

Category Business Advice

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Christmas Marketing Tips

Embrace the spirit of Christmas with these fresh marketing tips. Collated and revised over multiple years and firmly aimed at increasing seasonal sales in your business, they also offer plenty of opportunities to have fun along the way!

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Send an email with your name and your business name to Retailer-users-subscribe@yahoo.com

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

Share the idea with the Newsagent community by e-mailing us at: suggestions@towersystems.com.au

1. Make shopping easy.

Make access to your shop as easy as possible, roster staff to keep lines down; make sure everything is clearly priced; make sure front line staff are well trained to ease customers through quickly; have staff on the floor during busy times. Use your computer system to process deals and discounts easily and quickly. Ask your customers if shopping with you was easy and listen to their feedback regarding areas for potential improvement.

2. Make it sensory.

Consider a special scent for the shop for the Christmas season. Darrell Lea will tell you that the liquorice scent from their shops is key to their sales of liquorice. If you can find a scent which connects with Christmas for your customers, use it. Anything to increase their enjoyment of shopping with you and thereby driving sales.

3. Last minute gifts.

Make last minute gift giving easy. Have a display of pre-wrapped gifts ready to be purchased. Separate these by target recipient and price. Focus on the most popular items in your shop. Consider a deal - buy the gifts and get 25% off a Christmas card. Busy last minute shoppers will love this service if you have the right gifts on offer. To achieve this, keep it simple, focus on common tastes. Be sure to label the display LAST MINUTE GIFTS - tell it like it is.

4. Give a gift.

Work with a local coffee shop (or some other valued service business) and ask them to give you coupons for a free coffee (or something else) to give away on busy days. Promote this as a free gift for every purchase over a certain amount (E.g. \$10.00.) This makes you look good and it promotes another local business. This business you are helping could advertise our flyers or coupons promoting your business or a product you have.

5. Save patrol — free delivery.

Promote a free delivery service for Christmas when customers spend more than a certain amount (E.g. \$50.) This encourages customers who walk to your shop to buy from you knowing that you will deliver their purchases to their home for free. Even if the service is not that widely used, just offering it demonstrates a concern for petrol costs which will be appreciated.

6. Gift ideas and the Year Long Gift.

Put up posters of gift ideas for Mum, Dad, the Kids and Grandparents. Have fun with the ideas – always include a “left field” or goofy idea. Promote the *Year Long Gift* — the putaway, by printing an A5 advertisement and inserting them in bags. Ask the customer to pay for the full year so that there are no hassles for the recipient. The key is to make the sign up process easy and to maintain exceptional organisation of your putaways. Train your team to spot putaway up-sell opportunities – grand parents buying for grand kids, husbands buying for wives, parents buying for kids. A monthly putaway at \$5.95RRP will add \$17.85 to your annual GP and also adds to the sale value of your newsagency.

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7. **Be better than everyone else.**

Christmas is cut throat, especially in tough economic times. The most important advice you can follow for the best Christmas possible is this: *be the best in the area* - better than everyone else selling what you sell. Better range, better service and better value prices (if possible.) This takes hard work and focus. Being the best will generate excellent word of mouth and delivery of an excellent Christmas season to you.

8. **Christmas Hamper raffle.**

Create your own free gift for customers! Print receipts for all sales and get customers to complete their contact details. Draw the winner on Christmas eve. Make the hamper uniquely valuable to reflect the individual value of shopping in your store this Christmas.

9. **Promote core categories.**

Focus on gifts that support the core product categories of your newsagency. While tempting, selling 'once-off' stock (i.e. irregular stock sold at Christmas only) usually doesn't contribute to growing sales in a long-term capacity. Great core category gifts include pen gift packs, writing packs, diaries, boxed chocolates, lotto packs, magazine packs and street directories.

10. **Hire a spruiker.**

Book a professional spruiker for the days you really want to punch sales through. Spruikers generally charge between \$30.00 and \$60.00 per hour. A good spruiker should generate three to five times their cost in additional gross profit. Make sure you have great deals in-store for the spruikers to make Retail dynamite with.

11. **Wishing tree.**

Make a tall wishing tree out of cardboard. Invite customers to write a wish on the tree for Christmas. This isn't about sales, it's a feel good opportunity for your customers to gain a sense of belonging in the community. This is another way to demonstrate your focus on the *personal* as opposed to the big business *money grab*.

12. **Local charity donation box.**

Wrap and open an empty box and place it at your door, inviting customers to make a product donation which fits the needs of a local charity. Include photos of work the charity does. Invite the charity to let its contacts know what you are doing.

13. **Create experts.**

Give your front line associates extra training in your Christmas range. Ensure they know the products well. Get them excited about your deals and why they are good deals. Experience shows that product knowledge leads to more sales.

14. **Hold back.**

Don't put all Christmas stock out together. Create a great display and add to it daily, moving stock around. This gives displays a fresh look; it puts staff on the floor and helps you answer queries; and it gives an impression of a business on the move.

15. **Christmas art.**

Give your windows over to the kids for Christmas. Have an art contest. Give the winner a certificate – make it about recognition more than monetary value. The Christmas art entries hanging in your window will provide a warm community connection for the shop.

16. **Pitch to local newspapers.**

Pitch any funky gift ideas you may have to your local paper. If they are quirky enough they may run a story. Consider a giveaway – this could be the hook necessary to get the editor to promote your Christmas products over others.

17. **Create a top 10.**

People love lists. Book and music retailers (online and retail) use them to great effect. Create a top 10 for your shop. You could even start with a Top 3 for under \$10 or a Top 3 for under 15 year olds etc. Create the list or lists and update them each week. Put the list in a prominent place and locate the top performing stock nearby.

18. **Run a thank-a-thon.**

Make contact with your regular customers through December for no other reason than to thank them for their support. Use phone or e-mail.

19. **Embrace the season from your door.**

Change your floor stock as much as you can. Install your first offer just inside the shop, then another followed by another in chain format - each with a Christmas theme and a compelling deal. Design your store layout for Christmas success.

20. **Show people what to buy.**

Create space to display Gifts for Mum and Dad and Kris Kringle Gifts. If space is short rotate the display weekly. Plan what you'll recommend in advance and create a flyer to give to customers with your recommendations. If you can't create a display you could use bookmarks or some other tag to indicate that an item is a recommended gift for Mum or Dad.

21. **Embrace happiness.**

Have a staff meeting. Talk about Christmas and how important it is to customers and the business. Get employees to 'buy in' on the season's happiness. Be generous - hand out gifts to your team. Be happy yourself and commit to a happier workplace. It's infectious. Customers enjoy a happier business. Through the busy period bring in treats and find other ways to maintain the happiness.

22. **Countdown.**
Create a HUGE countdown calendar behind the counter. 20 sleeps to go, 19 etc. You can also put this on badges if possible. This could be a point of some fun — chocolate anyone?
23. **Respect your employees.**
Make sure workers get the breaks they need to recharge; give a bonus for a particularly heavy day (movie passes, vouchers) and be sure to have an employee discount policy. Recognise employee contribution by setting sales goals and rewarding high achievers. Make sure they feel part of the team. Happy employees will win business for you.
24. **Service, service, service.**
Christmas is stressful for shoppers. Be sure to have extra staff on hand to reduce the stress and help your customers buy their gifts in your shop. Be empathic—we all know what it feels like to be running late on Christmas gifts!
25. **Rest.**
Schedule enough time for rest. It's easy to forget, but the fresher you feel at work, the better judgments you will make, and the happier you'll be.