

# ANYONE FOR COFFEE?

One-stop shop appeal

BY JANE SMITH

Supermarkets like Tesco's and Asda now offer everything from food to insurance to credit. Whatever happened to sticking to their core business of supplying food? Well we'll tell you what it is. It's the one-stop shop appeal. And they're now stocking stationery somewhere near you!



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The commercial stationery market in the business-to-business sector first hit on the idea of facilities management and single source supply. As a result there is a huge opportunity for us to be selling catering and janitorial products on the back of our stationery contracts. Perhaps the one-stop shop appeal really can capture customers' imaginations if it is positioned in terms of best cost (in other words reasonable prices and the best use of employees' time). Why send somebody down to the local supermarket to buy supplies like tea, coffee, wash-

ing up liquid and loo rolls when for a reasonable price you can get it from your stationery supplier?

Jeanette Maillardet, merchandising manager at leading wholesaler Spicers Ltd comments, “Facilities management is a key target area which is largely untouched by the office products market as yet. We have the ability to offer a greater one-stop shop appeal to our customers than ever before. Building a broad, competent product offering and having knowledgeable sales teams approaching the FM decision maker will all aid in achieving the status of being considered a serious player and increase confidence in the end-user to encourage them to switch from their traditional FM suppliers.”

From the office to the boardroom and training facility, the postroom to the kitchen and washroom it really is possible to put together a one-stop shop solution that can provide your customer with a cost effective way of managing his or her business and premises, as well as a healthy profit margin for you. Having a broader depth and breadth of product range also gives you more scope when it comes to pricing and defending your business from competitors in the future.

Analyse your customers and target a few of them. You may find that some of them are already buying catering and janitorial supplies from you on an ‘emergency’ basis, but perceive that you’ll be too expensive to source from regularly. Get hold of the facts and then offer to put a proposal together. Other customers may be totally unaware that you can supply such items. Perhaps a targeted promotion to draw their attention to this would be effective. And don't forget, it's coming up to Christmas and there'll be plenty of office parties going on. Is this a ‘hook’ you could use to discuss where they'll be buying their supplies from over the festive season? ■