

50 ideas to Increase Store Sales

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Tips to increase your customer base and boost sales.

It's a busy retail world out there – every competitor wishes they had more customers. Actually, they wish they had YOUR customers. Keep competitors at bay and thrill your customers with these easy-to-implement, customer-pleasing, traffic-building, sales-increasing ideas!



On the Sales Floor ...

1. The customer's first 10 seconds inside the store sets the tone for their entire shopping trip. What kind of first impression does your store give? Check it daily.

2. Hang a bulletin board near your Decompression Zone (the first 5' – 15' inside your front door). Post a store map, a list of this week's sale items, Bag Stuffers, class calendar, special event, and other important information. In time, customers will stop at the bulletin board first to see what's going on in the store.

3. Place speed bumps – small tabletop displays of product just beyond your Decompression Zone. Make these displays irresistible and easy to shop: customers are far more likely to buy if they're encouraged to pick up the product.

4. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires store aisles to be a minimum of 3.6'. Can shoppers easily maneuver the aisles? Can two shopping carts comfortably pass one another in each aisle?

5. Set your end features to sell! End features are meant to display promotional items; not to house everyday, basic merchandise. You need to plan what will go on your end features, so assign each one a number, and make a list of product each end feature will house each month.



6. Studies show that customers will spend 25 percent more in dollars, and up to 15 minutes longer in the store when they shop with a cart. Even if your store is tiny, you can still offer customers a shopping cart. Visit www.BigBasketCo.com and check out their Basket Carts.

7. Don't house shopping carts and baskets in the Decompression Zone because customers will walk right by them. Instead, place them just past the DZ and in key locations throughout the store. Instruct



associates to get carts for customers' carrying product – once their hands are full, they tend to stop shopping.

8. Implement a signing program. Signs serve a purpose – they act as silent sales people, helping customers until a real person is available to help. Sign-making software is available from a variety of vendors.



Check Out the Checkouts

9. The wall directly behind your checkout counter is major selling space! Use it to display new items, hot buys, and impulse product.

10. Policy signing must be professionally done. Nuke the “No! No! No’s!” Write your policy signing in a positive voice: “We gladly accept returns and exchanges within ____ days. Your receipt guarantees it.”

11. Increase sales at the checkout with impulse item displays – your female customers can’t resist them!

12. Instruct associates not to hang out behind the checkout counter unless they’re helping a customer.

And when they’re assigned the job of cashier, have them work on a craft project in-between customers. You’ll create interest in that particular craft.

13. Save the sale! Keep a stash of items that customers frequently forget at each checkout counter. Then when a shopper says, “I forgot to get _____.” I’ll get it next time,” the cashier can reach under the counter and hand the customer the item. Cashiers can be your best add-on sales associates!



Store Operations

14. Make sure that your store is open when your customers need to shop. This means before and after work, nights, and Sundays.

15. Decide how you want the telephone to be answered, and then let every associate know that’s the plan. The phone must be answered within three rings, customers are “connected” not “transferred,” customers are asked before being placed on hold, and no one stays on hold longer than 45 seconds.

16. Cross merchandise whenever and wherever possible. Visit www.SouthernImperial.com for J-hooks, clip strips, power panels, and other inexpensive fixtures designed to help you sell more product.

17. Assign category captains. Their job includes making sure the shelves are full, the shelf space is optimized to avoid out-of-stocks, and that top sellers have been given enough facings.

18. Control your back stock. Make sure the product you’re about to order isn’t already in your back room.

19. Create a never out item list. Category Captains can check this list daily, and re-order product as necessary.

20. Every item on your sales floor must be assigned a “home” that’s identified with a **bin ticket**. If you don’t use bin tickets, your stock won’t be organized and product could end up in several different places.

21. Ditch the dogs! Add a “sell by” date to price tags and bin tickets and mark down as necessary. Move product with special sales, grab bags, store-created kits, and “Last Chance” clearance dump displays.



Your “Things to Do” List

22. Do our 360-degree pass-by every single day. Begin at the front door and walk the entire store. Note things that need to be attended to before the store opens for the day.

23. Are your windows set to sell? Window displays need to be refreshed as necessary and set to a new theme on a monthly basis.

24. Each morning create a store opening Checklist that outlines tasks that must be completed by the day crew.

25. Each afternoon create a store closing checklist. These are the things the closing team must accomplish before they leave for the night.

26. Set a daily sales quota for each person working that day. If it’s not written down, it’s not a goal. Your people will perform better if they know what’s expected of them.

27. Make time each day to quietly observe your customers. This daily exercise will help you come up with new ways to amp up the customer experience.

28. Host one MAJOR in-store event and two to three MINOR in-store events each month. Major events fill the store with shoppers; minor events limit the amount of participants. Think classes and crops.



Your Team

29. Hold a New Hire Orientation for each new associate. Let them know what’s expected, and give them an assignment they can easily accomplish on the first day – this will boost their on-the-job self-esteem.

30. Implement our “7-Tile Rule™”: Each time an associate comes within seven floor tiles – that’s seven feet – of a customer, they must acknowledge that customer.

31. Don’t react to customer questions. *Respond.* When you react you tend to give a short, unfocused answer. But when you respond to a customer, you look them in the eye and really engage them in conversation.

(more on next page)

- 32.** Associates must also do a daily 360-degree pass-by. They need to know the products they sell, where they're located, and what they're priced.
- 33.** Unless the customer looks like they need help ASAP, never ask, "May I help you?" Schmooze a little bit by talking about the customer's kids, the weather, or local news – the best opening lines have nothing to do with the store.
- 34.** Have associates carry product you don't want customers to miss. After a little schmooze time, the associate can talk with the customer about the item.
- 35.** Encourage every associate to practice add-on selling (selling the primary item, plus additional merchandise). Ethically, adding on to the sale actually strengthens customer relationships because it saves them time and money.
- 36.** Do a monthly add-on selling exercise. Hold up an item and ask associates to shout out complementary things they could add on to the original item.
- 37.** Each month ask associates to write three things they could do to exceed customer expectations. Implement their suggestions.
- 38.** Reward associates when they do a good job. A program like "Associate of the Month" is a great motivator IF they're well run. Have associates nominate one another and vote for the winner.
- 39.** Be flexible with scheduling. According to a recent survey, 61 percent of working women would leave their current jobs if they were offered more flexible hours elsewhere.
- 40.** Offer on-going education. Hold monthly in-store training classes, keep a library of books and DVDS, and ask vendors what they have available to help train your team.
- 41.** Two words: Dress code. Make sure that every associate is properly dressed to meet your customers.
- 43.** Add a "Forward to Your Friend" link to every promotional and marketing e-mail message you send to customers.
- 44.** Create a weekly bag stuffer and hand one to every single shopper. DO NOT pre-stuff them in your bags – they never get read if you do that! Some weeks, use your bag stuffers to advertise specific product or events, other times, create a monthly calendar that's loaded with in-store goings-on.
- 45.** Make a list of all the services and conveniences you provide and build a "brag sheet". Print it on the back of your weekly bag stuffer, and add it to your Web site and e-mail blasts.
- 46.** Watch QVC and HSN and the infomercials on television. Each time they host a craft or scrapbook day, or feature products you sell as well, hang "As Seen on TV!" signs over that product in your store.
- 47.** Make your own "radio" advertising campaign. Play it over the intercom system and use it as your telephone on-hold message.
- 48.** Contact local media and pitch stories about your store, product lines, services, in-store events and promotions, and more. 80 percent of the stories in local media come from a press release, so send one for each legitimate newsworthy thing you do in your store.
- 49.** Contact CHA and other trade associations and ask to be put on their Reporter Referral List.
- 50.** Collect customer testimonials and add them to your e-mail blasts, newsletters, Web site, and other marketing materials. A customer testimonial is 10 – 20 times more powerful than what you have to say about yourself! ■



Build a Buzz About Town

42. Pick an e-mail marketing company (like the creative industry friendly www.onlineitools.com) and send out monthly e-mail blasts. Send your blasts on the same day each month and customers will look forward to receiving them.

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