

Dumb and Stupid

Redundancy is Redundant.

Like the annoying customer, it's not always the dumb and stupid customer's fault they're...well, dumb and stupid. Sometimes people are just having an "off" day. Their actual intelligence and brain power may not have anything to do with their moment of stupidity. Even geniuses have their bad days.

We don't blame people for mistakes. But when your own error and brain malfunction turns you into a rude customer, that's when we feel like taking you by the ears and stringing you up with fishhooks. Here are some examples of rudeness born from stupidity.

Item Inquiries

"Yes, that's all we have."

It amazes me that so many people will go to an aisle, find the item they're looking for and realize there's only one or two left—or none at all—stare at it dumbfounded and go "Is that all you have?" But that's not the part that amazes me because, we *could*

have more in the back (though in the case of my store it's unlikely—we rarely have overstock). The part that amazes me is when I say “Yes, that's all we have” people get angry and act like we purposely ran out just to spite them.

“Why don't you order more?” They ask.

“Well, *that* never crossed my mind. Let me get on my ‘Get crap in five minutes or less’ computer and have that for ya right away.”

Don't be like this. Don't be a doodie-head. After all, this is a place of business. We, amazingly enough, *sell* our merchandise. And sometimes we run out. It happens.

If the shelf is empty, odds are we have ordered it. Sometimes several times. It takes at least a week to get this stuff in (in smaller stores anyway). And, in the case of my store, some products (I assume the less important ones) take longer to reach us than others. Frustrating? Yes. Our fault? No. Call Corporate and make a complaint if it pokes at your feelings that much. Otherwise, stop **baahing** about it.

Price Signs

“That’s not what that sign ten feet away from the merchandise said!”

This scenario has already been partially covered, but here’s a more in-depth example.

Some people get rather snooty and upset if they read a sign wrong and end up being charged more for an item than they originally thought it was. The problem here is, they usually see the price it says on the sign without reading specific descriptions.

For example, sometimes we set up displays with several items and, in order to grab the attention of the customer, there will be a sign above the display that says something like “Starting at \$1.00.” Some customers forget to read the whole sign. They only see the \$1.00 part and start grabbing only to find when they get to the register their beloved 2 gallons of fruit punch is actually \$2.00.

“That sign said a dolla!” they say all indignant and red-eyed, nostrils flaring.

“Huh?” the cashier asks. She glances over her shoulder at the display the angry customer is pointing

at. “Oh! That says *starting* at a dollar. The fruit punch is actually two dollars; see the price sticker on it?”
smile

The customer looks embarrassed for one brief second and then the rage is back in their eyes.

“Ain’t that convenient?” they say with attitude.
“You guys are always trying to pull one over on us.”

No no. *We* ain’t trying to do anything. See, we get instructions from the corporate office on how to display and price special displays. There are even pictures in the book that show us how to do it. Yup, the instructions say to make the price sign say *Starting at \$1.00*. That wouldn’t be our fault; that’s the “big guys” trying to “pull one over on you.” Sorry to disappoint ya...but you’re gonna have to complain to them.

Another thing that happens is there will be a sale on one item that happens to sit next to another item similar to it. Instead of reading the sign that says (i.e.) “Half off—blue towels only” the customer assumes *all* towels are half off. Then they get all huffy when you have to point out what the sign says.

In conclusion? *Read* everything so you can be sure you understand just exactly what is (and isn’t)

on sale. And if you still aren't sure, ask an associate for help.

Coupons

Because 20 cents off is worth holding up the line to argue about whether or not a name-brand coupon covers a generic product.

Read 'em. So many people don't follow the rules on coupons. If it's a coupon for a free item there's usually a price limit on the item (i.e. maximum retail value not to exceed \$3.00) or you have to buy something else in order to get the free item.

There are also restrictions on coupons. Some coupons only allow one coupon per customer or transaction, yet people bring 3 of the same coupons up to the register...and, of course they get all annoyed when you tell them you can only take one coupon off the purchase. Or the coupon has a size limit, like "Save 50 cents off floor cleaner 30 oz or larger" and people bring up a 20 oz bottle of cleaner and expect to be able to use the coupon with it.

My favorite: People produce a coupon for a name brand product and the item they brought to the

counter is a generic brand. What really gets me are the ones who *know* it's the generic brand and still expect the coupon to be used (yes, this has really happened to me—at least twice).

Then there's expiration dates. Most coupons expire. Don't get mad at the cashier if she has to point out your coupon is expired and cannot be used.

And if the coupon doesn't match the product no, the cashier cannot "just take it." Even if she wanted to bend the rules for you speshul people, she couldn't because most coupons have a bar code that you have to scan on the register and the computers are set up to match that bar code with the item being discounted. If the barcodes don't match, guess what? You don't get the discount. There's nothing she can do about it if the computer won't accept it.

Read your coupons.

Scanning Items

At least it's faster than typing in all the numbers.

Yes, we *do* have to scan every item, unless they're exactly alike. If you have 2 bottles of grape soda and

2 bottles of orange, we have to scan at least one of each flavor because they have different SKU numbers. If we don't scan every individual SKU, it messes up our inventory.

Deal with it and stop whining. It's not going to kill you to hand us one of each flavor.

Creepy & Icky

Stop giving me the pedo-serial killer look, please.

Sometimes customers are so weird they literally give you chills and make you want to put a bag over your head and run away. Some customers make Charles Manson seem like Mr. Rogers; they just make you downright uncomfortable.

Then there's the ones that make you want to barf because they either smell bad or tell some pretty icky stories.

Here's how to tell if you fit in any of these categories, and if you do...just stop. Please. You're scaring us.

First (and probably most important) rule that you should follow in order to not be creepy is this: **Retail stores are not your personal dating service.**

Guys especially like to stand at the side of the register and just talk it up with a cashier they're attracted to. Most of the time, these guys are actually

older men, sometimes 20 or 30 years older than the cashier, who reek of booze, motor oil, and some hefty b.o. Their hair is greasy (if they have any at all), and they're sporting a beer gut.

Guys? No. Just...no.

No woman in her right mind is going to be flattered by someone who fits anything in this description, no matter how old said someone is.

But that's not even the point. No matter what you look like (unless you more than slightly resemble James Franco), the grocery store, dollar store, convenience store, etc., etc., is not the appropriate place to try and get a date. If you're really interested in the cashier and believe she could be your soul mate, try some quick chatter while she's ringing up your stuff, flash her a flirty smile, and slip her your number.

But do not stand near the register for an hour trying to woo her. She has work to do, and other customers to ring up. And if she's not actively trying to converse with you, take the hint that she's not interested and shut up and move on.

Here are some hints that she's not interested:

- Casual, almost constant, nodding of the head, but not much talk. She's trying to get rid of you by pretending she agrees with you.
- Roaming eyes. Unless they're roaming all over you (i.e. imagining you **nekked**), she's trying to politely show her attention is elsewhere, and that she just wants you to leave.
- No smiles at all. One of women's most powerful flirting tools is her smile. If she ain't flashing her pearly whites, odds are she doesn't want you talking to her. But don't always rely on this. Some people fake-smile because they don't want to be rude. Learn your smiles.

This advice is only in the case of the innocent people who just happen to be shopping and see a cute worker they think would be a fun date, especially regular customers who develop a friendship with the

worker and then decide they want to take it a step further. There's nothing wrong with this.

But do not go *looking* for dates at any retail store. Don't go to a retail establishment hoping you'll meet someone. That's just pathetic and creepy.

Do You have a Staring Problem?

Or are you eyes just naturally stuck in place that way?

I despise people who stand a few feet away from me and just *stare*. Or sometimes, they'll stand at the other end of the aisle I'm working on...and stare.

I'm not sure what they're waiting for—maybe they think their very presence requires some special acknowledgement that involves me dropping whatever I'm doing, rushing to their side and kissing their fingers while saying, "Hello Mr. Speshul! I'm so glad to see you!"—but a simple "Excuse me, Miss" would get my attention just fine.

I ignore people who do this.

"But that's not good customer service!"

Frankly, my dears, I don't give a damn.

People who just look at you and say nothing are very unsettling and, I don't know about everyone else, but they make *me* uncomfortable. For all I know, you're some pervert undressing me with your creepy eyes.

No staring, punk.



Stop Looking at My Money, Weirdo!

Srsly, get your own.

Every cashier I've ever worked with has agreed with this one: We hate it when people lean over the counter to look into our cash drawer.

It's beyond creepy; it's scary.

What's the first thing that goes through our mind when someone leans over the counter to look at the till while we're getting their change?

Robbers. That's right, we think you're getting ready to rob us. You can pretty much guarantee that if you're making an effort to lean over to look at the money we have in our cash register, the cashier is getting ready to push the panic button. I was held at gunpoint when my store was robbed one night. Since then, I get very paranoid when someone does this while I'm running the register.

And here's a word of advice, if you *are* planning on robbing anyone, think it over: a lot of the cashiers now carry tasers and pocket knives—some even have guns.

People who lean over the counter to gaze at the dollar bills make us uneasy. Just don't do it. Ever.

Practice Good Hygiene

Smells like a good idea.

- Bathe daily, or at least every other day.
- Brush your teeth
- Use deodorant
- Spray on a bit of cologne/perfume

No one likes smelling Mr. and Mrs. Stinky. Body odor combined with cigarette smoke, booze, and motor oil is one of the worst combination of smells on the face of the planet. It's not polite to be a disgusting slob and expect everyone else to have to smell you. If you want to be gross, stay at home. But especially do not get as close as you can to ask a question when you smell bad. You'll have the employee gagging on vomit as she runs for the bathroom.

Keep Your Creepy Stories to Your Creepy Self

You did *what* to your mom's poodle?

- No one wants to hear about how you scraped up a bit o' road kill, skinned the cat, then bar-

b-q'd and ate it. That may be normal in your life...it's not for the rest of the population.

- We also do not want to hear about your kinky sexual experiences. Go to the XXX store and talk to those people.
- Keep anything personal private. We don't know you, therefore we don't care if your aunt's grandma has taken up bug collecting, except in the case where we've developed a friendship with "regulars."

Don't Stand So Close to Me

Srsly. I can almost feel your arm hair.

If you have a question, by all means, ask. But keep a respectable distance. I hate people who feel the need to get so close to you they invade your personal bubble and breathe their dragon-breath on you.

Stay at least a few feet away. Don't get inches close to my face to ask me where the paper plates are.

R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Find out what it means to me....

And finally, that old advice your grandmother used to give you, “treat others how you want to be treated.”
You *get* respect by *giving* respect.

And stop bein’ whiners.

The End

Or is it?

R. Vance

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Bad Customers Dictionary

Baah = To whine, complain, gripe, etc.

Big suck = Jerk

Demon Spawn = Children

Drama Llama = Drama Queen

Eff = The equivalent to a four-letter curse word that starts with the letter F

Facepalm = The act of lightly slapping your own face with your palm

Intarwebz = Internet speak for “internet”

LOL = Laugh(ing) Out Loud

MOD = Manager On Duty

Nekked = Naked

Rage-tastic = Angry

Rolltainer = The caged carts we roll out stock on

She-bitch = Very grumpy woman

smilemile = Fake smiling

Snowflake = A person who believes they are privileged

Speshul = Internet speak for “Special”

Srsly = internet or text talk for “seriously”

Weirded out = Disgusted or confused

Wut = Internet speak for “what”

About the Author



Photo © 2009 Sara (R.) Vance

Reyanna is a pseudonym; Vance is her real last name. She usually writes fantasy and horror fiction novels, but after spending 3 years working in retail, and being driven almost to the point of insanity by unruly customers, she decided to write this helpful little guide.

R. Vance was born in Arizona and now lives in Oklahoma with her fiancée and cat, Miss Bella.

R. Vance's Other Books

Dead Seed **Dies Irae Series**

These books may be found only online at
<http://lulu.com/reynnavance> & amazon.com.

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For more customer advice and “bad customer”
stories, please visit the Bad Customer website:

<http://badcustomersbook.webs.com/>

R. Vance's other websites:

<http://rvances.com>

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