

READY, SET, TYPE

I have staff members who don't or won't use my POS system and take their orders on paper, and it drives me crazy. Help! PHYLLIS REGA | PHYL'S FLOWERS | STRATFORD, CONNECTICUT

Technology is a great thing when you use it. I can't begin to count how many staff I have met over the years who for one reason or another don't use the store's technology or use it passively, taking the order on paper and then entering it after the sale is complete. Both of those situations drive me crazy, and I'm sure they drive you crazy, too. But why does this happen?

Because you, owners and managers, let it happen! Yes, you have staff of a certain age who claim they're too old to use technology. My 72-year-old mother would disagree, in an email! And please don't buy into that hokum of "I'm a creative person, I can't be bothered to learn that stuff." Even prima donnas can learn to type!

So how do you get them typing without drama? Here's my three-step plan for welcoming your tech-phobic staff into the 21st century!

Have the Talk

Pull your keyboard-fearing staff aside and have a very practical conversation with them about the situation. Explain that you are paying a monthly fee for the entire store to use the technology, and if they are not using the software, you're not getting your money's worth. Here are a few points to make before your staff member starts rattling off his or her excuses for grabbing a pen instead of a mouse:

1. Writing instead of typing actually take twice as long, pulling down your collective productivity.
2. Scribbling credit card numbers on paper is *extremely* dangerous (and possibly illegal in some areas). Explain how the POS system safely encrypts the credit card, protecting the customer and the store.
3. That piece of paper cannot tell what the customer's average sale is or show their previous shopping history. So taking an order on paper is a conscious decision to lower the service level for your customers.

4. Writing an order instead of typing it dramatically increases the likelihood of mistakes. (I have yet to meet a piece of paper that will alert me to a misspelling or add extra charges for a timed delivery.)
5. When you take payment on paper, you cannot process it until after you've hung up. If the card is declined, you have to call the customer back — a complete waste of time (and so easily avoidable... by using the POS system).

SET THE GOAL

Once you have substantiated just how bad order-taking on paper is for customers and the store, you must explain that change is needed. Tell your keyboard-fearing team that they will be taking orders on the POS system *and* you are going to give them the easy tools, support and a realistic timeline (six weeks is doable) for reaching that goal.

Give Them the Tools

Google "Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing," a great, inexpensive program designed to teach adults basic keyboarding skills. Install it on your PC and instruct staff that you will give them 15 minutes a day to go through the exercises. If their hang-up is not the keyboard but instead keeping up with customers, empower them with language by reminding them that it's perfectly fine to tell a customer, "Bear with me, I'm new

on the computer, so I appreciate your patience." Then do some role-playing — you be the customer and call in with an order. And remember to celebrate their progress from paper to keystrokes!

Final bit of tough love: Could your staff member start working at Target or Walgreens and say, "Sorry, I don't use the computer!" Heck no! But why do they get away with it at your shop? 🌻



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Got a sales or service challenge? Tell Tim about it, and he'll tackle it in an upcoming column. Email tim@floralstrategies.com, or call him, (800) 983-6184.

Cheat Sheet

Don't Say:

You can just take your orders on paper.

Do Say:

We all have to take orders on the system. Let me help to make you comfortable with the process.