**RESPONSE**

**Under Stress, More Errors**

There were only two of us at the counter when a customer came in with a returns and began digging in her bag for the receipt. A little while later multiple curbside customers arrived and my colleague went to deliver the curbside items leaving me alone at the counter.

My line started to grow as the customer continued digging for the receipt. I suggested she look on her online account to find the receipt. Initially, she resisted asking me to find it with her phone number, which I couldn’t do. Meanwhile, a customer in line shouted at me to call for backup. I let them know that I attempted to do this three times but got no answer.

Eventually, my customer was able to get a QR code for her item. It turned out to be a marketplace return that required a specific program to process it that was on another register. After letting the customer know, she expressed her impatience by saying, “I hate these returns because they’re always such a pain”. This remark, the impatient customers in line, our curbside rush, the stores understaffing and not feeling well got me flustered.

I made several unsuccessful attempts to process the marketplace return until my colleague came back and pointed out that I was on the wrong register. I assumed the register was just messed up and that’s why I couldn’t do the return. I moved to the correct register, completed the return, apologized to the customer and assisted the next customer.

It’s unusual for me to let customers and challenging circumstances affect me, but they got the best of me on that day causing me to make more mistakes than I typically would.

Designing with an awareness of how external factors may impact users can reduce the possibility of user errors in high stress situations. Presenting essential information first by using clear language and slowly revealing more information as users interact with your website can alleviate stress. Other ways to accomplish this would is to use logical layouts, intuitive navigation, clear error messages and responsive designs.

**More Choices, Too Much**

Over the years, I’ve noticed how customers tend to become overwhelmed when given more than three options.

Recently, a customer called asking me to put a specific pair of white pants on hold. Unfortunately, we didn’t have the pair she was looking for, but we had five other pairs that might work. She was excited that we had so many and asked me to put those on hold for her to pick up the next day.

When she arrived, I handed her the white pants that were on hold and she seemed overwhelmed just looking at the 5 pair of pants in front of her. It occurred to me that she couldn’t decide which one to choose. The initial pair of pants she wanted was made from a light fabric, so I asked if she wanted a similar fabric. She said they were going boating so a light fabric would be best. I suggested putting back the jeans and parachute pants, which left us with three lighter options.

To narrow the choices even more I asked what kind of outfit her husband would normally wear on a boating trip. This helped her eliminate another pair of pants. Once, we had two options she was able to decide within seconds.

This type of reaction is something I’ve gotten a lot while working in retail, so I usually only offer three items at a time unless the customer specifically asks for more.

I can see how being aware of this desire to have more, but not really being able to handle this can translate to web design, especially when there is an overwhelming amount of information on a site. However, finding a balance between providing additional content and preventing users from being overwhelmed is ideal. This can be accomplished by designing a website that is organized, gradual in its approach to information and user centered to create an atmosphere that meets the desire to have options without sacrificing usability and clarity.

**DISCUSSION RESPONSES**

**#1**

**#2**

**#3**

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