



# Five Ways to Kick Start your Retail Marketing

By Amanda Stevens

If you're bored of the same old promotional and sale ideas and stuck on how to give your marketing plan a refresh, here are some ideas to get you thinking and re-motivated about your marketing plan.

## 1. Stop Discounting

Retailers whose promotional messages rely on constant discounting eventually learn the hard way that it's an unsustainable strategy. Building customer loyalty and advocacy is virtually impossible if you're constantly cutting prices. It doesn't take long for discounting to lose its impact as your customers become immune to the sale stickers. Explore promotional mechanics that focus on adding value, upselling and rewards. 'Buy One Get One Free' is much better than '50% Off'.

## 2. Tell a Story

Does your in-store merchandising tell a story about your products? Are you enticing your customers with visually appealing and emotive displays? Are you enticing the senses with smell and movement? It might be time for a merchandising makeover. Bundling and bunching your products will not only improve in-store engagement, it will give your average transaction a push.

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## 3. Focus on your Past Customers. Be Proactive

If you don't have a customer database, it's time to start creating one. A customer VIP program is the easiest way to collect a database. Once you have a database - you have two choices in how you manage the relationship - you can be reactive or proactive in how you interact with those customers. Reactive customer management is simply reacting to their membership status with a discount at point of purchase. Smart retailers are far more proactive with the way they communicate with their customer base. VIP evenings, birthday vouchers, referral rewards and gift with purchase surprises are just a few ideas for maximising the engagement and value of your existing customer base. At a minimum, a monthly text message with an exclusive, limited offer will provide an incentive for your customers to return.

## 4. Build Some Joint Ventures

Joint venture marketing enables you to maximise the return on your invested marketing dollar by joining forces with a complementary (non-competing) retailer who markets to a similar audience as you. It's a marketing exercise where you tap into the customer list of another business, and vice versa. If you think about it, there are plenty of other retailers that would love the opportunity to market to your customer base. Similarly, there are retailers who have customer bases you would like to promote your brand to. This could be structured as simply as you providing a voucher to your joint venture partner's customers as a gift with purchase and vice versa. Or you may agree to feature a small pop-up display in each other's businesses to feature your products.

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## 5. And finally, look at your Mini Marketing Messages

In any retailer, your marketing messages are not just your campaigns, in-store posters and promotions. Your business omits lots of 'mini marketing messages' that, when combined, can have a significant impact on your customer experience. In-store signage, price tags, receipts, posters in change rooms, instructional signage on your counter ... are all messages that either engage or repel your customers. For example, the difference between 'Children under 10 are to be supervised at all times' versus 'Unsupervised children will be given a free espresso and a puppy.'

Ensure your marketing, even your mini marketing messages, reflects the personality of your business. Giving your customers a giggle will immediately change how they perceive your business. That in itself is marketing!