



Service With Your Shopping? In Today’s Recession That’s a Special Order

By MARTHA ROSENBERG

“No service?” ask two irate customers in a New Yorker-style cartoon as they pitch articles of clothing across the bar. “No shirt! No shoes!”

They may have even lit up a cigarette in a no-cigarette zone.

It’s no secret the U.S. retail sector is hurting as the holidays approach, having just reported its worst quarter since 1992.

Still is the contracting job base an excuse for the No Food, No Drinks, No Strollers, No Change, No Restroom, No Backpacks, and No Pets signs you see outside so many stores?

And the No Refunds or Exchanges, No Bills Over \$20, No Credit Cards, No Items Sold Without Tag, No More Than 2 Items in Fitting Rooms, and No Special Orders Without Deposit signs you see inside them?

WELCOME TO YOU, TOO!

Twenty years ago, it was an ethnic joke that God created WASPs because someone has to pay retail. Today, the joke might be someone has to buy offline—since it’s so much easier and quicker to buy on the Internet.

But instead of rewarding shoppers who choose bricks over clicks and brave the other “No” signs—No Parking, No Standing, No Loading, No Idling—shoppers are greeted with semi-committed clerks wearing Bluetooths on their head and Vicks NyQuil \$12.99 badges at their collar bone.

Of course no one can blame underpaid teenagers, forced to answer the store phone while working the counter, for annoyance at people who try to pay with cash—CASH—instead of debit

cards. And checks? Let’s not even go there.

But do store managers really think the same clerks who ignore people can charm them into signing up for the store’s loyalty or rewards program? As, gulp, valued customers?

Of course we didn’t reach the point of stores trying to lock in your loyalty as a customer after ignoring you for 14 minutes—Personalization With No Service—overnight.

It is the logical outgrowth of two retail trends:

Service cutting, which debuted when restaurants discovered people would bus their own tables for no reason and tip when they didn’t even get table service. (Hello?)

And personalization, which debuted when restaurants discovered people would order more when greeted with a “Hello My Name is Dwayne and I will be your server. Tonight’s special is a glazed, skewered, marinated, caramelized...” speech.

(Was this the beginning of videos replacing reading?)

Personalization With No Service is what brings “special” offers of jewelry and leather goods in your credit card bill at the same time the company slips in a \$60 “service charge” they hope you won’t notice.

It’s reductions in rental car, hotel, and snorkel guide costs in the Golden Traveler Program that are exactly equal to the cost of joining the program.

And of course the flip side of Personalization With No Service—also known as We-Love-You-When-It-Costs-No-Money—is Service-With-A-Snare.

Service-With-A-Snare is best

known for employees who are instructed when they provide you a legitimate service like phone or cable to try to sell you something extra as a condition of your service. The classic example is: “Before we restore your dial tone can we interest you in our Friendly Weekend Families program...”

There was a day when U.S. customer service was the talk of the world. Especially compared to European stores which were known for sparse shelves, sparser hours, and clerks who say they will show you an item you’re interested in, “perhaps tomorrow.”

A woman in the former Soviet Union was said to be so disconcerted by a local store that had converted to U.S. style service—Hello! We’re Glad You’re Here; How May We Help You?—she ran out of the store screaming.

But then employees started costing Real Money unlike Internet shopping carts.

Internet shopping carts sent you a post purchase e-mail every day after you placed your order—Your package has Left the Warehouse! It is On the Truck! It’s in Your Time Zone! It’s in Your Zip Code—whereas employees wanted wages, health care, and retirement plans.

So managers began to try to make customers feel valued without valuing them. And the answer was employees, who they also didn’t value, pushing loyalty programs while wearing NyQuil badges.

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Fashion School 101: The Bra—Part 2

By JASMINE ANTOINETTE
Epoch Times Staff

In my last article I discussed bra basics: how to correctly put on a bra and how to solve some common problems. This week, we’ll focus on how to determine your true bust size, and then find out which styles to look for.

DETERMINING YOUR SIZE

Two components make up your bra size: the band and the cup. To find your bra size, you need to measure yourself and calculate the band and cup sizes as follows.

Step 1: To find your band size, remove your bra and wrap a measuring tape snugly around your rib cage, and then add 5 inches to this number to get your true band size. For example: 29-inch rib cage + 5 inches = 34-inch band size.

No matter what size you are, the right bra will not only give you comfort and support, but it will also give you a visible lift.

Step 2: To get your cup size, wrap the measuring tape comfortably around the fullest part of your bust and subtract your band size. The difference will give you your cup size. For example: 1-inch difference = A cup, 2-inch difference = B cup, and so on.

It’s a good idea to measure yourself every year or so, as your size can fluctuate throughout your lifetime. Now that you know your correct size, the next step is finding the best styles to suit your shape.

BEST STYLES

Average: If you are fit with little to no additional flesh and wear a C-cup or under, you’re in luck—you can wear any style you like.

Petite: If you are a B-cup or under, you will benefit from styles with underwire, molded cups, and padding for enhancement and shaping. You can get away with the “triangle,” wireless bras, but be warned that while they are wonderfully comfortable, they do nothing for your figure! Save them for lounging around the house.

Push-up, demi, and balconnet styles are your best friends. Natural cups (no molding or padding) with underwire work as well, as long as they have seams that give you shape and definition; the seamless version will leave your girls looking sad and deflated.

Full: For larger bustlines with little or no additional flesh, look

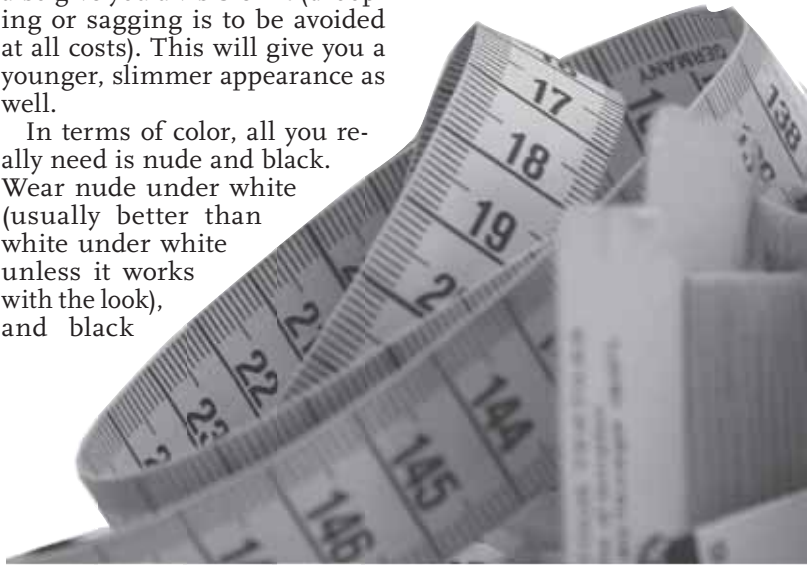


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for styles with more support. Natural cups or underwires both work for you. If you’ve got a bit (or a lot) of flab at the sides or in the back, you’ll want something with wide, firm straps, wider sides with boning, and firm, strong fabric that will give you additional support. Look for full cup or minimizing styles; avoid strapless.

No matter what size you are, the right bra will not only give you comfort and support, but it will also give you a visible lift (drooping or sagging is to be avoided at all costs). This will give you a younger, slimmer appearance as well.

In terms of color, all you really need is nude and black. Wear nude under white (usually better than white under white unless it works with the look), and black



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BEAUTY BOX

Don’t Spring for That Colorful Liquid Liner

At least not before you’ve checked out these products

By CHRISTINE LIN
Epoch Times Staff

Whether you swear by your neutral shadow but want a pop of color or your makeup collection looks like a rainbow in powder form, a brightly colored eyeliner is something that puts that extra zing in a look.

There are tons of colorful eyeliners out there in liquid, gel, and pencil form. But before you spring for even one of those liners, which may cost up to \$25, consider trying a shadow-to-liner converter product.

These products are basically a clear liquid or gel that when mixed

with loose or pressed eye shadow, turns the color into a liquid liner. They come in a slender bottle similar to the typical liquid liner. To use, drag the brush over the desired shadow and apply as you would a liquid liner. Wipe the color off the brush after your makeup application to avoid contaminating the gel with pigment.

This way, you can double the use of each of your shadows, save money, and have a wide array of eyeliner colors at your disposal. Besides, no cosmetics company carries more liner shades than they do eyeshadow shades.

One drawback to shadow-to-liner converters is that they tend

to come in liquid form. If you must have gel or pencil form, then this might not be the option for you.

A FEW PRODUCTS ON THE MARKET:

Too Faced Liquif-Eye felt tip: \$17.50

Sephora “Tricks of the Trade” Eyeshadow Transformer: \$10

Urban Decay Eyeshadow Transforming Potion, double-ended with one thick end and one thin end: \$18

Illamasqua Sealing Gel: \$12

MAC Pro stores carry a series of mixing mediums—for face, lashes, and eyes. Some formulas are gel, others water-based, and some alcohol based. Never use alcohol near the eyes.

Do-it-yourself method: Mix one part glycerin and three parts pure water as a mixing medium. Glycerin is inexpensive and available at many drugstores.

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