

Oh, Sorry, We're out of Magic Pop-Up Shelves

Try again later....

Something really annoying and only slightly humorous (because it makes the customer look like a twat) is when a customer gets butt hurt and takes it personal when we're out of a certain item.

Really, people. We are a place of business; people *buy* our things. Running out of a product tends to happen. Just wait a few weeks and it will be back in stock, or if you really, *really* need it *nooooooowww*, go somewhere else.

It's like people expect our shelves to be magical. Like when someone picks up a jar of jelly off the shelf, *poof!* another jar appears!

I love it when someone happily, skipping along, goes to where they know an item is at and when they see the shelf empty, their face just drops and they're literally stuck in a moment of stupidity. They stare hard at the shelf, look at me, look back at the shelf, and point a finger.

"You're out?" they ask in dismay.

"Unfortunately," I nod. "But we should get some more next week!" ***smilemile***

They don't respond. They just hang their head and walk away.

Or you get the rude ones who scoff, sigh, and stomp away as if someone told them their baby was ugly.

"Now I have to drive *all* the way to Wal-Mart! I *hate* going to Wal-Mart!"

Yup, guess so. Don't let the door hit ya on the way out, you spoiled little....

"I'm sorry for the inconvenience, Sir!"
smilemile

You *can't* be out of milk! Where's your cow?

Overreacting about a store being out of an item is silly. Take for example this woman:

She was a regular of ours; was always grumpy and had the manners of a warthog and the personality of a mop. She was always dressed super nice, and had her nose in the air so we interpret her behavior as her being a snobby b-word.

Did I mention she's blonde?

It was late January and we were in the middle of an ice storm. The store was going to close early due to the storm and the icy roads, so we were pretty busy with people coming in buying necessities for the next couple of days. One of these necessities was milk.

Now, the day before our cooler had been stocked full so it's not like our milk man was neglecting us. In Oklahoma, though, when there's even a hint of a natural disaster approaching, people hit the stores and stock up. Things sell out quickly during bad weather, so by the time the snobby b-word arrived, the milk had been depleted to one lone half-gallon of skim.

Blond Snobby B-word comes into the store with her usual attitude (nose in the air, looking at anyone who looks at her like they've insulted her by daring to look her in the eye), sashays to the milk cooler with her cart and just stares through the glass doors, at the almost empty shelves.

She then looks at me, scoffs, and says in a snotty tone, "Is this all the milk you've got?"

“Yup, that’s it,” I said, nodding. I didn’t feel the need to tell her that the ice storm was making people cautious and that’s why we didn’t have any milk, but then again, I lie to myself and assume everyone has common sense.

“You don’t have any in the back or anything?”

Why is it no one can take “no” for an answer?

“No, we don’t have a cooler in the back. We have a vendor who brings us milk a couple times a week,” I kindly explain, though in my head I’m going, “Hurr, derp derp.” I mean, come on...a store as small as ours, you’d assume people would know this.

The woman literally growls at her bad luck. Growls. Like an angry dog.

O-kay, I think. I turn around and leave her to mope. I stupidly assume our conversation is over. And it is. Until she gets up to the register after shopping for 20 minutes.

She brings a gallon of D milk tied in one of our store bags.

“I found this in the cooler, why is it in a bag?” she asked the cashier, peering at the object with curiosity.

The cashier kind of looked at me with a “help” expression so I answered the woman:

“That usually means something’s wrong with it and we’re holding it for the milk man to give us Credit.”

“But why is it in the cooler?”

“So it doesn’t spoil.” Something else I thought would be obvious.

“What’s wrong with it?” She pulled the milk out and started looking over it.

“Usually there’s a leak or the seal has been broken,” I explain.

“Well, can you sell it to me?”

“Uh...” I hesitate, knowing we’re not technically supposed to do that. “I *might* be able to, but it would be at your own risk, and I’d have to call my manager to find out for sure.”

She sighed woefully. *Woe woe woe, feel sorry for me; my life is so hard.* And then, seriously folks, she asked me the following question:

“Well, since you guys are out of milk, does that mean the 7-11 next door is out too?”

Facepalm

Why yes! When one store is out of something, that means the whole city is out! How do I know, this? Well, ma'am I'm psychic and know everything!

I was stifling laughter at that point.

"Uh, I'm not sure. I guess you'd have to go over there and see," I said.

She sighs again (*woe woe woe*), and starts looking over the lone gallon of suspicious D milk with longing, but confused, eyes.

"So, do you want the milk?" the cashier asked the lady. There was a growing line behind her so the cashier was trying to get her out without causing any kind of chaos.

Another sigh. "I guess. I have no choice. I've got three kids at home who *need* milk."

Drama Llama Alert!

I had to turn around so I could roll my eyes—I mean seriously, children can go one day without milk; it won't kill them; it's *not* that serious.

Then I remembered something. That particular gallon of milk was not bad and did not have a broken seal or a leak. It had been left behind by another customer the day before so we had put it back in the cooler in case he came back for it.

But by then, our 24 hour rule was up and we could sell it again (if the first customer would later come back, he would have still gotten a gallon of milk since he had already paid for it—once we were restocked—we just didn't have to hold *that* specific one after 24 hours). So I tell the woman this and that the milk is definitely safe to buy...and so she did.

The world was saved that night because her kids didn't have to go one morning without milk. Sleep in peace Snobby B-word. Sleep in peace.

Moral of the story? If a store is out of an item, don't panic. Accept. Embrace. Move on. We may not always have an item in stock—especially when natural disasters strike; you're just gonna have to get over it.

Returns and Exchanges

Got your receipt?

First rule here: *always keep your receipt.*

It makes things so much easier on both the retail worker and yourself. A lot of places won't let you get cash back or money back on your card if you don't have a receipt. If you don't have a receipt and you try to bring something back, you'll end up only getting store credit.

(Also along the same line of keeping your receipt, if you *do* decide you don't want it, just throw it away yourself. Honestly, what's the difference if I throw it away or you throw it away? By giving it back to me, all you're doing is making the person behind you wait an extra couple of seconds and, trust me, people don't like waiting, especially longer than they have to— even if it's just an extra second or two. I know it seems like we're not that busy, and to you, taking a few seconds to grab up your receipt and throw it away probably doesn't seem like that much of a pain, but it is. We are busy and we don't like being treated like servants; do it yourself)

Sometimes, usually when you go over a certain dollar amount—at my store it's 5.00—the manager (or whoever's doing the refund/exchange) will ask you for your personal information such as full name, address, and phone number. There are two reasons for this:

A lot of companies make follow-up calls to make sure the refund or exchange is “real.” Sometimes naughty employees like to do fake returns to steal from the company. So you may get a phone call later asking about your experience; if the person doing the refund was polite, and if everything went smoothly.

Another reason why companies ask for your information is because they're keeping track of you.

Sometimes, if you have a certain number of returns in a certain amount of time, they'll refuse to let you return anything else. This is to help cut down on thieves who come in and steal stuff and then try and return it for cash. Even if you have a receipt, it doesn't prove that you actually purchased the item.

So many people get rid of their receipts by just dropping them on the ground or telling the cashier to throw them away.

Anyone could pick up a receipt, go into the store and grab whatever's on the receipt, sneak out with it, and return it later. Or, a dishonest employee will take a receipt of the trash, steal whatever's on the receipt, and return it to a different store.

So, be sure you really want to take the item back; you could be refused if you've hit your return limit.

I used to have an older lady come into the store about once a week. She was as sweet as can be, always polite and concerned if she could tell we were having a bad day—she even gave my co-worker a hug when she was crying and assured her that “everything would be okay.”

Sweet, sweet woman.

But she drove us *insane*.

Every time she would come in, she would always have at least one return—sometimes without a receipt. She would always tell us to hold what she

was returning because she wanted to shop. We would hold this stuff at the counter for hours, waiting for her to finish shopping. On average, she would spend about two hours in the store each time she came in. She always filled up her cart and usually waited until five minutes before we closed to come to the check-out.

Five minutes till close, we're in a rush; ready to get people out of the store so we can continue closing procedures that can't be started until the doors are locked.

But she would always have a return that took about three minutes to complete. Then we would have to ring up her other stuff. No big deal except for the fact that she would examine every item before setting it down on the counter for us to ring up, and then decide she didn't want half the stuff she brought up to the check out. No exaggeration—*half the stuff*.

Her checkout time was usually seven to ten minutes. That's sometimes five minutes past the time we close, then we'd have to hurriedly put all the stuff she didn't want back on the shelves in their rightful places. By the time we were actually ready to

continue the closing process, it was 10 to 15 minutes past closing time. May not seem like a big deal to anyone who's never worked in retail, but trust me: that extra 10 to 15 minutes matters *a lot* when it comes to you being able to leave.

So, what have we learned about refunds?

- *Always* keep your receipt.
- Be cautious of how many times you return merchandise to one company.
- Don't wait till 5 minutes before a store closes to bring a cart full of stuff to the check out.