

Marketing to Existing Customers Pays Off

By Kathy and Larry Reitz—*Renewed Expressions Consignment Boutique*—Meridian, Idaho

Thank you NARTS board members for encouraging us to press on even when these economic times have often found us discouraged. Bonnie has helped us become students of marketing and we have read several of the books she suggested. Recently, we spent some time at our local book store, to see if we could come up with some simple, new, marketing strategies.

We read “Retail Business Kit for Dummies” by Rick Segel and got a sale bundling strategy we tried at our last shopping party. We have a strong Constant Contact following and sent out a reminder about our shopping party on the morning of our event. In that e-mail we told our customers we would have discounts based on purchases good on that evening only. If they purchased 3-6 items, they would receive 10% off of their entire purchase, 7-9 items were 15% off, over 10 items, 20% off. We were amazed at the number of items they tried on and with the sales by the end of the evening. In addition to the sale, we served appetizers, a simple dessert, presented a fashion show and gave out door prizes. We set the wrapped door prizes on the counter so they could see how many there were, and we gave them out between fashion show sets, in order to give the models time to change. Our customers had a great time and most stayed the entire evening. Admittedly, there is a cost involved in planning and hosting these parties, but we are getting new ladies in our store, brought by customers who love our store and hopefully many will become loyal customers.



When we collect our customers’ information, we tell them we send about three newsletters a month, interspersing sales, double punch days, coupons and special events. We also give out quarter sheet flyers at our cash registers promoting our events. We hosted our first Super Bowl Party in February and have also hosted several facilitated networking events where shopping is encouraged. We have found our sales to be best at the events where we put on fashion shows. We have had to be creative in making space for 50 ladies. It is necessary to have mingling room if you expect them to stay and shop and it’s important to serve refreshments since many are coming directly from work.

We have stayed aggressive in our advertising during these tough economic times, and have learned that advertising is negotiable. We gave up on phone book ads as many people now use the Internet to find what they are looking for. We asked our landlord for a decrease in rent, so that we could increase our advertising—which he gave us in exchange for using the name of his complex in our ads. We spend several hours a week outside of our store primarily finding suppliers and consignors so our store has ample stock. We market constantly to our existing customers. When they are checking out, we feed them information we want out in the community like, “We receive about 100 new items a day.” If they are dressed well, we ask them if they have ever considered consigning. We ask if they are receiving our e-newsletters, perhaps we have input their data incorrectly, and we need to edit their e-mail address.

We have a business relationship with a small retail store, in a neighboring town, that mainly sells handbags and accessories. We leased their loft and have four racks of clothing there. They market for us and our clothing helps bring customers back to their store. We attend Chamber of Commerce functions, read books and magazines, try new marketing strategies, believe that we can learn something from every entrepreneur we meet, we give back to our community and we won’t give up.



Once again, thank you NARTS for helping us become successful. ♻️