

The Fruit Punch Splash!

Copyright © 2007 by Calabash Educational Software.
All Rights Reserved.

There you were, during a bright sunny day, sitting and enjoying a coffee in one of the franchise outlets of a national donut shop. Within and outside the store, it was busy. You noticed a young mother pushing a stroller, with her young toddler following just behind. In the stroller was a 20-count box of “donut holes” and a small bottle of apple juice. The young child, fully capable of walking on his own, was carrying a small, glass bottle of fruit punch and a straw in his hands. As they passed you, walking toward the side door, you thought to yourself, “disaster in the making; would this young child be able to maintain control of his drink during his journey”?

A few seconds later, you heard a “crash”! You noticed that two police officers standing in line turned toward the side door; other customers did the same. You also noticed that the store manager, a middle-aged female, who was serving customers, also glanced toward the side door. Your curiosity then got the best of you; you turned toward the side door. On the ground, just outside the door, you noticed a “smashed” bottle of fruit punch. Your premonition came true! The child had in fact dropped his bottle of fruit punch. The manager immediately dispatched an employee to clean up the broken glass and spillage, a request that was responded to immediately, ensuring that no harm would come to others. Additional cleanup with a wet mop followed.

The young mother soon re-entered the donut shop and got in line. She left the stroller and her child outside the store. As she waited in line, she kept looking outside, checking on the well-being of her child. When she reached the counter, she purchased another bottle of fruit punch, obviously, replacing the one damaged by her child. As the mother left the counter, a customer was bringing the child into the store to his mother, indicating that the child was crying. The mother took her child by his hand and escorted him back outside.

Unfortunately, dropped donuts, drinks, and other food items are not uncommon occurrences in outlets of this nature. In this situation, it was not clear if the store manager knew who actually caused the breakage, one reason being that the customer was served at another counter about 15 feet away from where the manager was stationed. The identified drinks retail for \$1.25 and the 20-count “donut holes” retail for \$2.25.

Questions:

1. Evaluate the identified situation in terms of the relevant marketing theories and concepts? Include in your evaluation, consideration of the concepts of attitude, customer satisfaction, locus of control, and store image.
2. Evaluate how the store manager responded to this event.
3. Should outlets of this nature have a policy of “free” replacements when customers, for whatever reason, drop or damage their purchases, making the item(s) unfit for human consumption? Why or why not? Include in your discussion, consideration of fixed and variable costs, customer attitude, and store image.