

**Category** Business Advice**Version** All**Module** All**Windows** All**Updated** October 08

# BEING LOCAL

Yes, you *can* compete with national chain stores! By focusing on the local community, you can beat the chain stores at a grass-roots level. Chain stores usually write a cheque to show local support & sponsor a sport team or a charity. Real engagement requires a connection with the local community so that the community *wants* you to succeed. Forging this connection is what this advice is all about.

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**Join the Retailer User Group**

Send an email with your name and your business name to [Retailer-users-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:Retailer-users-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

**Contribute Suggestions**

If you have a great tip or suggestion about local marketing, don't keep it to yourself!

Share the idea with the Newsagent community by e-mailing us at: [suggestions@towersystems.com.au](mailto:suggestions@towersystems.com.au)

- **Honour board.**

Host a space to recognise a local hero on your shop's noticeboard, or as a separate promotion. Invite brief submissions. Make the decision. Put their photo and story on the board. Host the award regularly – quarterly, monthly – you choose. No prize – just recognition of a local hero.

- **Gallery.**

Create a local gallery on your shop's noticeboard, or as a separate promotion. Ask customers to provide photos of local happenings. Name the people in the photos. Create something local people want to look at — get snaps from sausage sizzles, working bees and local markets.

- **Employees as ambassadors.**

Your employees have a huge role in strengthening your local connection. Hire locally whenever possible. Show your employees your focus on being locally connected. Seek and welcome their suggestions, encourage their involvement and give them guidelines on customer communication. Chirpy, vibrant local staff can make all the difference.

- **Local newsletter.**

Publish a newsletter for customers about your business and its local connection on a consistent interval (monthly, quarterly.) Print some local stories. Explain how support for your business helps the local community. Promote local products you carry. Keep it simple and personal – stay away from the slick approach of the chain stores. It's a *community newsletter*, not a catalogue.

- **Recharge and localise your promotions.**

Make your promotions 100% local: local businesses, owned and operating locally, local sport teams, local clubs, local events. Headline your shop's noticeboard: YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY BOARD – CONNECTING YOU WITH YOUR NEIGHBOURS. Appoint someone in the shop to manage the board and check contents each day. A fresh and well arranged board will attract attention. Do not charge for the service.

- **Join in.**

Join the Chamber of Commerce, go to meetings, get involved in their projects. It's a great way for you to influence local government spending in your area and to connect with other independent businesses.

- **Donations.**

Focus your charity donations on local charities. While the bigger charities might complain and say they also work locally, there are charities specific to your area which struggle against the better known charities – just like your business does.

This general advice is provided by Tower Systems free of charge to supported users of its Retailer system. No warranty is made as to benefits to be gained by following this advice.



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- **Local products.**  
Try to get your hands on local products which fit with your range. There is no better way to connect with your local community. If you cannot find any consider looking at local markets. Put a sign up in cafes and other public places inviting product submissions.
- **Creating events.**  
Make your mark in the community by creating and hosting an annual event. Have fun. Try the annual paper plane contest. The annual burger bake off. The annual local music festival. The local games – potato sack race, egg and spoon race and so on. *Have fun!* Work in partnership with other local businesses.
- **Involvement outside the business.**  
The community needs to see your involvement beyond the walls of your business. The presence of those representing your business at local events will prove your connection in a way your corporate type competitors will not be able to match. Shop locally yourself and talk to local business owners. Ensure you know what's happening in the community.