

15 Ways To Cut Costs On Special Events And Promotions



Promotions and special events are the salt and pepper in your marketing plan. They spice things up and keep your store fun and exciting.

Promotions are a great way to keep your regular customers interested in your merchandise and give them more reasons to shop with you. Promotions can also be a great way of attracting new customers. It's just one more way to keep your marketing message in front of your customers and prospects.

But doing promotions on a limited budget can be challenging. You'll need to plan to spend some money to get the word out about your event, to purchase any necessary supplies, materials, or prizes, and to pay for any extra payroll hours needed for the event.

However, you don't have to spend a lot of money – use imagination and hard work instead of cash! If you are prepared to put in a little old fashioned elbow grease, you can dream up some really great promotions that don't cost a fortune.

Here are fifteen tips for keeping your costs down and your sales up.

- **Ask your vendors and sales reps to donate prizes, food, help, or anything else you need.** They are usually delighted to help in some way. Don't forget to invite them to attend the event if you are planning to highlight their product. They are often expert salespeople!
- **Use co-op advertising money to help cover the cost of a mailing.** Getting the word out about your promotion can be a costly expense. If you are planning to use traditional advertising like newspaper or radio, check out how much your manufacturers will contribute to promote their products.
- **Barter with other merchants in town to get prizes, services, customer mailing lists, etc.** We love bartering. If you barter your goods for others goods or services, you've essentially received a 50% discount (if you sell your products at a 50% margin). Yipeeee!
- **Keep your merchandise at full price.** There are lots of great promotions that get their impact from fun and added value rather than cash savings. You don't have to sell your stuff on sale to have a great promotion. **Co-sponsor the event with local media – newspaper, cable TV, or radio.** They promote your event in exchange for high profile exposure to your customers. A win-win situation!
- **Send out press releases to get free publicity if your event is newsworthy.** Don't forget, the newspapers have to fill up those pages every day! They are frequently delighted if you send them a great story. Your event does need to be newsworthy, however.
- **Stuff every bag with a schedule of events for the entire season.** Hey, they're already getting the bag. Make it work for you in multiple ways.

- **Put signs about the event in your store well ahead of the event date.** This one is a no-brainer, but lots of people don't do it. At the very least, put a small sign at the cash register.
- **Take advantage of today's super easy desktop publishing to design your own signs, flyer, postcards, or event calendars instead of using a graphic designer.** Any time or money you invest in acquiring and learning a simple design program will be well worth it. For big, important marketing pieces you may need a graphic designer, but for simple pieces you can do it yourself quickly, easily, cheaply.
- **Put your information about your upcoming event on your register receipt.** Many cash registers and computer POS systems will allow you to put a short message on the receipt. You'd be amazed how many people read them!
- **Write an article about the promotion for the monthly newsletter that's already going to your mailing list.** They are already your customers and the newsletter is already going out...don't forget to plug your promotion.
- **Create a window display highlighting your special event.** An interesting visual display will not only educate your walk-by traffic about your upcoming event, it frequently generates enough curiosity to get people in the door NOW!
- **Send personal invitations to targeted VIP's.** Make absolutely sure your very best customers know about, and will attend, your event. A personal invitation is a powerful draw.
- **Ask your customers to tell a friend about the upcoming event. Give them a no-cost gift if they bring a friend to the event.** An easy referral technique that could bring you tons of potential new customers! Make sure you get the names of all the "friends", even if they don't buy.
- **Mention the event on your answering machine message.** Your answering machine should be your marketing machine. It's a quick, easy, and totally free way to let people know about your upcoming events.

There are lots of ways to have fun on a budget. Get creative! Use your noodle!

If you're looking for more great ways to get new customers and build sales without breaking the bank, you'll love the "[Big BANG! Marketing Kit](#)". It gives you six amazing tools to turn your hottest prospects into customers for life.

By Bob and Susan Negen, WhizBang! Training

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Bob & Susan Negen
 212 South Harbor
 Grand Haven, MI 49417
 Phone: 616-842-4237
 Fax: 616-842-2977
 E-mail: Bob@WhizBangTraining.com