

## Pre-Event Tips

- **Plant the Seed**

A few weeks before the event, put some items near your cash register or in your window that fit the theme of the upcoming event. For example, place lemons near your register before Lemonade Days. The point is to raise awareness of the event and to allow you to tell your customers about the specials you will be offering at the event.

- **Print Flyers**

Advertise some special buys in your store during the event. Beginning a few weeks before the event, put the flyers in your customers' shopping bags so they know about the event and what will be going on in your store.

- **Work Your Contact List**

If you have an email list of your customers or a Facebook page for your store, sent them an email and let them know about the event, your store hours during the event and what you will be offering. If you have a mailing list, consider sending a flyer along with a coupon that is good only during the event. Staying in contact with your customers makes them feel valued and it keeps your business in their mind.

- **Prepare Coupons for Event Attendees**

You can create coupons and hand them out during the event. The important thing is to let people know that your business is open for business.

## Day of Event Tips

- **Make Sure Your Business Remains Open**

Keep your business open during the event. You can't make a sale if you aren't open. While special event attendees may not be your 'regular' customers, they are your 'potential' customers. Show them you are supportive of Falls City and that Falls City is a great place to be.

- **Have a Sidewalk Sale Table**

Attract attendees to your store. When possible, try to offer items that complement the special event. For example, retail businesses might consider selling sunscreen, tanning lotion, flip flops, sunglasses or hats during the Cobblestone Festival in August. If your business doesn't carry these items, just moving some of your regular merchandise outside brings extra attention to your shop.

- **Have a Special In-Store Sale**

Have specials only during the hours of the event. Provide such good deals on selected merchandise that it's worthwhile for people to come inside. While they're in your shop, consider running an easy contest. For example, 'Guess the number of Jelly Beans in the Jar' contest for a chance to win a gift certificate to your business. Just have participants fill out a piece of paper with their guess, name, address, phone number, email address and birth date (no year needed). By doing so, they've entered your contest and you've got important information that allows you to add them to your mailing list or to begin one. By getting their birth date you have the opportunity to send them a card on their special day - something most of your competitors don't even dream of doing.

- Offer “Just Looking” Coupons

Hand them out to customers who are browsing in your store and invite them to come back. Remember that people are more likely to respond to “dollars off” promotions than they are to “percentage off” promotions.

- Offer to Hold Customers’ Purchases for Them

Some people resist making purchases during special events because they don’t want to have to carry additional items. Holding packages is an easy way to help close a sale and to provide a great customer service that will long be remembered.

- Have an Open House or In-Store Demonstration During the Event

This is a great way for service-related businesses to introduce themselves and their service to the public. Have a brief sign-in form to capture the name, phone number and email address of everyone who attended so you can follow up with them after the event. Also, be sure to pass out flyers or business cards to all who attend.

- Build Your Mailing List

Take every opportunity to get names and contact information from event attendees. Building a mailing list allows you to communicate directly and inexpensively throughout the year with your customers.

### After Event Tips

- Follow Up

If you collected names and contact information from people who visited your business during the event, reach out to them. Even if they didn’t purchase anything during the event, sometimes a follow up is all that is needed to make a sale or close a deal.

- Stay in Contact

In today’s world, that’s easy and inexpensive. One of the simplest and most effective ways to stay fresh in the minds of your customers is to send them regular electronic newsletters. There are many programs available on-line, such as Constant Contact and iContact. There you will find a wide range of easy to use templates for creating your own newsletters. Use them to tell your customers what is new in your business. Let them know of other upcoming Falls City events. Conduct a survey to find out what your customers are looking for. The possibilities are endless. Between newsletters, maintain contact and inform customers about sales and specials through email and snail mail.

- Be Part of Planning Other Events

Special events don’t happen by themselves. They take months of planning and organizing by volunteers and merchants just like you. If you are part of the planning, you have a direct input on how events can be structured to better meet the needs of business owners.

- Keep At It!

Not every promotional idea will work for every business every time. Try different things. Keep what works. Get rid of what doesn’t. Come up with new ideas.

**Remember: the only time you can be guaranteed success is when you set out to do nothing!**

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