

SLIGHT IMPROVEMENT IN SCORES FOR SUPERMARKETS

Retail customer satisfaction down this year

Tourist satisfaction sees 12.2 per cent drop, compared with 1.9 per cent dip among local shoppers

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SINGAPORE – As global and online retailers up their game to woo customers, local retailers appear to be falling short, with tourists feeling less satisfied with their retail experiences compared with previous years, a survey showed.

This was one of the findings of the annual Customer Satisfaction Index of Singapore (CSISG) released yesterday. Overall customer satisfaction in the retail sector dipped this year, falling 3.5 per cent from last year to score 69.6 points out of 100.

Tourist satisfaction saw a 12.2 per cent drop, compared with a 1.9 per cent dip among local shoppers.

Meanwhile, department and furniture stores were the worst performers among the retail sub-sectors, with drops of 9.1 per cent and 11 per cent respectively.

The survey was conducted by the Institute of Service Excellence (ISES) at the Singapore Management University between January and March. More than 9,000 responses were collected from locals and tourists.

Tourist satisfaction fell in all four of the sub-sectors — department stores, fashion apparel, jewellery stores, and clocks and watches — which took into account tourist responses.

ISES director Caroline Lim said changing tourist expectations could be a reason for the drop in their satisfaction. “There are many factors that

influence tourist expectations, including the country they came from, the past experiences they have had here and in other tourist destinations,” she added.

In a slightly better showing for the retail sector, supermarkets saw a slight improvement in scores, climbing 1.6 per cent. Petrol service stations recorded a slight dip of 1.9 per cent.

Service standards in traditional retailers have to improve, said Dr Marcus Lee, ISES academic director, who noted that customers are becoming savvier, finding out alternatives on the Internet before buying what they want.

“Training requirements for service staff, such as the familiarity of online alternatives and product knowledge, have to change. Even the selection criteria of staff would have to change,” he added.

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Sometimes, customers may show up at the store knowing more than the salesperson. That changes the reference point of the quality and the price point of the things I am paying (for) locally.

Dr Marcus Lee
ISES ACADEMIC DIRECTOR

8.5 per cent in scores, told TODAY that a stronger dollar is one reason for the drop, since it “will make our goods and services relatively more expensive”.

The store said it also faces manpower shortage, where “we cannot get enough people and lesser quality”. It plans to beef up training for its staff.

Meanwhile, the info-communications sector saw a 1.3 per cent drop in customer satisfaction — scoring 66.8 out of 100 points this year — but the ISES noted the small drop was not statistically significant.

The broadband sub-sector registered a decline of 3.3 per cent in satisfaction scores.

This year’s survey also included the sub-sectors of Pay TV and Wireless@SG, both of which had scores that were below the sector average. The Pay TV sub-sector scored 66.5 points, while Wireless@SG scored 61.5.