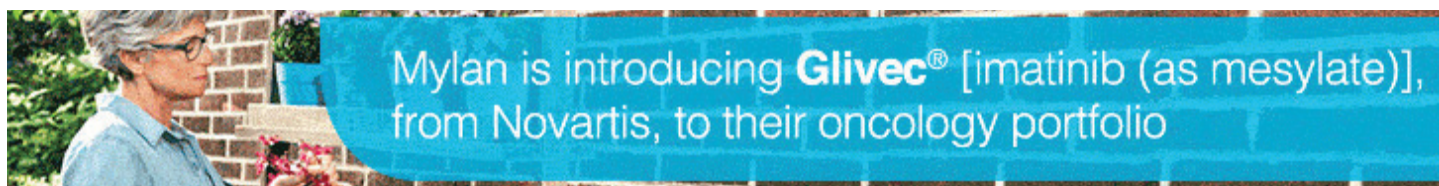




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'Counter discipline' ...a retail virtue too compelling to ignore, says Glenn Guilfoyle

As consumers, pharmacists – like Joe Public at large, are so conditioned these days to a certain “counter discipline” in classic retail environs. Take the everyday supermarket.

There is clear signage and a reinforcing culture, that if you

- Want self service you go to those self scanning/self self paying areas
- Want service and have less than 12 items you go the express checkout
- Want service and have more than 12 items you go to any other checkout
- Have a query you go to the customer service kiosk, usually in the middle of all the checkout lanes
- We even see some supermarkets recently provide for lolly-free checkouts, self provision of shopping goods bags, etc

Take the local branch of your bank. You will often be corralled into queues via those tensa barrier devices for efficient processing of your needs at the battery of service counters. Sometimes you may even be intercepted before queuing by the bank equivalent of the maitre d', who will triage you.

Similarly, at the airport, for those not yet automated with the self check-in kiosks, you will be corralled into queues via tensa barriers, and marshalled to appropriate service counters, based on things like whether you are a bag drop or



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need full check-in. There are separate counters for ticketing, lost baggage and a host of other needs.

Take the aspirational Apple Store experience. Apple is legendary for hosting from one specialist service counter to another, each manned by subject matter experts, who have everything they and you need at their fingertips at that counter to provide you a complete solution for that product type.

I could go on and on.

But as consumers, subjected and conditioned to all of this, who also happen to be pharmacists, what do we subject our customers to? Allow me to generalise, and apologies to any of you that this does not apply to.

We tend not to employ these counter discipline systems. Why? Have we got it right and all those in other retail environs got it wrong? I think not. Why? Because we are different, since we are about health and medications. Again, I think not.

- We may or may not clearly sign our counters as dedicated to a specific type of service, eg script-in
- Whether we do or don't, we often do not honour such signage and will allow any customer/need to go to any counter they like <or we like>
- We may provide one, two, three or sometimes even more so-called "back counters"
 - Yet we will often under-utilise our counter "real estate" and allow the 80/20 rule to apply, ie 80% of customers are allowed/encouraged to come to 20 % of the available service counter "real estate"

And what is so wrong with this comparatively laissez faire approach?

- It fosters congestion on both sides of the counters, ie the customer side and the staff side

And what is so wrong with congestion?

- It destroys smooth traffic flows again on both the customer and staff side of the counters

What is so important about smooth traffic flows?

- It fosters efficiency and speed of processing on the staff side and greater chance of controlling customer traffic

damage done to the patient, the profession... The Judge should also just slap the back...

Yabby

King thanks participants, flags financial analysis of pharmacy sector
What concerned me most about the "independent" review was that no acknowledgment of the great things community pharmacy does...

Nicholas Logan

Pharmacist rapes customer, attempts to flee country

I agree with the persons making comments below: 1. Where was the supervising pharmacist and 2. I don't think he...

Leah Rosevear

CLINICAL TIPS



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Clinical tips: hayfever

KARALYN HUXHAGEN, 21/10/2016



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BEN BASGER, 14/10/2016



Clinical tips: why pharmacist vaccination matters

KARALYN HUXHAGEN, 07/10/2016

in such a way as to expose more of your gondola aisles in the approach to and from the dispensary

- It also fosters greater effectiveness of the customer's quiet and private conversational experience. By dedicating specific service counters to specific types of service.....script-in; script-out; otcand aligning traffic flows accordingly, this provides the opportunity to create a holistic service hub at that specific counter. Think about how closely you might be able to move towards re or co- positioning all relevant products, services and information at the given service hub so that the pharmacist stationed there has all the "tools of the trade" at the fingertips whilst hosting the customer conversation, without needing to break stride to go get something.

Efficiency and effectiveness. Two, often opposing forces, when applied to most pursuits. But it doesn't always have to be that way. And re-engineering the way you think about your service counters in the pharmacy can be one very good example where efficiency and effectiveness can co-exist. Your customers will love it.

Glenn Guilfoyle is principal of The Next Level. Click here for more information

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