SEBAGO LAKES REGION

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

892-8265
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Retail Committee Action Plan Presentation

June 28, 2011

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Lori Cunningham, The Grotto

Matthew Dicianni, AT&T

Tim Seavey, Seavey's Appliance

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Mission Statement

The Sebago Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce's Retail Committee is dedicated to encouraging growth in the retail sector of the Lakes Region by connecting businesses to key demographics and encouraging consumers to shop locally.

Vision Statement

To support local retailers in making the Lakes Region a destination of choice for consumers.

Purpose

To identify, organize, and promote strategic programs that will help area merchants to increase sales.

Objective #1:	Work in cooperation with local retailers to market the region and promote the benefits of shopping locally.

Goals:

1. Implement a regional "shop local" advertising campaign by May of 2012
2. Provide training and support to retail companies that want to enhance marketing activities

Strategies and Action Plans:

- Identify what is unique about the Lakes Region and our retail businesses to develop a brand concept for the area
  - Understand what brings consumers to the Lakes Region
  - Identify why other consumers choose to shop elsewhere
  - Explore factors other than price that are attractive to consumers
- Meet with media outlets to explore options for regional advertising campaign
  - Radio
  - Newspaper
- Conduct a Marketing Workshop to provide retailers with ideas and suggestions for promoting their brand and product lines
  - Identify marketing companies that are Chamber members who may want to get involved with this project
  - Approach marketing departments of companies that belong to the Chamber
  - Share success stories from retailers that excel in this area
- Share marketing opportunities with retailers
- Explore methods of funding for advertising campaign
  - Cooperative advertising
  - Fundraising
  - Asking towns and economic groups for assistance
  - Grants
- Create an advertising flyer with discounts to distribute at local campgrounds
- Focus on educating consumers on the benefits of shopping locally
  - Money that stays in the community will benefit all
  - Helps grow/maintain employment opportunities
  - Tax revenue

Goals:

1. Provide a visible presence for "shop-local" initiatives on the chamber website
2. Provide resources and direction for retailers who use technology to enhance their sales efforts

Strategies and Action Plans:

- Provide training to local businesses on how to use social media
  - Basics on how to create and utilize social media
  - How to use as a marketing tool- relevant and interesting
- Promote a "shop local" message on the Chamber's website
- Create a Community Board and Calendar where businesses can post sales and other promotional events
  - Implement on the Chamber's website
  - Create a Retail Committee Facebook page that would be open to the public
- Provide training and guidance resources to businesses that want to create a website
- Create a consumer e mail list to use to promote sales and special events
- Encourage use of recommendations on LinkedIn to create referral opportunities
- Identify and communicate trends in mobile phone apps that could benefit retailers
  - How can this help local merchants
  - How do can they compete against competitors that are using these apps

Goals:

1. Hold 2 events in 2011
2. Build awareness among consumers about the quality of products and services available to them in the Lakes Region

Strategies and Action Plans:

- Hold a sidewalk sale event on Labor Day Weekend
- Turn *Season's Greeting Saturday* into a retail shopping event
- Conduct a Business Expo in the 1st quarter of 2012
- Schedule an event that focuses on safety and maintenance issues that would introduce service businesses to prospective business and consumer customers

Goals:

1. Increase participation in the Chamber's Member to Member discount program
2. Utilize Chamber resources to promote discount and incentive programs of its members

Strategies and Action Plans:

- Refresh and promote a meaningful Member to Member discount program
  - Create wallet card sized cards to hand out to members
  - Create new point of sale signs for local merchants
  - Ambassador Committee discuss with businesses during next visit
  - Promote on the Chamber web site
- Design a discount program for college students
  - Meet with representatives of St. Joseph's College to explore the possibility of utilizing meal plan cards at local stores and restaurants
  - Focus on encouraging mid-week shopping and dining
- Plan an Information Session for local retailers on how to create, promote, and track discount and referral incentive programs
  - Identify businesses that have successfully utilized these programs and invite them to speak
  - Provide education on pros and cons of discount and referral programs
  - Connect retailers with the resources that they need in order to implement programs
  - Explore methods of cross promotion
- Create a coupon book that could be sold to the public for a nominal fee

impact their industry.

Goals:

1. Share feedback from the Retail Business Forum and action plan with municipalities and other stakeholders in the Chamber's footprint
2. Look for opportunities to partner with other organizations/municipalities on retail projects

Strategies and Action Plans:

- Work with local groups and municipalities to identify issues that impact retailers
  - Traffic
  - Signage
  - Design Standards
  - Zoning and ordinance
  - Outdoor sales
  - Sewer
- Proactively inform merchants of topics that impact the retail landscape
- Be an advocate for retail businesses in a manner that is consistent with the Sebago Lake region Chamber of Commerce's overall mission
- Invite members of local economic and merchant groups, as well as municipal officials to meetings and events, as appropriate
- Inform local municipalities about the actions of the committee
- Work with local groups to build local character and to create a "sense of place" in retail centers

Goals:

1. Increase awareness of the benefits of being a Chamber member
2. Increase participation in Retail Committee Events

Strategies and Action Plans:

- Utilize technology to share successes
  - Blog
  - Facebook page for businesses only where retailers can share ideas
  - E mail communication from committee
- Find out what is working in other regions and implement here
- Create a resource book to provide retailers
  - Training and development
  - Demographic trends
  - Technology
  - Marketing tips
  - Industry trends

Downtown Promotional Events	Value (appreciation)	Facebook	Regional Advertising	Increase Market Sales	Generating Referrals
Referral Party	Relevancy (2)	Social Media	Reach new customers		Lead Generation
Community Involvement	To be seen as a resource	Social Networking	Business Discount Program (2)		Referrals
	Customer awareness	Internet	Visibility (2)		Resources
	Transition		People		

*Responses were taken exactly as written and categories were created I order to organize and prioritize the needs of those in attendance.

Commercial vacancies. Chamber website does not promote specific businesses or "shop local" on website home page.

Ideas/Comments:

- Community board/calendar
- Cross marketing of each other
- Business card racks
- Signs
- Where are customers going? And why?
- Expo: Community involvement
- Find ways to be different
- Don't give up on an idea to soon
- Corporate vs. local- its own discussion
- What is working for others
- Referral credit, reward person doing referral, offer education to reach new people
- Address signage with local municipalities
- Promote businesses/shop local on website

Topic 2: Lead Generation/Referrals

Current Reality: None provided

Ideas/Comments:

- Participate in outside activities
- Ask for referrals
- Give instant response to referrals
- Follow up with person giving referral
- Respect privacy
- Ask people that you do business with to be your reference, be open to feedback
- ID issues that are important to people and educate referral sources how you can help with those issues

have migrated from other areas and don't recognize local merchants and the value that they provide.

Ideas/Comments:

- Find out what people are talking about and base your social media "ads" around it
- Instead of just pushing your value, tie your value to things that people find important
- Getting involved in the community
- Compete in areas other than price... i.e. service, expertise, convenience
- Sell the store brand, not just product
- Find ways to differentiate yourself

Topic 4: Customer Awareness/Being Seen as a Resource

Current Reality: Traffic issues, need signage and town ordinances that are more business friendly. Need to create a sense of place.

Ideas/Comments:

- Chamber
- Realtors/Rental/Seasonal
- More shoppers (people) mid-week
- Summer camp contacts
- Spring boost
- First time shoppers
- Need to know where shoppers are going- if not shopping in Windham, why?
- People that don't live here, how do you get them here... i.e. Gorham, Bridgton, Westbrook

Topic 5: Transition

Current Reality: None provided

Ideas/Comments:

- Find out what people's needs are- new vs. used
- Letting customers know about the changes you've made within your company

- Marketing Social Media

Topic 7: Regional Advertising/ Increase Market Sales

Current Reality: People not realizing what our community has to offer. People Shop where they work. We need to do a better job of telling our story.

Ideas/Comments:

- Need to advertise our community outside of the area
- Improve image of Rt. 302 corridor
- Create "destination" shopping
- Create a "sense of place"
- Address signage issues and Design Standards. Need to allow business to promote their brand. Has to be affordable for businesses
- Local day- franchise vs. big corp.

Topic 8: Downtown Promotional Events/ Community Involvement

Current Reality: Dead mid week- no people! People are still not aware that we are here. Still going out of town for business.

- Sidewalk Sales

Topic 9: Business Discount Program/ Generating Referrals

Current Reality: Slow during the week. Trouble building new clientele. Lack of awareness of services. Need knowledge of how to incorporate programs.

Ideas/Comments:

- Ask for referrals
- Create buzz
- Punch card program, double punch Wednesday's
- Referral discount program for current/existing customers
- Extend to new customers as well?
- Local referral program

Topic 10: What is Working.

Ideas/Comments:

- Post card advertising
- Web sales
- Business Expos
- Rewarding referrals

Resources

Sales

Tips to Increase Retail Sales
http://retail.about.com/od/marketingsalespromotion/a/increase_sales.htm

10 Insider Tips for Retail Success
http://www.entrepreneur.com/startingabusiness/businessideas/retailcenter/article76368.html

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http://www.entrepreneur.com/startingabusiness/businessideas/retailcenter/article76368.html

Marketing

50 Marketing Ideas for Retailers (Part 1)
http://retail.about.com/od/marketingsalespromotion/a/marketing_ideas.htm

50 Marketing Ideas for Retailers (Part 2)
http://retail.about.com/od/marketingsalespromotion/a/marketing_ideas_2.htm

Most Valuable Players: Adding Value for Your Customers
http://www.entrepreneur.com/magazine/entrepreneur/2003/june/61882.html

Planning Promotional Events: Retail Merchandising Opportunities
http://retail.about.com/od/marketingsalespromotion/a/promo_calendar.htm

Technology

Social Media: A Game Changer for Retailers
http://www.chaindrugreview.com/inside-this-issue/news/03-14-2011/social-media-a-gamechanger-for-retailers

Social Network Sites Offer New Opportunities for Retailers
http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/industry_sectors/retailing/article6128182.ece

Presentations on how to use social networking effectively
http://www.facebook.com/MyICSC?sk=app_216910348335721

10 Internet Marketing Tips for Retailers
http://retail.about.com/od/ecommerce/tp/internet-marketing-tips.htm

10 Mobile Shopping Apps Changing the Retail Landscape
http://www.screenmediadaily.com/marketing-smartphone-retail-mobile-shopping-apps-android-aislebuyer-redlaser-milo-jiwire-shopkick-sundrop-0629905.shtml

Initiatives and Studies

A shop local initiative designed to shift 10% of consumer purchase to local businesses.
http://www.10percentshift.org/design/localshift.php?do=home

A study that shows the impact that local purchases have on a community's economy.
http://andersonvillestudy.com/AndersonvilleStudy.pdf