realized I did not have my coupon. The store refused to honor my discount, even though they have the ability to process the coupon, whether I have it in my possession or not. In their system I am listed as a preferred customer, and am clearly one of

## Mary's Updates

My book ["Master Your World ~ 10 Dog-Inspired Leadership Lessons to Improve Productivity, Profits and Communication"](#) has been selected as the winner for Dan Poynter's Global eBook Awards in its Leadership category. Thank you for cheering me on in person, via email, and on Facebook. This is so cool!



We have just added an at-a-glance event calendar on [my website](#) to make it easy for you to find me. :) If you will be at any of my upcoming events, please [shoot me an email](#). I'd love to connect with you.

## Mary's Book of the Month



[\*\*The Presentation Coach: Bare Knuckles Brilliance for Every Presenter\*\*](#)  
by Graham Davies

Graham Davies book, *The Presentation Coach: Bare Knuckles Brilliance for Every Presenter* is a must read. Graham Davies is a presentation coach to some of the world's most important people. He knows what works in crafting a speech, from a eulogy to a toast to the House of Commons. He is brilliant, and he shares his methods in this book. I recommend this to everyone who has ever tried to be persuasive, in addition to anyone who delivers presentations for how to be effective. Graham's book is also hilariously funny and profoundly interesting. Seldom do I read a book so quickly and learn so much.

## Twitter and Social Media

Sorry, kids, but we are using Facebook more and more for business. Businesses need a Facebook presence and that link needs to be shared. Put your Facebook username on everything that has your email address and your website. It increase SEO and helps people find you.



[To see what Mary is saying on Twitter, click here.](#)

the coupon recipients. At that moment, I certainly did not feel preferred.

The store manager explained to me that the reason they could not honor my coupon was because "Headquarters wants to track which advertising was working the best."

With a smile on my face, I told her what tactics were not working, but the sarcasm was lost. Needless to say, I departed the store with zero items and a healthy resolve to never return. (If you'd like to know the name of the store please e-mail me and I will give you both the name and the address. It ends with Mart and it has nothing to do with animals or walls.) I thought this was a deplorable lack of communication between the company's advertising and marketing departments, their data collection ability, and the retail store.

Since when does data collection take precedence over sales? Isn't the whole intent of advertising and marketing to generate sales? Do we really have retail organizations where the corporate departments are so compartmentalized that they are not supporting the goals of the company? Apparently, we do. We have retail stores and service providers who have lost sight of why they are in business.

Let me help. If you are in business, your products fill a need for your customers. Your job as a manager and a leader is to make the buying process as easy as possible, as pleasant as possible, and provide a good quality product for the price. That's it. It is that simple.

The process breakdown generally is not the quality of the product. It is either deplorable customer service or a miserable buying process. In my case, the store was a shining example of exactly what not to do.

I recently attended a grand opening for another store. The planners did a terrific job with advertising the event, but on the day of the opening, the store had very few cashiers, although several customer service people were walking around the store asking if they could help people. Why would a store manager pay employees to help potential customers on the floor, but then neglect to have sufficient cashiers? I observed the checkout line with 15 people in line. Many potential buyers just left their carts full of merchandise as they walked out of the store, clearly disgruntled.

Again, this is a case where the store manager poorly managed his/her employees at the expense of sales. The quality of the product was there, and if customers had the opportunity to have interaction with personnel at the cash register, it may have been pleasant. But the process was too long and cumbersome, so customers never got that chance.



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Mary Kelly



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Pet Tip:



Domesticated animals should not be left unattended outdoors! Allowing domesticated cats live outside (or dogs or rabbits or anything else, but mostly people let out cats) to "roam free" means putting them in terrible danger from cars, coyotes, owls, raccoons, snakes, and diseases. This is not being a responsible pet caretaker. They don't know what is best for them - you do. I have heard many recent tales of sorrow by pet owners who let their animals outside overnight or for days at a time only to learn of the animal's tragic end. Please keep animals safe.

Thank You for Reading



Please feel free to [contact me](#). I'd love to hear from you!

*Mary C. Kelly*

Two lessons here: 1. Makes sure that you look carefully at your processes to make sure they are consistent with your business vision and support your business plan. Coordinate among the divisions to make sure that one is not unintentionally sabotaging another. 2. Make sure that your people respond appropriately when you are not there, and that their response is what you want them to do.

Front-line customer service personnel should encourage business growth instead of alienating preferred customers.

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