

How to encourage customers to shop local:

1. Prepare marketing materials.

If you don't have a logo or brand, consider developing one. Having a unified and consistent brand makes it easier for the customer to identify you. Use your Chamber membership. We are happy to provide you with some recommendations for marketing a special event and those that can help you succeed at it.

2. Stage great deals and contests.

Entice customers to enter your store for special discounts and giveaways. For example, if you have a retail shop, have treats ready for sampling as customers come in to browse. Even partner up with other local businesses. Prepare a sign-up sheet, where customers can give their names and emails to be eligible to win a great door prize. This is a fantastic way to greet your customers while building up a database for ongoing email campaigns.

3. Take advantage of social media

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest...it all works. Look at how successful the County Fair was this year. We used social media to advertise. When you post, post pictures. Engage your followers with questions. Create giveaways. If you choose to run contests in your store, share the entry opportunities on your social media pages. This is a great way to reach those who might be on the fence about stopping by. Plus your company can grow its social following.

4. Have GREAT customer service.

We cannot stress this enough, especially during the Holiday Season. Consumers will arrive at your business to fill holiday wish lists, support local entrepreneurs and enjoy browsing and shopping. Remember to have fun with customers. When owners and employees are personable, helpful, friendly and provide great service, they build a reputation that far exceeds the value of any coupon or discount dispensed.