

Planning A Customer Appreciation / Grand Opening Event

Are you thankful for your customers? Of course, you are. The real question is – do you show it? Customer appreciation plays an important role in retaining customers and gaining new business.

Providing a remarkable customer experience is critical to retail success, especially in an age where customers can shop online and on mobile. To truly engage the modern consumer offline, retailers must offer experiential in-store visits that customers can't get when they're browsing the web or tapping on their phone.

What's the solution? Businesses should show a little love and give back to the community by hosting a **Customer Appreciation Event**. When done right, this strategy can draw people into your store, increase awareness, and even generate sales.

When planning the event, you should factor in seasonal changes as well as the schedule of your target market. Consider a theme but be mindful when picking your date that is not too close to the snowy, or rainy season, or on summer weekends when everyone is traveling to their favorite vacations spot.

Planning a successful event requires managing several moving parts and sticking to a budget and timeline, all while running the regular aspect of your store.

The turnout of your Customer Appreciation Event will depend on how well you market it, so spend a good amount of time and resources on this step.

Consider these suggestions as part of the marketing budget for the store and look at it as long-term effort that will generate results.

- Sending postcard invitation to existing customer base & referral sources
- Sending e-mail invitations
- Creating Facebook event with invitations
- Publishing social media (i.e. Facebook and Instagram) post and sometime paid for post or ads
- Putting out banners in front of the store
- Leaving flyers at neighboring businesses
- Handing out point of service flyers
- In some cases, call your top customers or referrals and invite them personally over the phone
- Consumer Financing Available
- Free raffle every hour
- Free Hot Dogs
- ABC105 Radio Station will have a remote "live" broadcast from 11-1pm
- 5-point maintenance check on any mobility product
- Walker Tune Up
- CPAP / Mask maintenance checkup and adjustments

Events are a slow build strategy but can have a profound impact if done correctly. It's best to see the *Customer Appreciation* events as an investment as opposed to a sales tactic. While it's common practice to showcase merchandise during events, be careful not to come off as too salesy. Remember that the goal of having events is to deliver great experience, and not stuff.

Social media is an excellent resource for company exposure. So, remember those pictures and videos that you took of your event? Post them on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and any other social networks you belong to. Thank everyone who attended the event, mention the people who took part in it, and tag individuals you know personally.

The more involved you become within your surrounding community, the bigger your customer base will grow, and you will find that work can be more fun than you thought it could be!

Customer Appreciation / Grand Opening Event Suggestions

- Contact all manufacturers that want to participate
- The event should be held on a Thursday or Friday. (If applicable a 2-day event is also beneficial...maybe a Friday & Saturday event)
- Print & Radio Advertisement (Check with a good local radio station to do a remote broadcast during the lunch hours)
- Social Media...Face Book post of the event with before & after pics
- Chamber of Commerce – Advertised as a Community Event
- Market event to local independent & long-term nursing facilities
- Market event to local Hospital's
- Market to Caregivers
- Market event to referral sources
- Market event to customers
- Special drawing / giveaway at the end of the month (This will help generate new referral listing)
- Grill, Hot Dogs, Buns, Condiments, Drinks, Plates, Napkins
- Contact Health Inspectors to notify of food being served for event
- Tables & Chairs
- Balloons & Banners for inside and outside decorations
- Hand Wash Station, Meat thermometer
- Ice & Ice coolers (need 2)
- Pop up Tents for outside (Maybe 2) 1 for product and the other for eating
- Make sure we have enough LC, SC, & PC to sale!
- Set up Care Credit for consumer financing
- Have FUN!