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SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE CONSIDERATIONS

Protecting our customers against risk means building trust in the business.

By Cristóbal Guerrero López

PRESENT AND FUTURE OF OUR CUSTOMERS WITH MOBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY PROBLEMS IN SUPERMARKETS AND HYPERMARKETS

Objectives:

LOOKING AFTER THE HEALTH OF ELDERLY PEOPLE, OF OUR ACTIVE CUSTOMERS WITH REDUCED MOBILITY, AND REGULAR SHOPPERS IN LARGE SUPERMARKETS AND LEADING FOOD RETAIL CHAINS, IS THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND THE SOLUTIONS I OFFER TO HYPERMARKETS AND FOOD RETAILERS IN ORDER TO AVOID THE RISKS THESE CUSTOMERS SUFFER WHEN SHOPPING.

*Spain has more than eight million elderly people, accounting for 17% of the population. By the year 2050, 36% will be aged over 65, and the proportion of octogenarians continues to rise from current levels already in excess of 5% (Advance interpretation of the 2012 municipal population register by the Spanish National Statistical Institute. (HI. 9 August 2013. (1-10-2014.)



As **BUSINESS PEOPLE**, we all comply with the regulations imposed by lawmakers with regard to **occupational risk prevention**. Other aspects, although not subject to official obligations, must be monitored and addressed by business owners in order to enhance the **social well-being of their customers**, regulations to be fulfilled with regard to the prevention of risks to consumers, **which we have found to be overlooked or inadequately addressed in practice**.

Modifications to operating standards are implemented if the company realises that the reasons behind the cause and effect could harm its target consumers, and finds that regular customers are suffering consequences when shopping as a result of factors which should be covered by personal risk prevention protocols.

Adoption of the measures required to prevent avoidable risk should be a commitment within the context of social responsibility at the company.

Small businesses and retailers know that **SELLING IS SERVICE**, that customers deserve our full attention, and that we must offer them a pleasant and safe experience. To achieve this, we adapt preventive measures allowing customers to make their purchases in the most convenient, fluid and healthy manner possible.

The universal self-service approach devised in the USA in 1916 is now and has for many years been the method applied by supermarkets and large food retailers. Such premises are required to keep thousands of square metres of exhibition space in perfect order, with aims which include the mission of improving the return on shopping routes, focusing on marketing and logistics strategies to capture customers' attention, monitoring timings down to the last detail, the positioning of brands along the route and the whole customer experience between setting foot in the store and arriving at the **CHECKOUT**.

WE FIND that regular customers of advanced age or reduced mobility, those who are ill, pregnant, etc., are exposed to health problems when shopping as a result of

unfavourable conditions caused by conventional ergonomics systems which they are forced to deal with as they make their way around the store. The solutions which customers demand in order better to deal with the self-service approach can be resolved at little cost to the business considering the health benefits offered. Customers are also confronted with the uncontrollable discomfort of air conditioning, aware that this is essential in order to preserve the produce, despite the risk which exists of an impact on customer health caused by the sudden change in temperature between outdoors and indoors, while other factors open to improvement include the positioning of articles on shelves at a reasonably convenient height in order to avoid bending at the knee and other postural changes when picking objects off shelves with different heights and weights, improved readability of price labels, and also an attempt to avoid customer disorientation when changes are made, etc. All these factors and more are borne by customers with resignation, despite a belief that they could be avoided. Companies, aware of this situation, should analyse enhancements which would offer such customers greater convenience. They expect to be served and our position is that if their requests were addressed then this would be recognised and highly valued in terms of a socially responsible corporate image.

Healthy solutions to improve accident prevention.

There are POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS in the adaptation of a small ramp with a **"healthy" platform** adapted to the start of the conveyor belt, a simple, economic and practical solution making it more convenient for customers to lift up their basket of articles to be scanned at the CHECKOUT.



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HEALTHY ramp

Proven effectiveness. The results: Care for the health of individuals, avoiding risks involved in bending of the legs and back.

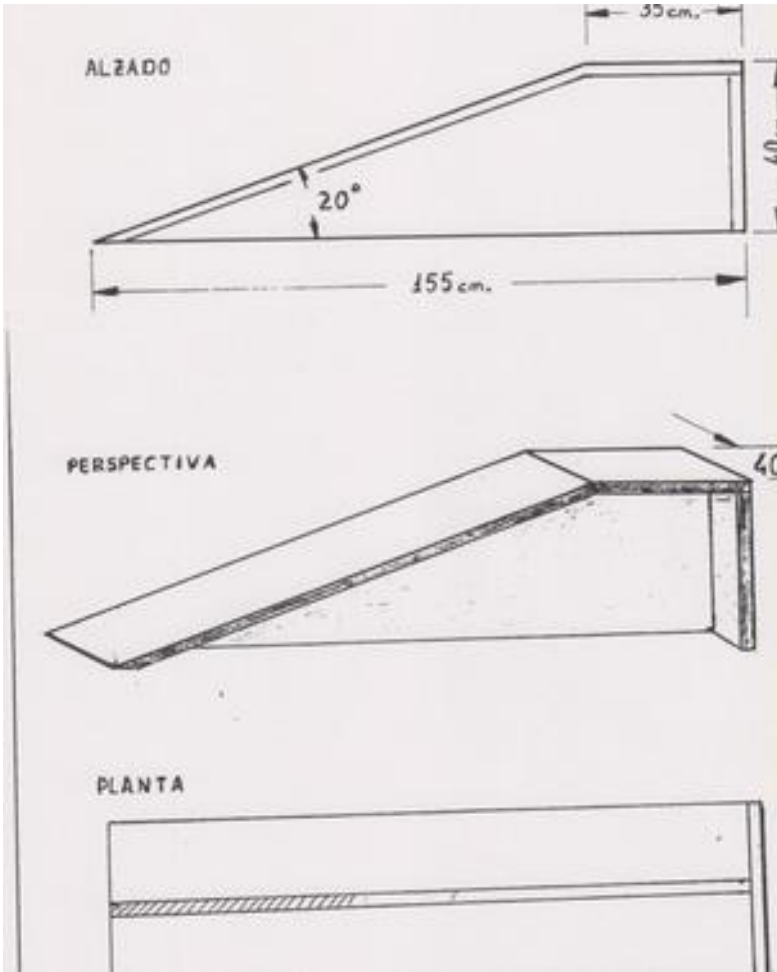
This healthy ramp has been made from wood for presentation, with this tailor-made prototype installed at one of the El Jamón supermarkets on Calle San José in Huelva. The user satisfaction survey generated remarkable results, the response by customers being surprise and gratitude towards the company, which has always demonstrated social

responsibility in helping the neediest members of society, with particular consideration for elderly people in incorporating this invention on its premises, given the benefits which use of the ramp platform offers as part of the checkout structure, making it easier for them comfortably to place the articles at the end of the shopping route.

The healthy ramp can be made from more solid and longer-lasting materials, using aluminium with non-slip coating, and wheels to move it into place, along with any different colours or dimensions which the company might find appropriate.



Prototype "healthy ramp"



Cristóbal Moreno



Basket arrives with articles



Basket wheeled up to the platform

CURRENT SYSTEM AT SUPERMARKETS



1 Customer to checkout



2 Customer/articles and trolley



3 Space to install ramp

1/2 : Trolleys/baskets, with articles and food taken out by the customer from ground level.

3: Usable space to install the ramp (155 cm) allowing the trolley to be raised to a height of 40 cm, allowing for swift and COMFORTABLE removal of the articles.



Using this "healthy ramp", customers can wheel the trolley-basket up to the platform located at a height of 45 cm above the ground. From this height the customer can remove the articles from the basket and place them more easily on the conveyor belt.

This customer service development is particularly valuable in terms of social responsibility, and will serve to enhance the standing of this established brand in Huelva. Listening to and addressing the initiatives, suggestions and proposals presented by our target consumers represent an additional service which we must all take on board in order to win the loyalty of our customers.

This "healthy ramp" has been registered, and one of the options considered by the inventor to provide finance is to include advertising within the module, an exclusive attraction for brands with a substantial commercial impact, presenting for sale high-selling and regularly purchased articles in a manner highly valued by the target audience. This

will make it simpler to negotiate with those supermarket chains wishing to adopt this healthy and socially responsible ramp.