



# Getting the Customer to Take a Number

**Reducing customers' confusion when installing a new "take a number" system, and ensuring they check-in at ease.**

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When a new queue management system is installed at a location where previously customers used to stand in line or just walk straight up to an available service representative, the situation may initially be confusing.

Customers would not always notice something has changed, and if they do – they might still not be sure what they are supposed to do next.

This article discusses one possible cause for confusion – finding the way to take a number or "check in" to the waiting queue – and suggests some techniques for eliminating it.

**For more information about:** [Queue Management System](#)

## Changing the check-in process

When a customer enters for the first time into a service center with which he has no previous acquaintance, he would likely stop and look for directions, maybe trying the information desk before attempting to approach any service counter. He will search for a method, and one of the first things he will try to identify is where and how one enters the waiting line.

If a computerized queuing system, or even just a roll of paper tickets, is to be seen – he will find it and use it.

However, when an old customer of a bank (or a clinic, or any other business) visits the same location regularly to get service, he would not stop at the entrance to ask questions, but walk straight up to the service counters. If one day a new kiosk gets placed at the entrance, where a queue ticket needs to be taken – this customer would probably not even notice its existence.

This will be more evident in locations where the entrance hall, in which the kiosk is installed, is separate from the service area – since the customer would then only spend a minimal amount of time at the entrance area. Naturally he will go to the service area, where after some time he would realize he should have taken a ticket from the kiosk. The more time elapsed (and practically wasted) until this is realized, the angrier the customer would get. This is bad customer flow, and a negative customer experience.

When planning the customer check-in process we must be aware of this effect and try to minimize it. An attendant placed at the entrance would surely solve the problem, however that is an expensive solution to maintain, and most organizations will try to avoid keeping the attendant position staffed beyond the initial launch phase.

What this article focuses on, therefore, are means to making the kiosk more noticeable to visitors.

## Tip #1: Bring the kiosk closer to the customer's path

Often, the interior designer in charge of service branches would be given the goal "to streamline customer flow from the entrance to service areas". This is very true, in theory. However, misunderstanding the role of the queuing system may push the check-in kiosk away from the natural walking path of arriving customers.

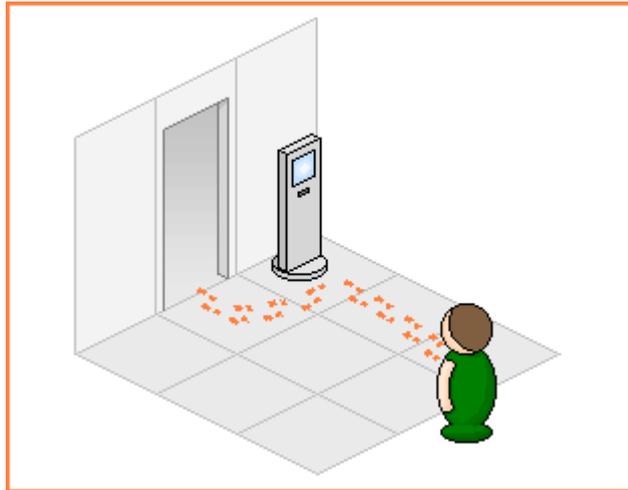
The kiosk must be adjacent to the customers' path and at times even partially block it. While the interior designer might find this flawed, he could be given a challenge of redesigning the entrance area so as to make the kiosk's placement seem natural and esthetic.



## Tip #2: Lead the customer

Sometimes, technical limitations would prevent us from placing the kiosk at its optimal location. For instance, we may be required to fix the kiosk to a wall if electricity and communication cables cannot go thru the floor. Still, clever means for leading the customer to the kiosk can be devised.

For instance, one way found to be effective is to stick or paint "footsteps" on the floor, in the form of a path going from the entrance to the kiosk, and then to the service area. Apparently many people would notice this marking and tend to follow it, very much minimizing the percentage of people ignoring the kiosk.



### Tip #3: Signage, Signage, Signage

While visiting service centers we would often find kiosks covered with stickers and improvised signage, trying to draw the customers' attention. These belong to organizations who were a little late to discover how important signage is in emphasizing the kiosk's role at check-in.

To avoid the improvisation, it is recommended that clear and visually pleasing signage would be prepared in advance. Such signage should be attached to the kiosk or placed between it and the service area passageway. However experience shows that signage alone usually does not suffice, and is best combined with other elements mentioned in this article.



#### Tip #4: Kiosks can speak

Kiosks can be installed with built-in speakers, and these speakers can be used to draw the customer's attention. Needless to say we do not suggest yelling at visitors from across the store, so this would work best in conjunction with tip #1 – bringing the kiosk closer to the walking path.

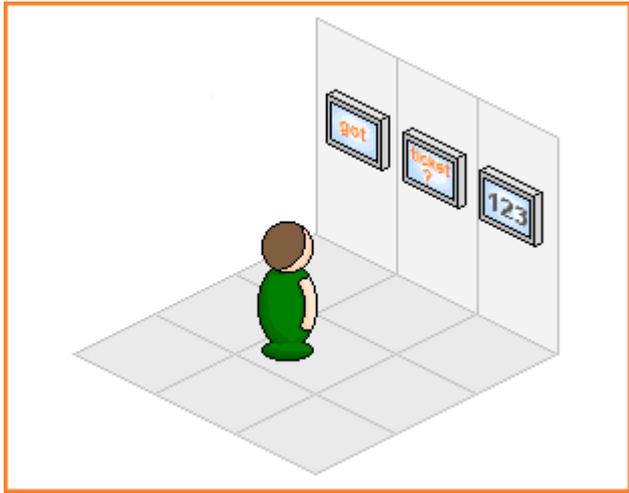
The most basic option would be to have the kiosk occasionally uttering a short greeting, ideally one that alternates and does not repeat itself, like "good morning", "hello", "welcome" etc. Kiosks can also be equipped with proximity sensors that would enable the greeting to be voiced when a customer actually goes by.



#### Tip #5: Use your digital displays

If a customer somehow managed to ignore all signs and went past the kiosk without taking a ticket, he will enter the service area. This part of the branch is likely strewn with digital displays, showing contents managed by digital signage systems. We can take advantage of these screens.

It would be easy and highly effective to add a short video explaining the service process to the play-list. Any customer, who forgot to check-in at the kiosk, would be reminded to take a ticket as soon as seeing the video, thus avoiding an unnecessary wait.



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