



## Ask SCORE for Business Advice

"Ask SCORE" Column  
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### **Did You Find Everything Today?, Dec. 17, 2009 by Tina Dettman-Bielefeldt**

DYFET. It's a question that clerks are taught to ask customers. It's also a question that few respond to.

"Did you find everything today?" the clerk asks. The responses I've received have ranged from total silence to a mumbled "huh". At a department store, the clerk asked me the question. I told her that I was looking for baby bibs and had thought that they carried them. She said she thought they did, too, but never offered to check.

Clerks have replied, "That's too bad" and "Maybe you should try a different store." Despite asking the question, no one actually tried to help. It had become almost a game when one day while shopping at Festival Foods, the young, male cashier asked the question. When I told him what I couldn't find, he was on the telephone immediately. It was extraordinary to have someone actually practice customer service.

When asked about his training, he said that the boss insisted on good service and it was a responsibility that he took seriously. I was so impressed that I called the boss, Mark Skogen, CEO/President of Festival Foods. Skogen has 13 stores and 3,500 employees. Of those, 3,500 receive DYFET training during orientation.

"We expect the cashier to ask the question and be of help if the answer is 'no, I couldn't find...' or 'no, you didn't have...' We actually have a video created that role plays how to do DYFET the right way," Skogen explained.

Employees are taught that any guest questions, comments, or concerns brought to an associate need to have ownership taken of that question. He noted, "The question/concern is 'yours' until it's solved. An associate may not be able to solve the question or problem on their own so they need to get the proper associate that can help in that case."

Skogen has a dozen associates in each store on headsets so that they can bring up an item requested by a customer. If there is a product requested that Festival doesn't carry, they ask that a "want card" be filled out (available at each register). A person in each store researches the want card requests and, if possible, it is added to the inventory. Over the

course of a year, hundreds of requests come in and about 100 new items are added based on availability.

Other stores could learn from Skogen. Before the good experience at Festival, I was convinced that training ended at asking the question. Perhaps managers aren't aware that they are losing an opportunity for a sale every time the response goes unanswered. According to Skogen, associates need to remember why they're asking.

"They shouldn't be asking because it's a 'task' they must do. They should be asking because they want to help. They want to make the shopping experience as good as it can be and get the products that were missed or that someone gave up on because it's a long walk across the store to get it," he said.

If you'd like to learn more, contact the Green Bay Chapter of SCORE. Visit [www.greenbayscore.org](http://www.greenbayscore.org) or call Cindy Gokey at 920-496-8930 for information.

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