

January 2015 Observations...

My oldest son and I did some post-Christmas shopping at Oakbrook Mall, and with both of us being technically inclined we of course had to visit the Microsoft Store and the Apple Store. I was not buying anything, so I had the luxury of just sitting back and observing things. Here are some things I noticed:

#1 – Store Size:

I had not been to the mall for a long time, so I was surprised to see the Apple Store had moved locations closer to, and expanded to be the same size as, the Microsoft Store. I always thought that the original Apple Store was kind of small, so now they have more room for customers... which leads into point #2:

#2 – Population:

If you like to have a lot of company and want to be in the center of the crowd, go to the Apple Store. If you like your solitude and privacy, go to the Microsoft Store. What does that say about popularity? I'm not sure, but with Apple, you have pretty limited places to get Apple products. You can get Windows computers almost anywhere, like any mom-and-pop retail store. I would not be surprised to find Windows computers at a 7-11 someday. So it makes some sense that the Apple Store would be more crowded just because there are fewer places to get Apple stuff.

#3 – Personnel:

The Apple store folks are more clean-cut and perkier, the Microsoft Store folks have more tattoos and body piercings. Not that there is anything wrong with being clean-cut and perky, but in the Microsoft Store there was definitely more personal body art on display. The Microsoft folks are also a bit more stand-offish, but then I am not in their "Under 40" target market. The Apple Store folks are "pushier", despite my not being in their "Under 40" target market either.

#4 – Cool Factor:

Apple. Not even a contest: next observation please.

#5 – Content:

I was not totally shocked, but surprised nonetheless that in the Microsoft Store, there was not a single example of a traditional Desktop CPU / Monitor for sale. Only laptops, tablets, and all-in-one computers were on display. The Apple store had at least one Desktop unit to show off. Microsoft had their X-Box360 gaming console out on a shelf, but that does not count as a computer.

So there you have it: a non-scientific survey and comparison of the two stores. No conclusions or inferences beyond what I observed, but interesting. Now I have to figure out how be 39 again so I fit into their target market profiles.

-John Becker