

Managing the Chaos at Your Business

12 Ways to Satisfy Your Customers While They Wait



Introduction

Waiting rooms and lobbies can be stressful places to spend any amount of time. Just ask anyone who has worked in an active business. The nature of checking in and sitting down or waiting in a long line often causes anxiety and uncertainty for your customers who, more times than not, have to get back to work or pick up the kids that day and unknowing how long they will be expected wait for their turn.

The following best practices reveal how to alleviate stress (and sometimes chaos!) that can arise in a congested business.

Implementing any of the following ideas will improve your customer's experience. And if you're able to eliminate the inconvenience of waiting in a physical line, you can improve patron satisfaction even further while allowing employees to feel confident and in control.



1. Keep them hydrated.

When people are thirsty or feeling dehydrated, tension can mount. Help customers from having to walk out of your business to find a water fountain or purchase bottled water.

Maintaining a spring water dispenser with disposable cups is an easy way to show that you're dedicated to keeping them comfortable—and it doesn't require a huge investment.

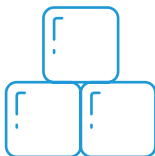


2. WiFi + phone charging stations.

It's become nearly a must-have these days: free WiFi. If your business isn't equipped to provide your patrons with free access to the internet on their mobile devices, they will usually become frustrated.

Access to WiFi in public spaces is becoming so widespread that many people anticipate its presence whenever they're in a place like a waiting room, office building, restaurant, or lobby.

Modernize your business with complimentary guest WiFi access along with charging stations so people can charge their batteries while waiting to be served. Remember to post a sign that gives information about the free WiFi as well as the password to log in.



3. Entertain the kids.

Having a basket of coloring books and crayons for children to play with will accomplish two things: keep parents and caregivers from having to find ways to entertain their children while they wait, and offer the rest of your customers relief from bored or noisy children.



4. Keep pens and paper at the ready.

And speaking of keeping the kids occupied, be sure to have a stash of pens and blank paper available for the adults too! Many people use the time they spend waiting to be served making to do lists, paying bills, and catching up on paperwork.

Keeping pens and paper readily available also prevents your employees from being interrupted for requests for pens.



5. Keep chairs, surfaces, and doors clean.

You probably already have a cleaning crew that maintains your business regularly. But if they're not servicing your location daily, it's important to assign daily general cleaning duties to your employees or on-site janitorial crew.

Waiting areas are best checked 2-3 times throughout store hours to ensure that trash cans are emptied, magazine racks/piles are straightened and that doors, glass and other surfaces are free from smudges, debris, dust, and germs.

Many people already feel a bit anxious waiting around with strangers and an untidy appearance or lack of cleanliness can increase anxiety for everyone.



6. Hand sanitizer, tissues, and waste baskets.

Being in close proximity to strangers may be stressful, so long wait times can heighten the anxiety for everyone involved.

Providing tissues and waste baskets in visible areas of the store is common practice, but it's important to also offer hand sanitizer. This will encourage good hygiene among your employees and customers allowing everyone to feel a bit more secure in the environment if someone does sneeze, cough, or blow their nose.



7. Soft, calming music.

Silence can make people feel uncomfortable when they're standing in line and waiting to be served. Some people feel pressure to make small talk to try and eliminate silence and wind up putting others in a position to hold conversations they may prefer not to have.

This is why calm music is a great way to maintain a relaxed atmosphere. Please note that playing music in a business requires a business licensed account. You can find commercial-free, licensed music accounts from several places on the internet — SiriusXM for Business and Mood Media are two to check out.



8. Crosswords, puzzles, brain teasers, and Sudoku.

In addition to magazines, brain games are a great distraction for people waiting. Sudoku and crossword puzzles are entertaining crowd pleasers.



9. Add an aquarium.

Maintaining a nice fish tank will require a bit more effort in terms of maintenance, but the payoff could be worth it. Many people find water elements to be relaxing and soothing.

The aquarium provides a point of concentration and allows people to relax while they observe the fish swimming in the water. Added bonus? Kids love fish tanks! So if the coloring books and crayons aren't cutting it, you've got back up.



10. Trivia games on the wait notification screen.

Companies such as Tap TV and Buzztime offer trivia game channels to help pass the time. For example, a trivia question will appear on the screen along with 4-5 multiple choice answers. A timer at the bottom of the screen indicates how much time is left to make their final selection before the correct answer is displayed.

This keeps people engaged and entertained and can even end up sparking a friendly competition between the people waiting together. And best of all? Their focus is taken off of the fact that they're waiting (and they might even learn some cool facts to impress their friends!)



11. Pleasant lighting.

Lighting is known to play a major role in people's moods, so take a bit of the budget to invest in better lighting. Providing a calm setting that's easy on the eyes is one key way you can keep people feeling less irritated.

We all know how unpleasant it is to be stuck waiting in a store that is showered in fluorescent or other harsh lighting. Talk to a contractor or your building manager to switch outdated lighting to a more modern system that operates on a dimmer. If this isn't a possibility, consider keeping the overhead lights off and invest in well-placed floor and table lamps that add a bit of ambiance. One final trick is to unscrew every other fluorescent bulb; that will do wonders alone.



12. Implement a virtual check-in system.

Virtual check-in systems eliminate lines and crowded waiting areas, increase productivity, and decrease operating costs. Have you ever actually gone through the process of waiting to be served at your business?

If you haven't, go ahead and try it to get a feel for the experience—you might be surprised by what you discover.

However, with today's technology, there are mobile-enabled queuing systems capable of creating virtual lines that eliminate physical lines and reduce the number of customers crowded within a business.

The technology is out there, but you'll want to ask a few questions as you check out the various systems available today:

- ▶ Does the system provide customers with the ability to join these virtual lines from their mobile phone, home phone, an on-site kiosk or directly from your website?
- ▶ Are your customers able to interact with the system if they need to scoot back in line while they run an errand or step outside to take an important phone call?
- ▶ Are customers informed via text message updates as their turn approaches? When they reach the front of the line, do they receive a text message summoning them for service?

Selecting the right automated queuing system for your business' needs will result in boosted productivity, happier employees, better response quality, and improved satisfaction scores.

This last tip allows your customers to wait for services however and wherever they choose by holding their spot in line with a mobile phone — no matter where they are!

This decreases your customers' perceived wait time and equips busy stores with flexible solutions that provide absolute control over scheduling and customer flow.

For more information on how to implement a virtual check-in system at your business, please schedule a demo with QLess!

Request Demo

About QLess

QLess is the global leader in wait management and mobile check-in. The company's patented, cloud-based technology helps business owners lower operating costs and improve customers' experiences by eliminating lines and offering convenient ways to make and manage appointments. QLess customers include the motor vehicle offices of Texas, University of California Berkeley, Brazil Public Healthcare, T-Mobile, and many more.



99%
citizen satisfaction



75%
reduction of walkways



40 million
current users



1,200+ years
of time saved

"The lines have stopped!"

— Kansas Department of Motor Vehicles

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