

Are South African Consumers Really That Timid, Retail Transference Of Responsibility/Risk

How do you feel about showing your receipt and having security look in your bags....

Retailers in South Africa seem to take security and loss management too far and we as customers participate in this violation of simple consumer rights. One thing retailers fail to understand is that shoplifting and collusion by staff with criminals to steal has nothing to do with regular customers. This is a risk that comes with being in the retail business and should be met with high security technology such as people walking aisles and cameras not securities at the door looking for receipts and looking into people's bags to confirm what they see on the receipts.

I have taken some time looking at this and it happens in many CBD's and Township shopping centres, Game, Shoprite and many other retailers have security personnel who man the door like a club bouncer and ask for receipts. I asked a manager at a Jet store in Bloemfontein who told me it's Jet's policy. A Game Manager said it is a random search they conduct on any buyer and on all electronic appliances because they found a staff member who colluded with a friend and stole some electronic appliances, A Township Shoprite manager told me their looking at other way and will soon change it because people fight, this was a year ago and nothing new happened.

I bluntly refuse and tell them if they suspect I stole something they should follow me out of the store and apprehend me. But do I really need to go through that kind of frustration as a customer just to get out of a retail store not feeling like a criminal. The shocking is that this security measure is not implemented in all stores of the chains, in the same towns it will be implemented where there is a lot of black consumers and if you shop in the northern sides of the town then you find that nothing like that is happening. Now what the difference between the two groups of customers, is there no shoplifting where we live. Is shoplifting only in CBD's and Township, does it warrant searching of everyone that goes into these shops?

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