

Lack of communication may cost you a sale

Prescriptives: One Customer's Quest for Makeup

Today, I went to the mall in search of a replacement for my dwindling bottle of Prescriptives foundation, which I love. First I went to Nordstrom, where I originally found it. The Prescriptives counter was very small, and a salesperson from a different counter "helped" me. She was not very familiar with the brand and she said they were out of what I needed. Next stop, Bloomingdales. I looked everywhere and no Prescriptives counter. I asked someone who answered me with a look as if I had just asked for Cover Girl, that Prescriptives does not have a counter at Bloomingdale's. I walked out.

Next stop was Macy's. A young sales guy informs me that Prescriptives is being discontinued. This is news to me. I ask whether I can purchase the foundation online. He tells me no, but that he can custom blend some foundation from me at exactly double the price. I asked if I could find a similar foundation with the parent company, Estee Lauder. He says probably, and walks me over to the Estee Lauder counter, where he explains what I need to a saleswoman who then proceeds to ignore me. No joke. I walk out.

Finally, I get to Lord & Taylor. I find their Prescriptives counter and the salesperson tells me they are sold out of that particular foundation. She shows me a couple of others, which I don't like. She assures me I can find something similar at Estee Lauder. We go over there, and the Estee Lauder looks up in her sales book and yes, she finds the "equivalent" to my foundation in the Estee Lauder lineup. OK. She is a good salesperson. She is nice and helpful and I buy the Estee Lauder offering.

I get home. I check on the Internet and guess what? I can buy my exact foundation online. I do it.

What is the moral of this makeup quest? A company must communicate with its associates and the public just a wee bit better.

- First, I did not know Prescriptives was being phased out. It is probably buried in some news somewhere but a large ad would have made that clear to me.
- Second, the counter people did not know enough to say the following: Prescriptives is being phased out. You can still purchase our existence here or check online until X date. One of these sales people even had the wrong information. Not helpful.
- Third, the physical displays/counters at the stores did not have any of the above information.

Prescriptives is part of Estee Lauder. It is in EL's best interest to make sure that Prescriptives customers migrate to one of their brands, and be happy about it. In order to do this, the company needs to communicate better. Period. End of story.

Have you ever had to deal with a brand that was being discontinued? What did you do?