

Market Info

Nobody asked but ...

I heard a radio report, as I recollect its gist, of a study which found that customers prefer NOT to be asked, “can I help you?” in a marketplace. That squares with my feelings as well. I prefer to see everything that is available, at my own pace, and then make my own reasoned choice. That preference is what markets are all about. Seller, let me see your wares. Sometimes the array of wares is too dense, or poorly structured, so then I may need to ask for assistance as an alternative to spending more time and exposing myself to impulse buying.

The study also found that people liked digital checkout over attended checkout. I suppose this is part of a general trend which shows that buyers take to automation well. I will need to think about this a good deal more. I have had less than favorable interactions with kiosks, in the main. And there have been repeating irritants with self-checkouts — unexpected item in the bagging area! What the ... ? There is too much fogginess wherein user goals are being confused with process goals. But such can exist in human exchange as well.

I would imagine that customers will tend to avoid sellers who irritate them or sellers’ machines which confound them. They may even avoid that section of the marketplace.

It’s funny. In restaurants, I prefer human interaction, but in food stores, I prefer inanimate systems.

I didn’t hear any numbers on either finding of the study.

— Kilgore Forelle