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12-4c Customer Privacy

Lululemon is known for wanting to avoid collecting large amounts of customer information through big data techniques. Instead, it desires to have a close and open relationship with customers. One of the ways it does this is by listening to customers as they shop in the store. Lululemon takes customer complaints or concerns seriously and will attempt to make decisions based on this information.

Although this emphasis on listening to the customer is an important part of Lululemon's customer relations, some people believe Lululemon takes it too far. A less well-known ethical risk that the company practices is the training of retail employees to eavesdrop on their customers. Lululemon prefers this to spending money on marketing software that tracks purchases or sending out survey requests. Christine Day, the former CEO, used to spend much of her time in retail stores, pretending to be a customer, in order to listen to complaints and observe shopping habits. When she was with the company, she had stores set up their clothes-folding tables next to the fitting rooms so employees could better overhear any complaints. Whether these practices are smart marketing techniques or infringements on privacy is ambiguous.

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