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11 April 2011

Dear Sir.

RE: Your Opinion Counts

In need to fulfil my wife’s desire to complete her restoration of our patio dining set we popped into your North Walsham store today to purchase a tin of Ronseal ‘New Oak’ furniture stain. You don’t need to know that really but I thought I’d set the scene.

On passing through checkout we were 3rd back in a queue (of about 10) and so whilst standing firm and keeping my queue slot secure my eyes started to peruse the store and happened to notice your ‘customer comments’ post box (not photographed). What an excellent idea I thought (despite the barely readable and probably corporately unsanctioned type face), ‘you don’t often see that in chain stores these days’ I continued in thought.



However next to the box was the corporate customer comments stand, the sanctioned one (corporate colours and typeface gave it away) Oh yes, very official looking! I bet someone high up thought that was a gem of an idea to engage with your customers and really get their feedback wasn’t it?

‘**Your Opinion Counts**’ it said. Can you imagine my disappointment when the moderate hope that you really valued my opinion was dashed because the forms to collect my opinion were missing (see photograph)!

So tell me this.

- a. Does my opinion really count?
- b. Is this the best idea you could come up with to collect opinions?
- c. Do you know how people share their opinions these days?

You see the irony is that my opinion does count doesn’t it and I think you get that. After all I’m the man who spends his hard earned money in your store. ‘Me’ being not just me the consumer but me your customer base (although often I am literally the

only one in there). And so making my experience of shopping in your store the best it can be is absolutely vital, isn't it?

So what is better I ask. No feedback facility at all or a feedback facility that isn't operational because no one could be bothered to fill it with forms? The impression I'm left with is that **no one really cares**. It's meaningless would you not agree? If you (the brand) really thought my opinion counted then every individual in that store would take ownership and check that the forms were stocked up wouldn't they?

I'm not angered by this despite my passive aggressive tone. I'm frustrated. Frustrated that big British (often struggling) brands continue to not get what it means to engage with their customer base and still expect them to come and spend money.

Thanking you in anticipation of your considered reply.

Mr Gary Dickenson

A customer, business owner and advocate of great customer service & engagement
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PS The checkout guy was very courteous and apologetic about the queue. It didn't bother me as we were third but I bet it bothered the customers who were 10 + back. Of course they couldn't give their opinion could they but judging by their faces as we left I have a fairly good idea what it was.