

## Want buyers to return? Let them return goods: Poll

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Return and exchange policies in physical and online stores here should be improved if businesses want customers to return, according to the latest Customer Satisfaction Index, released yesterday.

The index, compiled by the Institute of Service Excellence (ISE) at the Singapore Management University, shows that although customer satisfaction levels for the retail sector remained statistically unchanged from last year, these policies were among the attributes rated most poorly by respondents.

The retail sector – comprising supermarkets, fashion apparel, e-commerce and department stores – scored 72.6 points, a 0.6 per cent increase from last year.

“Customers who rated exchange and return policies poorly are associated with lower satisfaction and loyalty scores,” said Mr Chen Yongchang, head of research and consulting at the ISE. “Addressing the issue may be a source of competitive advantage for companies.”

Ms Yogeswari S. Sambasivam agreed. The 29-year-old communications officer cited Zalora’s 30-day item return policy and the ease of requesting a return as reasons she shops there.

“I’m more willing to buy clothes from Zalora because I know that if they don’t fit properly, I can fill up a simple online form to return them.”

The store clinched the top spot in the index for e-commerce entities for the third year in a row.

The index also found that customers who shop at both a store’s physical and online businesses are likely to be more loyal to that store.

Lecturer of marketing and retail at Singapore Polytechnic, Mr Lucas Tok, suggested that stores that have both online and physical platforms are likely to convert one-time consumers into long-term ones because they are able to engage these consumers continuously.

Some 6,900 locals and tourists were surveyed for the index.

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