



Scrappy or crappy?

Last week, I did something I haven't done in years; I walked into a national chain bookstore, determined to buy a book. After reading a number of Kindle books, I missed the feel of a hardcover. Ten minutes of browsing led me to "Trillion Dollar Coach" about Bill Campbell, a Silicon Valley 'Yoda' who helped mentor Google and Apple.

The price on the back cover read \$28.99, but that's kind of like a car's MSRP... Nobody pays the list price. Out of curiosity, I check the book's price on this store's website: \$15.17. That's more like it. Next, I check Amazon's price: \$19.60. Scrappy Brick-and-Mortar Retailer 1, Behemoth Online Retailer 0. Hold the applause.

I walk to the counter to pay, and after a brief hello, the cashier asks me if I want to sign up for something to save 10%. No thanks. Then she asks, "What's a good email address so we can send you valuable coupons?" No, I'm good. I prefer non-valuable coupons anyway. Finally, she scans the barcode and the register shows \$28.99. I protest and tell her the online price is \$15.17, and she says, "Oh, we don't have the same prices online as we do in the store." Ummm. "And besides, that's the Marketplace. Those are used books." I'm sure I looked like Napoleon Dynamite in deep thought, so she says, "But I can give you the online price, which is \$24.31. With tax, the total is \$26.01." Still stunned, I slowly hand over my cash.

When I get to my car, I set the book on the passenger seat and stare at it for an unusually long time. Buyer's remorse is riding shotgun. I wonder if the library has this book? I go about my day, but I can't shake this feeling that I've been taken. After several hours, I do what most rational people would do...I let it go. And, by that, I mean I took the book back to the store and requested a refund.

This all might seem petty or stupid or a waste of time, but it confirmed to me why I hadn't been into a national chain bookstore in a while. It's much less of a hassle to order online and have a book show up at my door 1-2 days later. Plus, I save money and I'm not accosted with "deals" (Save \$1 on your next Danielle Steele purchase!).

Do companies really think they can still get away with charging a premium price for subpar customer experience in today's world? We see it all the time in the financial advisory world: "advisors" and firms selling high-fee products that underperform, nickel-and-diming their clients for add-on services, and offering one-size-fits-all solutions—all of which fly in the face of how P&A operates.

Rather than trying to upsell our clients, our approach is to up-serve you. We know the client experience bar isn't coming down; your expectations will continue to move higher. We also know there's a big difference between scrappy and forgetting the "s."

To view this article and others like it online, visit the P&A blog at <https://pittand.com/blog/>.