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DFWC KPI monitor underlines the importance of engaged sales staff in Duty Free shops

The latest Duty Free World Council (DFWC) KPI Monitor highlights the importance of a high quality of service and the influence of well trained staff on the customer experience in duty free shops. The quarterly report for Q1 2019 reveals that service level has climbed to second place among all criteria measuring impact on the overall level of satisfaction among global duty free shoppers. Value for money remains the number one criterion for shopper satisfaction.

Produced by Swiss research and consultancy agency m1nd-set for the Council, the report is compiled through interviews with over 4000 international travellers across all world regions during the month of March.

Staff are not only a key contributor to the shopping experience in airports but also influential in converting browsers into buyers, according to the report. On average, less than half of global shoppers (48%) interact with staff in airport shops and of those shoppers who do interact 45% are positively influenced and purchase following the interaction. Europe sees the lowest level of staff interaction (40%), while engagement is highest in the Middle East and Africa.

The interaction with staff is more influential among men than women according to the KPI Monitor (48% vs 42%) as well as among Millennials, compared to older generations, namely Seniors (49% vs 39%). Staff influence on the purchase decision is also greater among shoppers from the Middle East and Africa region. Categories which benefit the most from successful engagement between staff and shoppers are Jewellery & Watches (55%), Fashion & Accessories (50%) and Beauty (48%).

The quarterly KPI Monitor also illustrates which aspects contribute to the overall perception of the duty free shopping experience. Among the top criteria, the perception that duty free provides a “truly different experience” has been gaining importance consistently over the past few quarters. According to DFWC and m1nd-set the differentiation of duty free shopping compared to downtown, with new products, travel retail exclusives and the different experience, is an area where staff can play a significant role in influencing the decision to purchase and increasing basket size.

Frank O’Connell, DFWC President, commented on the findings: “Given that less than half of shoppers globally interact with staff in duty free shops, there is huge potential for the industry to make a concerted effort to train staff to be more proactive in engaging with shoppers and positively influence the sale. Complimenting brand and product knowledge, sales staff understanding the specific needs of travelling consumers better and having the knowledge and skills to cater to those needs is the key. The opportunity to raise standards in our industry has prompted the DFWC to create the DFWC Academy dedicated to offering accredited, online training programmes created uniquely for people working in, or planning to join, our industry. Our first course – a Certificate in Duty Free and Travel Retail, will start in September this year with student enrolment already underway. I would encourage all industry stakeholders to get in touch with us about this exciting initiative.”

Peter Mohn, CEO & Owner at m1nd-set added: “While online information sources and digital tools are indispensable to reach shoppers in travel retail, personal interactions are still fundamental in the marketing mix. The sales team is a major player alongside all other communications touch points. Travel generates experiences and stories and travel retail needs to be more focused on the stories behind the brands and their heritage. This, together with knowledge on new product launches and unique offerings in the store, should be a key area on which brands and retailers should focus in their staff training and employee engagement programmes. Engaged employees will thirst for more stories to seduce the shopper.”

“It is also vital to ensure monitoring and evaluation processes are well established with staff, Mohn continues. “Well trained, engaged staff are vital, not only for their potential to impact sales but also because of their influence on the shoppers’ overall perception of the airport shopping experience and long term customer loyalty.”

Further information about the various aspects studied in the Monitor is available from m1nd-set upon request (info@m1nd-set.com.)

About the Duty Free World Council

The Duty Free World Council, the DFWC, is the industry association representing the interests of the global duty free and travel retail channel and has the overall objective of creating the optimal operating environment for the industry that will allow it to achieve its full potential.

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About m1nd-set

m1nd-set is the largest independent and privately owned travel and travel retail research agency, based out of Switzerland. It conducts research for clients across all world regions, working for over fifty companies in the travel sector, including brands from all product categories, as well as a number of the duty free and travel retail associations and several leading retailers in the industry.

m1nd-set is present with local interviewers at over 60 airports on a regular basis to conduct on-site research. It also has its own database of regular international travellers. Corporate social responsibility is a fundamental part of the company’s philosophy and each year commits a minimum of 10% of profits to charity, mainly for unprivileged children in developing countries.

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