

Retail Adventures in the Real World™

It's Not Too Late!

By Rich Kizer and Georganne Bender

Last-minute, sales-building ideas to spin the doors on your stores this holiday season

For many retailers, the holiday-selling season is make-or-break time. We hope you have your store calendar completely filled with in-store events and promotions to spin the doors on your store. We also hope that you gave each of your customers their very own copy of that calendar, and that they are hanging it on refrigerator doors in homes all over town. But if you are like most retailers, you could probably use a few last-minute promotions to increase store traffic and build sales. We can help! Here are a few of our favorite easy-to-implement ideas that you can use any time of the year, but are particularly effective during the holidays.

50% OFF COUPON EVENT

Customers love a great sale; even more, they love being able to choose for themselves what's on sale. The 50% Off Coupon Event puts the choice in the customer's hands.

The 50% Off Coupon entitles the customer to 50% off of any one regular-priced item of their

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Photos courtesy of Paper House

choice. You may want to limit the dollar amount to 50% off of any one regular priced item of up to \$25.

This event is designed to be advertised via Bag Stuffers.

We love Bag Stuffers – the Street Savvy™ retailer's ultimate stealth marketing weapon – because they can help increase your customer count without having to spend a fortune in additional advertising. And at no cost of distribution!

In this case, your bag stuffer is the coupon. The secret to using bag stuffers lies in how they get into the customer's hands. One thing's for sure: you can't pre-stuff them into every bag, because if you do, you're just wasting your time.

Instead, ask your cashiers to engage the customer in a conversation describing the event. Ask your cashiers to then place the coupon directly in the customer's hand. This will ensure that A.) The customer understands how the event works; B.) The customer knows the day and time of the event; and C.) The 50% Off Coupon won't get thrown away with the bag when the customer returns home.

PIN THIS TO A GUY

Year after year, too many women to count tell us that they would like to get the holiday gifts they really want, not the appliances, vacuum cleaners, robes, socks, or stuff from the convenience store they usually receive. There's still time to help them out! Our "Pin This to a Guy" event allows your customers to choose the gifts that they really want. "Pin This to a Guy" is also advertised via bag stuffers. It's the perfect event for customers who already know and love your store.

"Pin This to a Guy" is an open house-type event. Its purpose is to encourage your customers to list the things they really want from your store on the "Big Hint Shopping Data Sheet" that's provided on the back of the "Pin This to a Guy" invitation. Tuesday, December 16, is a perfect night to invite your customers' significant others to your "Guy's Night Out" Open House where you will make their holiday shopping pain and hassle free.

The front side of the invitation reads: "On Tuesday, December 16, Pin This to a Guy and send him to (Your Store Name Here). We'll make sure he

"Use events to strengthen relationships with current customers and build relationships with new customers."

comes home with some pretty cool stuff. We're setting aside four hours on Tuesday, December 16, to redirect your guy from football to fun and festivities, from hot rods to great holiday gifts for you!"

The back side of the invitation features "The Big Hint Shopping Data Sheet" – space where your customer can list all of her gift selections and make her guy's shopping experience a breeze. Your customers will enjoy spending time browsing your store and listing gifts to their hearts' content.

Make the night of your event special with the following "guy-friendly" services:

- **Extended Guest Service:** Really great customer service to help make your guests' buying experience easy and hassle-free. Make sure you have lots of "Guy Helpers" on hand to help out.

- **Free Gift Wrap:** Offer a choice of wrapping papers, or festive gift bags and tissue paper, and wrap the gifts before the customer leaves the store. We recommend that you also throw in a small gift card.

- **Entertainment:** Invite a choir to sing or a band to play. There are many talented people in your own community, maybe in your own store. Showcase their talents! Check out

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schools and churches for entertainment and availability. If live entertainment isn't your style, even a great holiday CD will put customers in the mood to buy.

• **Refreshments:** Our motto: "Food is good," applies here. Coffee, soft drinks, and cookies will do just fine. Plus, the caffeine and carb mix will keep your customers going strong and in the mood to shop.

NEW YEAR'S BOUNCE BACK

How would you like to have the same customers who filled your aisles this holiday season come back to shop with you again in January? It's easy when you bounce 'em back!

Bounce Back Coupons look like any other coupon, but they are used to entice current customers to return to your store again soon. The cool part is that the Bounce Back Coupon can only be redeemed during the designated time frame, so if the customer's experience in December has been a good one, you're almost guaranteed they'll be back to shop again in January.

1. Run your Bounce Back Coupon Promotion during the two weeks before Christmas, when your store is likely to be at its busiest. You can choose to end it on Christmas Eve or continue through the end of December. Remember that the more customers you impact in December, the more you will have return to shop with you in January.

2. For every \$25 a customer spends, he or she will receive a Bounce Back coupon good for \$5 to use on any regularly priced purchase during their January visit to your store. In other words, if a customer

spends \$100, he/she will receive four \$5 Bounce Back Coupons.

3. We recommend that you allow the discount to be applied to any purchase, however, you may want to add some disclaimers to eliminate certain products, brands, categories, or classes. Please note that all of your disclaimers must be listed on the Bounce Back Coupon and on any signing and other in-store materials.

4. Set a specific redemption date for all of the coupons to be redeemed.

5. Create signage for each cash register that detail how the Bounce Back Coupons work. Include the following:

- Bounce Back Coupons may not be used for purchase of gift certificates or for previously purchased merchandise
- Bounce Back Coupons may not be redeemed for cash. No change will be given.
- Bounce Back Coupons are valid for in-store purchases only.

YOUR TO-DO LIST

Things to Do to Make Each of Your Events an Unbridled Success:

- Schedule a store meeting well in advance of each event to explain to associates what the event is all about. You will also need to explain how the bag stuffers will be distributed. If the event involves coupons, you will also need to explain how you would like them to be redeemed. Get your whole store involved! During your meeting, ask for ideas that will enhance your event.
- Remember our motto: "Food is Good!" Serve refreshments. Cookies, coffee, and soft drinks go a long way keeping shoppers energized!
- The 50% Off Coupon Event and Pin This to A Guy work best when you begin to distribute your bag stuffers



two weeks before the day of the actual event. Be sure to give one to every customer who comes into the store. Other

options are to decorate your store with the appropriate bag stuffers, and run a newspaper advertisement announcing your event.

• On the day of the event have a greeter waiting at the front door to distribute more of the appropriate bag stuffers to customers who do not already have one. The greeter should also ask each customer if they know about the event and how it works.

• Relax and enjoy yourself! Use this day to strengthen relationships with current customers and build relationships with new customers.

• After each event spend a few minutes recapping how it went. Note what you liked and what you would like to do better next time. Ask your store associates to do the same. This will be an invaluable help in planning your next event.

A FEW MORE THINGS

We have easy-to-customize templates for all of these promotions available for you via e-mail. Drop us a note at info@kizerandbender.com, and we will send yours ASAP.

We want this to be your best holiday season ever! Please feel free to call us toll-free at 888/215-1839 if you have questions, for individual help in planning your events, or if you would just like to brainstorm.

Have a wonderful holiday and a prosperous New Year. See you in 2004! ♦