

## Where Do You Stand?

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Several months ago gas in Nashville cost almost \$3 a gallon. One enterprising station owner decided to charge around \$2.60 a gallon, while all of his competition was at the \$2.97 range. While he did this, people were lined up to get in the station. People were pouring through his little convenience mart, to go to the bathroom, or maybe pick up on his 2 for \$2 Coca Cola deals. His competitor's stations (there are 4 more within a two block radius) were nearly empty.

This station owner was a very smart man. Did he lose money? His profit margin may have been smaller, but the traffic and sales increase probably doubled his typical profit intake. He had to bring in tankers three times a day to refill his tanks, and some delivery truck was almost always there restocking something in his convenience store.

There is a lesson to be learned here by America's retailers. If you've never worked in retail management, you don't know what kind of mark-ups most retailers have on the goods you and I purchase every day. Sometimes those mark-ups are anywhere from 70 - 100% of the actual cost of goods. Bars and Restaurants even more so, where the mark-up could be as much as 600% on some items. Now, to be fair, these businesses have a lot of overhead they have to pay: salaries, utilities, licenses, security, insurance, etc. But, notice they're having trouble doing some of these things right now? No one is buying.

This is called "market correction". See, we (the American public) have allowed these companies to more or less rape us for years. Why is it that an automobile that cost \$3,000 in 1977 will cost \$18,000 today? Why does a gallon of milk cost almost \$3.50? Why is it that a gallon of gas that sold for \$1.15 in 1999...? Well, because we let them charge us that much. And right now, we're done. Not only won't we pay those rates, we can't.

The government is so heavily involved in trying to 'bailout' America (Have you **read the stimulus plan?**), that big business is still losing the Big Picture. You want your people to stay employed? You want to get back towards the black? You want to keep getting fat bonuses, and have the funding to continue driving innovation and expansion? OK, then charge a reasonable rate for product. What is really more important, a fat profit margin, or staying in business?

I know, there are dozens of other factors involved here. Employers think they pay too much for help. Employees don't think they get paid enough. Unions want every benefit the rest of the American public can't afford. Fuel and utility costs are rising,

increasing the expenditures and affecting the bottom line. When does the cycle stop? When do we, the American public, wake up and say enough is enough? When do American businesses say "We can do better by the American people, and survive, and be profitable." and start working with the boundaries of sanity. \$250 for a Wii and \$40 a game? It's a f@%#ing game. \$200 for an iPhone? It's a damn phone. \$80 for a pair of Nike? They're shoes for God's sake, they're gonna wear out in six months if you use 'em right.

When did we become so screwed up that we would continually let ourselves be taken advantage of? When does common sense sink in and we all say "No"? (When does "Common Sense" become common again?) There is a difference between being profitable, and being Greedy.

It takes people, average Americans like you and I, to stand up and be heard. It takes forcing retailers and businesses to "get it straight." What do you want to say? What do you want to do? How do you want to live? These aren't just rhetorical questions, I'm looking for your feedback. Stand up and be heard.