CHAPTER 1

Introduction: What Is Showrooming?
We have all seen it. A customer walks in, not looking casually or really browsing, but focused, with smartphone ready. Not seeking help on the floor, but moving directly toward a particular section in the store. He or she may respond to a salesperson’s attempt to engage—the friendly “Can I help you?” or “Can I show you something?” or “Can I help you find something today?”—with an assured, calm, even careless response, “I’m fine, thanks!” or “I’ve got it covered, thanks!” or “I’m good, thanks!”

If you watch, you’ll see the customer pick up a shoe or a piece of gear or a shirt or a tool or a hat or a piece of jewelry or whatever is in your inventory—and handle it. The customer will check it out in detail, try it on, get a sense of its weight, figure out what it feels like, touch it, or look in the mirror with it on. This may happen with several different versions or styles of the same item; for example, the potential customer may try on several pairs of shoes or test five or six different pairs of headphones.

This doesn’t happen in two or three minutes. The customer will work at figuring out which item “feels” the best over a period of 10 to 15 minutes and in the process leave nothing to chance; more than likely the person will even ask a member of the floor staff to get different sizes or styles of an item—not concerned, not hiding, not nervous, but in plain sight. But after this person has spent all this time on your sales floor, touching