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Three things your business can adopt from Wayfair - by Diana Perry

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As a new home owner, I've been on the lookout for everything from a dining room table to bedroom furniture, carpets, dishware and (to my husband's dislike of hanging) curtain rods and blinds. There are so many things needed once graduating from an 850 s/f apartment in the city to a house in the suburbs. But in order to design the home of your dreams, you need to visit all of the home furnishing store favorites like Restoration Hardware, Arhaus, West Elm, Anthropologie, Crate & Barrel, Room & Board, Tempur-Pedic and many others.

However, in my home furnishing research there is one retailer that sticks out far above all of the others for many reasons and that's Wayfair. The soon to be clicks-to-bricks retailer (opening its first bricks-and-mortar 3,700 s/f store at the Natick Collection this fall) has done so many things right. There are lessons to be learned from Wayfair that can be applied to any business in our industry.

Wayfair has quickly become the largest online retailer for home furnishing in the U.S. with \$7 billion in annual revenue, employing over 13,300 people to oversee that things run smoothly. Yes, it's a massive company but they have so many things figured out that we can all learn from. Let me explain:

Website search and sort capabilities

The amount of filtering options offered in searching for a product on the Wayfair website is just astounding. They have so much product (over 14 million items) so it is a lot to filter through so getting to your desired product as fast as possible is important. From color, style, price, material, availability, shipping date and other options, there are a lot of ways for you to browse for what you need. Think of applying this same idea to your website. How can you offer the best search and sort experience for brokers and retailers looking for retail space? Some ideas include: By state, city, s/f, type of use, ceiling heights, septic, co-tenancy, recently viewed, suggested property...etc.

Customer service

Wayfair has revolutionized customer service to a new level. Once you purchase an item you get an email confirmation, text updates on where your item is and when to expect it, they send you individual parts if anything is missing, and the turn-around is sometimes just 1 day which is unheard of in the furniture world. They also offer incentives like \$10 off your next order if you review your purchases on their website. They even have a customer care person assigned to you who will call you to be sure you're happy with everything. Take this highly personalized approach to your company. Fast call backs, text updates on where the space is for hand-off, photo and video updates, a lease transition meeting, and follow-up post move-in, are all ways to show your client or tenant you're committed to helping them succeed and grow. And, it's ok to ask for a review, most are happy and willing if they have a positive experience and this will help with your SEO.

Omni-channel experience and social media

Having a multi-channel approach is no longer acceptable, you must have an omni-channel approach where all communication methods work together. This is what Wayfair will now be achieving with their b&m store. They're also offering an on-site design team to help with room function, layout and décor. You can do this for your clients; be sure that conversations pickup where they left off, have an accessible office for them to come speak with you, engage with each other on social media, and make sure your webchat conversations enter your CRM system. Good luck, you've got this!

Fun Fact: The founders of Wayfair met as high school students attending a summer program at Cornell.

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