



From the hardware store to the bookstore

For those of you who may be feeling like a career in retail isn't challenging enough, there's always the life of a children's book author to consider — and if you need some advice on how to get started, Mark Healy may be able to help.

Together with illustrator Alex Diochon, the Mississauga, Ont.-based associate dealer for Canadian Tire recently published *Monica and the Zamboni*, the true story of how his auction purchase of a Toronto Maple Leafs Zamboni helped turn a near tragedy — his three-year-old daughter's near-fatal fall from a parade float — into a heartwarming story about the true meaning of Christmas.

"We were very blessed that day and just wanted to turn a negative mishap into a positive learning tool so that no other child or family had to experience what we all did that wintry day many years ago," Healy said. "It also allows us to raise money for Sick Kids Hospital."

To order copies of the book, visit www.monicahealy.com.

PRIVACY

Retailers must limit use of driver's licence info

Privacy commissioners in Ottawa, Alberta and British Columbia have issued new guidelines to help retailers better protect the privacy of their customers, and they say retailers should exercise more caution when it comes to recording and collecting information from driver's licences.

While retailers may, for example, use driver's licences to verify the identity of someone using a credit card or picking up merchandise that has already been paid for, many also record driver's licence numbers to deter and detect fraud, particularly when merchandise is being returned without a receipt — a practice that concerns the commissioners.

"A driver's licence is proof that someone is allowed to drive a car; it is not a universal identity card," said says B.C. Information and Privacy Commissioner David Loukidelis. "Nor is it an appropriate identifier for use in analyzing shopping return habits."

Alberta, British Columbia and Quebec have adopted privacy laws covering the private sector; federal privacy legislation applies everywhere else in Canada. The common criteria in all this legislation requires that the collection of the personal information from the driver's licence must be for a specific and reasonable purpose.

The new guidelines, available at the Commissioners' Web sites, explain that many business purposes can be satisfied by simply looking at identification, or, at most, recording the name and address appearing on the licence.

"Retailers want to foster good relationships with their customers, and they understand that respecting their privacy is a key issue," said Derek Nighbor, Vice-President of National Affairs for Retail Council of Canada. "These guidelines help clarify the rules for both consumers and retailers, and we encourage all our members to ensure that they put the appropriate practices in place."

Learn more: www.privcom.gc.ca/information/pub/guide_edl_e.pdf

And we quote...

"In retail, it's pretty important to know how your customers are feeling. In a gender-based study that we conducted with Maritz Research in 2007, we asked 1,000 Canadian women and men their world view about the stars and dogs of the retail and services world. Well over half

of the women in our study said they had experienced a retail situation where *they felt they were being treated less seriously* because of their gender. Almost three times as many women as men made this statement.

But here's the paradox. Seventy-one per cent of the women in our study said they were the key decision-maker regarding consumer purchases in the household, with 42 per cent of men saying the same thing."

Source: *The Gender Intelligent Retailer* by Joanne Thomas Yaccato and Sean McSweeney



SURVEY

Service, not price, top cause of customer churn

While retailers focus on improving efficiencies and managing stock flow to see them through the economic downturn, at least one recent study suggests a renewed focus on customer service could be the ticket to retaining customers.

Accenture's fourth annual Global Customer Satisfaction Survey found that just as customer expectations are rising, the customer experience is falling short. In Canada, for instance, almost half (48%) of Canadians believe their expectations are never, rarely or only sometimes met — a noticeable rise from 41% in 2007. In addition, poor customer service was cited as the top reason Canadians switched providers during the past year.

"While the survey found increased customer turnover, this situation may provide an opportunity for companies, especially in tough economic times," said Accenture's Woody Driggs.

Other findings:

- Two-thirds of respondents reported moving their business to other companies as a result of poor service, up from 59% of respondents in last year's survey.
- For the fourth straight year, the study also found that the number of consumers who left because of poor customer experience (68%) was significantly higher than the number of those who left a business because they found a lower price elsewhere (53%).
- Twenty per cent of respondents reported that they would immediately leave a company because of a poor service experience, up from 13% in last year's survey.
- Globally, retailers ranked third among consumers when asked which industry sector provided the best customer service, placing