Introduction

As a developer of EPOS systems and solutions, we are continually updating our software to help trade counters and merchants get the most out of their business.

It struck me one day that getting some feedback on what makes a good trade counter from the customers that use them would be useful not only to the trade counters themselves but it would also help us to develop better software for them. So, we posted a message on the Plumbing Forum asking the members what they thought and we got some great responses which are listed below.

Obviously, these responses apply whether it’s a plumber’s merchant or any other type of trade counter, but many of the comments are true for all businesses.

Simon Harvey

➢ “Free, quality coffee! Can’t even think without it.”

➢ “Software systems don’t make good merchants. Good people do.”

➢ “You can have the flashiest system in the world, but if it’s operated by donuts you’ll get ‘cack’ out of it.”

➢ “Service and price are my big 2.”

➢ “Good staff make a merchants and ignorant ones fail.”

➢ “What about access to their stock list while you’re in the queue? It’ll crack you up waiting 20 mins to find out the part you require is not in stock.”

➢ “I know people will say ring ‘em but sometimes you can’t get them on the phone!!!”

➢ “Proper professional, caring merchants who look after their customers”

➢ “A local merchant by me still uses paper trail, but it doesn’t really matter as they provide good customer service and the guys behind the desk know their stuff.”
What Makes a Good Trade Counter? (continued)

> “A decent amount of stock!”

> “Software is the concern of the merchant to be honest. I don’t really care unless it means the demise of decent guys serving you.”

> “Knowledgeable staff. I hate reading out a list then having to check the bag because the guy either gets confused or doesn’t want to ask what I mean!”

> “Good levels of stock and a system that allows quick transactions. Nothing worse than losing half an hour out of a busy day just for a few fittings.”

> “We can login to some suppliers and order the necessary materials for jobs and either have them delivered to an address or available for pick up at any branch. Of course this has some glitches, due to items that are not generally held in stock, but if that happens I will get a phone call letting me know if the item(s) will not be available at the requested date/time. At least now I don’t have to waste time at the suppliers placing orders tomorrow for things that need doing next week.”

Conclusion

The main point coming out of this seems to be that your trade counter customers want to be in and out as quickly as possible so they can get back to their job and earning money. The main way to achieve that is having efficient, knowledgeable staff. As one of the comments above points out, “You can have the flashiest system in the world, but if it’s operated by donuts you’ll get ‘cack’ out of it.” In the same way, once you’ve invested in quality, knowledgeable staff, they won’t be able to do their job properly if your point-of-sale system is slow, cumbersome and unreliable.

That’s why it’s so important to make sure you have EPOS and accounting software that will make your life easier, not harder, and let your most important asset, your staff, do what they do best – keeping your customers happy.

If you’d like to find out more about EPOS and trade counter software that will help you do business better, give us a call on 01458 444010 or send an email to simon@benchmark-software.co.uk.