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“Every time I travel, I open up the Yellow Pages and see the same horrendous mistake. There is a picture of some very ugly, poorly shot shower door in everybody’s ad. Show me a showroom that makes me actually want to go there.”

—Tom Whitaker, president, Mr. Shower Door, Norwalk, Conn.

My first dream job was ...
“to be an architect ... and then the first woman president.”



Katy Devlin
Co-editor, retail glass

Adding the wow factor to customer care

On a stormy day in July, I found myself with video camera in hand at the Designed Glass showroom in Burnsville, Minn. Co-owner Erica Chandler gave me a tour of the showroom that was only briefly halted due to an unpredictable Midwest thunderstorm (a storm that unleashed a bit of hail, cut power and sent us to the back for safety). The video tour also was intermittently interrupted by several customers, who obviously took priority. Through observing these interactions, I started to understand how a showroom shapes the customer experience. And, I started to learn a little bit about what Chandler calls the “wow factor.”

“Customers get the wow factor in a showroom,” she says. “They are able to touch and feel and know what they’re getting. That wow factor starts upon entering the showroom to see a well-organized display of glass applications, from the more ordinary to the extraordinary, and continues through personal interaction.”

One couple came into the showroom shortly after I arrived. They had already worked with Chandler on making plans for a new shower enclosure but wanted to check out the glass options one more time. In the showroom, they were able to view samples and look at the shower displays to make sure they were getting the exact product they wanted.

“Having a showroom impacts the customer experience tremendously,” Chandler says. “It allows them to touch and feel, see and know what they’re getting—see all the options of shower doors, handles, and match them to colors.”

The showroom also provides an important place for face-to-face communication with customers before and after a job. During the tour, another customer came in with

product care questions for her recently installed glass shower. Chandler guided her through the care procedures, and the customer left satisfied, commenting on how rare it was to come into a business and bring questions directly to the owner.

Other glass shop owners have said their showrooms serve as crucial aspect of their business as they work with customers. Write me at kdevlin@glass.org to talk about the wow factor at your showroom. See Page 72 to read an article about upselling in showrooms.

Shower doors vs. curtains

When promoting bypass sliding shower doors, consider pointing consumers to a recent article in the Los Angeles Times about the toxic effects shower curtains can have on their health.

Vinyl shower curtains sold at major retailers across the country emit toxic chemicals that have been linked to liver damage, as well as damage to the central nervous, respiratory and reproductive systems, reported Los Angeles Times

Staff Writer Tami Abdollah, June 13, www.latimes.com. The findings are the result of a study by the Falls Church, Va.-based Center for Health, Environment & Justice to determine what caused that “new shower curtain smell” familiar to many consumers, Abdollah reported.

Researchers tested the chemical composition of five unopened polyvinyl chloride, or PVC, plastic shower curtains bought from Bed Bath & Beyond, Kmart, Sears, Target and Wal-Mart, according to the article. One of the curtains was then tested to determine the chemicals it released into the air. “One of the curtains tested released measurable quantities of as many as 108 volatile organic compounds into the air, some of which persisted for nearly a month,” Abdollah stated.

—Submitted by Mark Pritikin, president, Creative Mirror & Shower, Addison, Ill.



To kick off our “Showrooms as sales tools” series, we take a look on Page 72 at how two retailers use individual displays to upsell customers on everything from glass to hardware. Future articles will address floor layout, lighting and design, location, sales props and showroom personnel, among other topics. If you’d like to share your successful showroom strategy with Glass Magazine readers, write me at jchase@glass.org.

—Jenni Chase, co-editor, retail glass

