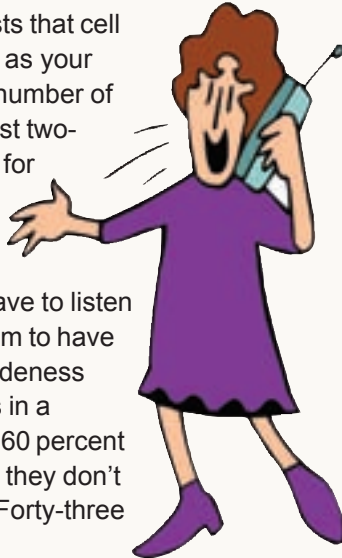


## Considering Cell Phones

**A** growing body of evidence suggests that cell phone use in public places, such as your retail outlet, is extremely annoying to a number of people. Cell phone chatter annoys almost two-thirds of Americans, and of those polled for Cingular Wireless, 80 percent said they overhear cell chat in stores and restaurants.

While it's annoying for shoppers to have to listen to the conversation of others, diners seem to have the greatest aversion to it. Cell phone rudeness was the number one complaint of diners in a recent Zagat Restaurant Survey. Nearly 60 percent of those surveyed by LetsTalk.com said they don't turn off their cell phones in restaurants. Forty-three percent leave them on in theaters.

So, how do your customers feel about it? It might be time to ask them, before unbridled use of cell phones in retail settings drives even more customers to online shopping.



## Avoid These Scams

**A**s if there weren't enough to worry about as a retailer, the Better Business Bureau has released its latest list of the most popular scams being perpetrated on small businesses.

One is the Labor Poster Solicitations in which an organization using a government sound-alike name sends a letter warning that businesses are required by federal and state law to post notices to employees explaining certain employee rights. The posters are offered for anywhere from \$24.75 for a federal poster to \$49.50 for a state poster. No state or government agency charges for these

posters. The scams use phony invoices, such as one for "solid waste consulting fees" or a similar service not requested by the business. Fraud artists count on the basic honesty of businesses, many of which pay without questioning the invoice.

Businesses should alert their bill-payers to be on the lookout for disguised solicitations.

Finally, avoid companies offering advertisements to help local sports teams unless you've contacted the organization directly to find out if it is aware of the ads being sold and if it will, in fact, derive financial benefit from the advertisement. ☒



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