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You no buy; go bye-bye!



Pizzeria has a very unique loyalty strategy.

By: Roger L. Brooks

When I was in high school (some twenty-five years ago), there was a pizzeria I often frequented. It's name, Grotta

Azzurra, the Italian translation for Blue Grotto, which was kitty-corner to the school. The real Blue Grotto is a sea cave on the coast of the island of Capri, Italy. I had the good fortune of visiting the Blue Grotto about ten years ago. It is one of the most beautiful, and serene places in the world.

[Here's a short [YouTube Video](#) showing what it's like inside the Blue Grotto.]

Ironically, the pizzeria was not quite as serene, nor was it beautiful inside. In fact, it was anything but. Grotta's (as we called it) is typical noisy pizzeria with black-framed posters of various scenes from Italy lining the walls. It was a perfect place for students. I can still recall the wonderful aroma of fresh baked bread, garlic knots and brick oven pizza upon opening the door.

The restaurant was divided into two halves with the center area reserved for ordering. The dining room was located on the left side of the restaurant facing front, which had freestanding tables and chairs with red-and-white-checked plastic tablecloths on top. The right side was outfitted with roughly eight booths. Students liked this area better as it was more comfortable. During the lunch hour, it was hard to find a seat on this side. We would often squeeze six to eight people into a booth (which was intended to seat four comfortably).

What I recall most about Grotta's is that every time my friends and I went in we could count on a good laugh, or two. The owners, Rosa and Giuseppe, are immigrants from Sicily, Italy. They spoke in a broken-English accent and the lunch scene could have been right out of a movie. Giuseppe did all of the cooking and prepared the orders while Rosa manned the register and bussed the tables. The husband-and-wife team worked non-stop, seven days a week.

Without doubt, every time I went into Grotta's, there would be at least one student tagging along with friends who did not buy a slice of pizza, or order a drink. Rosa would seek those students out—and then make a spectacle of them.

"Hey, a-you... over a-ther! You no buy, go bye-bye!"

Students hearing this for the first time would often have a confused look on their face. Rosa would repeat, "I said, you no buy, go bye-bye!!"

As she called the student out, she would quickly clap her hands twice as if she was slapping dust off her palms, and gesturing to... GET OUT! Often times those students would scramble to come up with enough change to buy a slice of pizza or purchase a drink in order to stay.

If the student didn't buy an item, Rosa would escort them to the door. She would often have a frown on her face walking them to the door, and a smirk as she walked back in.

As you can imagine, word got out and Grotta Azzurra was packed every day... even in the dead of winter. The pizza was good, but the entertainment was better.

What was Rosa's loyalty strategy?

Get every student to buy something every single time, or leave.

What can you learn from Rosa?

Find a niche in your strategy to change and motivate customer behavior.

Now, I'm not suggesting you should follow Rosa's lead, and tell people to buy, or go "bye-bye". However, if you are creative enough, you'll find that secret formula customers crave which makes them want to buy, every single time.

P.S. Did I mention I have a book for sale? You can [click here](#) to buy the book, but if you no buy, go bye-bye!

Roger L. Brooks is a trusted authority and assists companies in building successful customer loyalty strategies.

Comments? E-mail Roger:
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The Durbin Amendment's Impact on Merchants: FeeFighters' Perspective

By: Laura Edgar

The [Durbin Amendment](#) allegedly protects merchants from higher interchange fees on debit card transactions by capping the swipe fee at 21 cents plus 0.05 percent of each transaction. When we first heard about it, we wondered what would stop [credit card](#) processors from pocketing the extra savings for themselves rather than passing it on to their customers. To get more information, we asked our friends at [FeeFighters](#) to weigh in on the issue. FeeFighters is a website that allows you to comparison shop credit card processors. Since they act as a middleman between merchants and credit card processors, the Durbin Amendment doesn't affect them directly. But they're passionate about watching out for their customers, who aren't likely to know much about how the Durbin Amendment affects them.

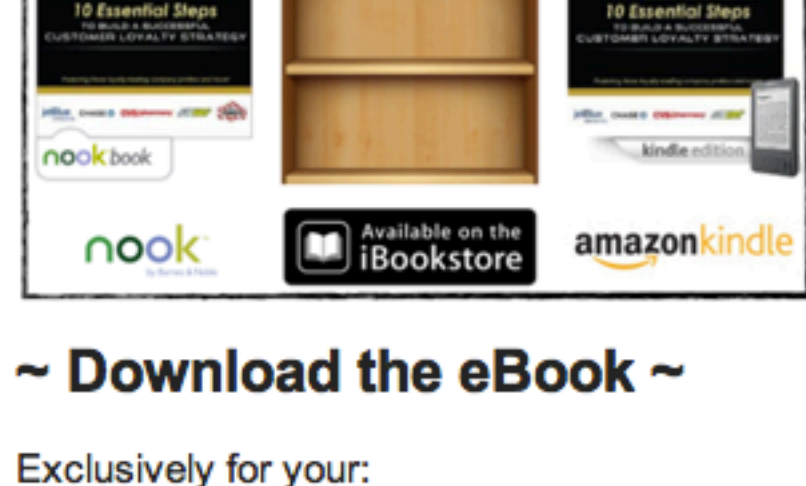
What merchants don't know can hurt them

"Most merchants aren't familiar with the Durbin Amendment at all," says Sheel Mohnot, who oversees FeeFighters' business development and partnerships. "At most, they may have heard about it, and if they have, they probably assume they'll benefit from it without knowing much about how it works." After creating a Durbin Amendment-inspired interchange fee calculating tool, FeeFighters discovered that merchants generally don't see any benefit unless they have interchange plus pricing. By Sheel's estimate, 80 percent of merchants have tiered pricing plans, which allow credit card processors to tack on extra fees without providing any transparency. In this case, the Durbin Amendment savings aren't passed on to the merchant, because credit card processing companies have every incentive to keep that information hidden. Needless to say, our suspicions were confirmed, but at least the circumstances are more predictable than we thought.

The Durbin Amendment only helps small merchants who do their homework

The saddest part of all this is that the Durbin Amendment's benefits will be nullified for those it was meant to help: small merchants. Big box retailers like Wal-Mart and Home Depot, which almost always have interchange plus pricing plans, lobbied for the amendment to save money, and big banks lobbied against it to protect their debit card transaction profits, plain and simple. In a way, both parties won. [LINK TO FULL ARTICLE](#)

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American Influence Abroad

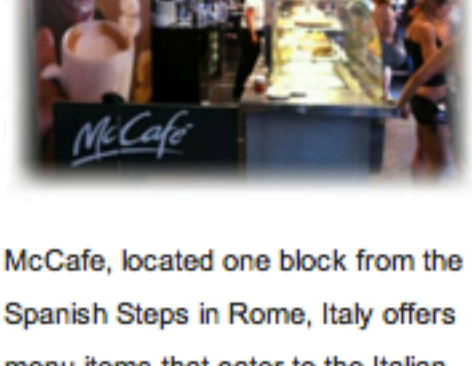
GAP
LIFT RATING: 77.25

American influence has never been greater overseas. My family took a European vacation this past summer, and I made a conscious effort to seek out American businesses on our journey. I didn't have to look too far.

Upon arriving in Rome on Delta Airlines, I rented a car from Avis Car Rental and checked into a Hilton Hotel. In Rome's main shopping district, merchants such as Gap, Nike, Tumi, Disney and McDonald's were visible on the street. Deliverymen in their signature brown uniforms could be found exiting their UPS trucks, or seen briskly moving through crowds of people with packages in hand. Every street vendor sold Coke-a-cola and/or Pepsi, Snicker's, M&M's, and Pringles. Souvenir shops hung NY Yankees t-shirts (which put a smile on my face). I filled my tank with Esso (Exxon) fuel, iPhones are prominently displayed in mobile phone provider windows, and Visa is literally everywhere you want to be.

It was interesting and insightful to see how many of these American made companies adapt to their audience, hence providing for a more relevant customer loyalty experience. For example, the McDonald's McCafe had an espresso and gelato bar upon entering the main doors—something you would never find in the U.S. (although it would be neat to see it tested).

Other than seeing historic landmarks such as the Coliseum and the Vatican, and falling victim to the poor value of the U.S. Dollar, I pretty much felt right at home.



McCafe, located one block from the Spanish Steps in Rome, Italy offers menu items that cater to the Italian culture.

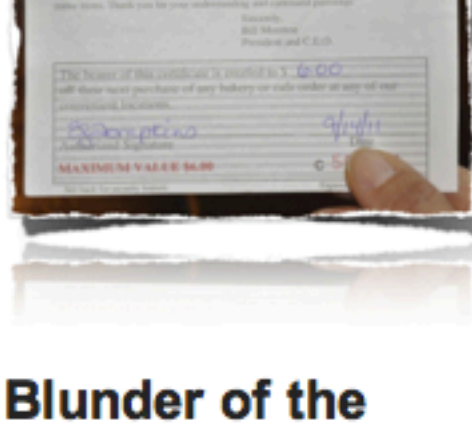
McDonald's
LIFT RATING: 81.50



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Blunder of the week—made right...

PANERA BREAD
LIFT RATING: 90.50

For the past couples of years, our office has called on Panera Bread for our catering needs when visitors are in town. Recently, we placed an order, which my wife Sabrina graciously picked up, as Panera wasn't able to deliver that day. When the order arrived, we found that all of the lunch items were there except for the main item... the sandwiches. Our visitors were hungry so I called Panera in hopes they would deliver the remaining items.

To my dismay, Panera said they left the sandwiches in the cooler, and did not have a delivery driver available at that moment... it was 12:30 in the afternoon, their busiest time of the day. I called Sabrina to go back and thankfully she was able. This whole process took another 45-minutes.

Later that evening, I was in disbelief that the company I've come to trust and count on, let me down. It just wasn't like Panera to do this and not make it right. I was indeed disappointed.

The next day, Sabrina handed me four credit certificates the catering manager gave her when she went back the second time. She forgot to tell me about the certificates the day before. I was immensely relieved. At that moment, all the negative thoughts I had about Panera were erased. My favorite catering company/ bakery-cafe didn't let me down. Although it didn't completely erase the mishap, it certainly brought my satisfaction level back to the degree I've come to know and expect.

visit: panerabread.com

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