

# Studying patterns improves sales

**Customer traffic analysis highlights weak points at bottom-line level**

**Ron Chalmers, The Edmonton Journal**

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EDMONTON - When Harry Kipnes wanted to know exactly how well his 22 cellphone stores were attracting shoppers and closing sales, he turned to in-store traffic analysis.

"We take the sales process very seriously, asking customers what their needs are, finding the right fit, asking for the sale and overcoming objections," says Kipnes, CEO of Edmonton-based Digital Connections.

Although Digital is Alberta's largest Rogers Wireless dealer, Kipnes wondered whether his stores were attracting as many shoppers and closing as many sales as they could.



**Harry Kipnes and communications consultant Shayla Holloway review a data report inside the Rogers store in Southgate Mall.**

**Candace Elliott, The Journal**

So he hired HeadCount Corporation, also of Edmonton, to measure foot traffic and the percentage of browsers who actually buy -- hour by hour, day by day, in two stores.

Kipnes now receives a monthly data report that reveals patterns within and between stores and helps him decide whether to concentrate on drawing more shoppers into the stores or on more effective selling to those who do enter.

The answer could vary by store and by day or hour.

If the traffic at one store was low or falling, Kipnes might boost advertising or promotion.

If traffic was ample but the number of buyers was disappointing, then he could look for improvements in store layout or staff training.

"It gives us an indications of whether the staff are taking advantage of the opportunities that are presented to them," Kipnes says.

HeadCount president Mark Ryski has grown his client list to include such chains as Golf Town, London Drugs, Sleep Country, Visions and Rogers.

In two years, the business has grown eight-fold. "We work with retailers that represent thousands of sites across the country," Ryski says. Typically, a chain will start as Kipnes did, buying the service for one or two stores as a pilot project then, Ryski hopes, ordering it for more locations.

Initially, Ryski struggled to sell retailers on traffic analysis.

Then, early in 2005, he published his first book, *When Retail Customers Count*, distributed it to 600 senior retailing executives and soon filled his calendar with appointments for high-level presentations.

"Retailers are starting to get it," Ryski says.

"The book helped us to break through and reach some of the most strategic minds, and has materially advanced the business."

Now he's writing a second book on store traffic analysis, tailored toward chain retailers. Ryski recently signed a deal to offer HeadCount services, at a discounted rate of \$139 per month per store, to the 9,000 members of the Retail Council of Canada.

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