

QuickBooks

Point of Sale



QUICKBOOKS POINT OF SALE SUCCESS TIPS

Tips to bring in New Customers

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TIPS TO BRING IN NEW CUSTOMERS

It's much cheaper to keep an existing customer than to acquire a new one. And getting new customers through the door is tough work. Fortunately, with a little imagination and experimentation, not to mention advertising, acquiring new customers becomes an important pillar in boosting sales. To help you achieve your goal, I've assembled some common-sense tips for getting new customers in your store. They're easy to implement, so start today.

TIP #1: DIRECT MAIL ADVERTISING/COUPONS WITH PRIORITY CODES

We've all received direct mail advertising, whether it's a coupon sent by mail or a postcard reminder from the dentist. And, there's a reason so many companies advertise through the mail — it works. American consumers spend \$528 billion a year purchasing goods and services in response to direct mail, according to the US Postal Service.

For small and medium-sized retailers, direct mail is one of the most cost-effective ways to reach potential customers. Best of all, you can experiment with small mailings to see what works, revise your offers, then follow up on proven success. Be sure to include a promotion code on all direct mail advertising, so you can track your results.



TIP #2: OFFER GIFT CERTIFICATES

Imagine it's the holiday shopping season. A customer asks for help selecting a gift for her Aunt Mary, who always seems to return gifts. You suggest a gift certificate as the perfect solution: the customer brings joy to a finicky relative, Aunt Mary finds the gift she really wants and you get a new customer in the store.

In this scenario, the gift certificate acts as a high-powered word-of-mouth program in which Aunt Mary becomes highly motivated to visit your store. Many retailers, moreover, benefit from low redemption rates. Perhaps Aunt Mary forgets to use her gift certificate, letting you ring a sale without selling any merchandise.

Not only that, but gift certificates are an effective tool for up-selling, since many customers purchase items exceeding the certificate's face value. And once Aunt Mary sees your other products for sale, she's likely to make additional purchases as well. If you're smart, you'll even suggest she purchase a gift certificate for a friend!

TIP #3: MAKE YOUR STORE A DESTINATION

Rather than relying on foot traffic and casual browsing to increase new customers, many retailers transform their stores into destinations customers seek out. How? By running in-store events like workshops or hosting special events or parties.

As an example, consider a wine store offering free wine tasting classes run by a wine expert. Such classes bring in new (and existing) customers while helping them become better educated, not to mention loyal, wine drinkers. Other examples include crafts demonstrations using materials you sell, catered business parties, or even bringing in guest lecturers on topics of interest to your customer base. How about a motorcycle club meeting at a motorcycle supply store? Whatever your store's focus, by using your imagination, you'll find some event will surface to bring in new customers.

TIP #4: BRING-A-FRIEND PRIVATE SALES

Smart retailers understand that to get high-quality new customers, sometimes pampering existing customers works best. As an example, consider running a bring-a-friend private sale where your preferred customers receive an invitation to bring a friend to a special private sale. This accomplishes two important goals: new customers arrive motivated to buy your products AND you make your existing loyal customers feel like VIPs.

Private sales let you interact directly with customers, giving you an opportunity to put a face on the name while conducting in-person market research. Think about questions beforehand for both new and preferred customers, such as what new products would they like to see, how they view your store, or what would make them buy more items.

If you do your job correctly, by the end of the sale, the new customers will become preferred customers anxious to invite a friend to the next private sale.

TIP #5: SPONSOR ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

Many marketing professionals suggest launching a public relations campaign or sponsorships as a way to associate your store with the local community. Perhaps you'll sponsor a little league team's uniforms or help a local Girl Scout group sell cookies from your shop. If you operate a sporting goods store, associating your business with a local charity 10K run may fit the bill. You could even include offers in the race's goodie bag to drive new business. Whatever your imagination can conceive, a public relations campaign puts your store in customers' minds as a strong community supporter.

TIP #6: LAUNCH AN E-MAIL MARKETING CAMPAIGN

E-mail can work wonders on your efforts to attract new customers. The key to effective e-mail campaigns, of course, centers on responsible use: sending e-mails only to those who ask for it. Otherwise you risk appearing like a spammer; a sure-fire way to sink your store's reputation. With that in mind, tailor your email campaign to friends of existing customers by offering a discount to existing customers who sign up friends or family to receive your e-mails. Then, when you send the new contacts an e-mail, offer them a

“new customer” discount. As for content, many businesses send e-mail newsletters that mix store or community news with product information. It’s probably best to avoid seeming too salesperson-like, so stick with an informational tone. But be sure to highlight your current sales promotions and new products.

HOW QUICKBOOKS POINT OF SALE HELPS BRING IN NEW CUSTOMERS

As you may guess from the tips above, I firmly believe that advertising then analyzing the results are the keys to getting new customers in the store. Those keys, however, won’t work well if you’re stuck in the last century using outdated technology.

Fortunately, QuickBooks POS comes to the rescue. QuickBooks POS lets you quickly capture customer information at checkout time, including addresses, phone numbers, even e-mail addresses. How does that help? By knowing your existing customers, your bring-a-friend private sales and e-mail marketing campaigns become much more effective. Not only that, you can build a customer list to promote to and then issue gift certificates.

QuickBooks POS also helps track your promotions. By including a promo code on your coupons, advertisements and e-mails, with QuickBooks POS you simply record the code number on a receipt. The bottom line: you’ll know which promotions work — making it easier to decide where to invest your marketing efforts.

Speaking of analysis, QuickBooks POS generates detailed sales reports, giving you a clear picture of how each tip adds new customers. Reports include:

- Best/Worst Selling Items
- Sales Summary by Promo Code
- Sales Summary by Customer

QuickBooks POS reports take just seconds to produce, placing important business data at your fingertips. Simply put, QuickBooks POS lets you know your business.

TIP #7: ADVERTISE IN THE YELLOW PAGES

With the Internet dominating today's news, many businesses forget the tried and true yellow pages. Although the yellow pages may seem dull compared to a slick website, consider this fact: Internet penetration in the U.S. reached 69.3% as of July 2004, according to Nielsen/ NetRatings. Put another way, that means 30.7% of the population doesn't use the Internet — a big customer base you cannot ignore. Now ask yourself how many households receive the yellow pages. Probably close to all of them.

Tips for successful yellow pages ads include:

- **Emphasize benefits:** Explain how your store will benefit the customer compared to your competitors (quality service, experience, low prices and so on)
- **Bigger is better:** Buying the largest ad you can afford may help customers pick your business first
- **Test your results:** Include yellow pages-only offers to help track results
- **Include snappy graphics:** Add a map to your store, an image of a popular product and so on

After you've experimented with various ads and offers, be sure to follow success by focusing on those ads that brought the most new customers.

TIP #8: ROPE THEM IN WITH SALES AND PROMOTIONS

Sales and promotions are one of the most effective ways to get new customers in your store. Who can pass up a store-wide, one-day sale? Or 30% off their favorite item? With today's value-conscious consumers, sales prove vital for gaining new customers.

So, what's the best way to use sales events to bring in new customers? Coupling promotions and discounts with advertising will ensure your message reaches the maximum number of consumers interested in your products. Or consider loss-leader promotions designed to deeply discount one item with the aim that once customers walk in the door, they'll purchase other more profitable items.

TIP #9: GET NOTICED

Assuming you've found a great location with lots of foot traffic, nearby parking and so on, your store's sign is vital to snagging new customers. Clearly visible signs help customers looking for your store and encourage casual customers to drop in.

As an example, imagine a diving shop located near an exit of a major highway. The owner knows the proximity to thousands of drivers should lead to new customers, but for some reason he's been disappointed. The problem? His signage runs parallel to the highway, preventing many drivers whizzing by from seeing his store. Simply by erecting a sign at a right angle to the highway, he'll instantly gain visibility and more customers.

Effective signage, according to "Run Your Own Store" by Irving Burstiner, accomplishes two vital tasks:

- Indicates your store's name and what lies inside
- Grabs attention

Consider the worldwide success of the McDonald's Golden Arches as a highly successful example of what a recognizable sign can do for business.