

Pass It On®...

Respecting Your Customers.

As the Great Depression impoverished the country, many families stretched their budgets by making clothes out of flour and seed sacks. What companies did next may surprise you.

Marketers often talk about meeting the customer's needs or understanding the customer's journey. Being a good corporate citizen means taking care of your community. But at the beginning of the 1900s, most companies were in a land rush for market share. Everything was about profits; that is, until the recession hit.

After 1929, banks closed, the stock market plummeted, and farmland went arid. Fifteen million people were unemployed. Rural America was hit hard. Eking out a living from land that had been over-farmed and over-grazed made for less and less productivity. And getting product to market amounted to mostly breaking even.

Farmers bought seeds and flour in bulk. No longer packaged in barrels, cheaper cotton bags were stacked at feed and supply stores. Soon, innovative mothers began using the empty flour and seed sacks to make clothing for their kids. It was common to see children wearing flour-sack shirts and dresses.

In today's fashion world, where labels are a status symbol, consumers flaunt brands in big ways on every article of clothing. But during the Depression, flour and seed companies saw an opportunity to help struggling families. Wearing a flour-sack dress got you labeled as poor and sent you down a rung or two in social circles. So, the flour and seed companies started printing their sacks with smaller logos and pretty gingham patterns. They even published instructions for how to soak the logo out of the fabric and printed it in water-soluble ink. It wasn't long before you couldn't tell the difference between a dress made of a flour sack or store-bought material.

At a time when the country was trying to pull itself up by its bootstraps, companies were doing their part to help poor families feel a little less ashamed of the circumstance they found themselves in. As each of us goes to work, we can look around and see who might need a little help fitting in. We can

make a difference by being the kind of friend who doesn't judge them by the labels they wear.

Be the Good... PassItOn.com

By The Foundation for a Better Life®

The Foundation for a Better Life® promotes positive values to live by and pass along to others.

Copyright © 2023 | The Foundation for a Better Life®
All rights reserved. | www.passiton.com

Available under a Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 License (international):
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>