Checking out the customer experience

My last blog post was about how you have to “be open for business” if you are trying to market a destination. In other words, marketers have to be aware of what the potential/actual customer experience looks and feels like.

Last night, I attended a happy hour at a newish bar in Penn Quarter in Washington, DC. My friend and I each got a $5 beer and sat down. The place was crowded, not packed, and the din was tremendous. We could barely hear each other. Why? Well, the room was apparently designed to bounce all noise back. There were none of the usual noise absorbers like acoustic tile on the ceiling or carpet or drapes. Instead the floor was pure concrete, the ceiling had no insulation and the walls were also concrete.

It was so unpleasant that we left after one beer. I wonder how many other people also left after a short while. If this bar checked out its customer experience they could take corrective steps to cut down some of the noise. Otherwise, I predict that within six months the place will close because no one is going to want to hang out there.

Regardless of what field you are in, marketing is not simply pushing out a message and hoping it will stick. Marketers need to understand their customers and their experience with their product or service.

Savvy marketers will check out the customer experience. Whether you do it by surveys, secret shoppers, going on location, listening to customer input on social channels—there are many ways to understand what your customers like and dislike. If you ignore the customer experience, your marketing will ultimately fail.

How do you check out the customer experience? Have you had a marketing campaign fail (or succeed) because of customer feedback?