

# Making Hula Hoops

In the late 1950s, the owner of a small chain of general merchandise stores in the South noticed that he couldn't keep the popular hula hoops in stock.

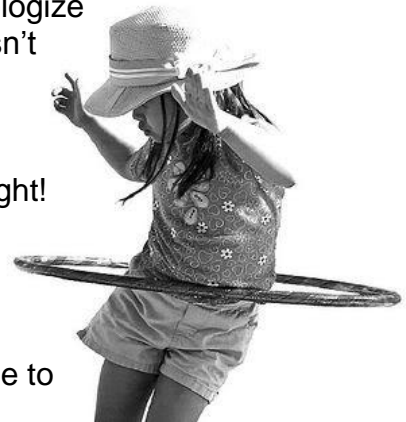
This fad was sweeping the country like wildfire, and not even the manufacturer could keep up with the demand.

"We're sorry," the manufacturer told the owner. "This product has become a nationwide craze, and we simply are not able to produce our product quickly enough to keep up. You will have to wait awhile, we're afraid, before you will have more hula hoops."

The owner of the stores could have told his managers to apologize to customers, and then explain that the popular item just wasn't available.

Instead, this man ordered some plastic tubing and began making his own hoops – at the astonishing rate of 3,000 a night!

This resourceful, proactive store owner brought the same sense of customer service and can-do attitude to everything he did. He was willing to jump through whatever hoops (pun intended) necessary to satisfy the men and women who came to his stores to shop.



Eventually, his chain of stores grew to national prominence, and the man became a billionaire.

His name? Sam Walton, the founder of Walmart and Sam's Club.

Paying attention to our customers' needs and wants – and effectively, even creatively, responding to them – is critical in health care, too.

The Bible has something to say on this subject: *If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small* (Proverbs 14:10).

– Beecher Hunter