

Promotion Basic Training

Maine Downtown Institute

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Three types of promotions

- Image Building
- Special Events
- Retail Events and Sales



Image building (covered by Tripp Muldrow)

- Activities to create or improve the image for downtown with potential to overcome negative perceptions



Special Events

- Expose customers or visitors to the potential of downtown.
- Don't necessarily generate retail sales (*be wary of expectations of business owners here*).



Special event examples

- Festivals - art, local culture or heritage
- Community celebrations – seasonal, holiday, parades
- (Salem, MA – the Witch City – what we share; what we keep for ourselves...interesting situation)

Lisbon Lilac Festival - 2009





Elements of a special event

- Food
- Music
- Activities –that will encourage visitors to linger (*be wary of offering passive entertainment*)

Seasonal events – *Farmers Market*





Retail Promotions

- Retail events
- Retail sales

There's a difference



Retail events

- In-store demonstrations – fashion, cooking, wine-tasting
- Social gatherings – special shopping nights for men or women; “openings” – even if just adding a new product line, hold a special event to introduce the new product(s) (*manufacturer incentives?*)
- Generally done by business owners, but downtown programs can promote them and assist in other ways.



Retail sales

Geared specifically at generating sales:

- Sidewalk sale days
- “Dollar Days”
- Discount or sales-oriented activities



Famous Main Street manager quote:

*“We can bring people to Main Street,
but we can’t make them go into
your store/business.”*



So, what can a Main Street manager do?

- Organize retail workshops
- Share ideas from other businesses on how to increase sales
- Bring retail consultants to town for conferences or one-on-one meetings.



What else?

- Be vigilant and watch the latest retail trends.
- “Why We Buy” by Paco Underhill – great reading for managers and business owners
- Help retailers with their store appearance – through sign or façade grants
- Expose them to good store “hygiene” – clean windows, lose the sign (and other) clutter



Examples – how you can help

Promote the events created by the businesses

For instance:

- Littleton's Winter Coupon Book
- Littleton's Calendar of Events rack card
- Lisbon's Lilac Festival "Best of Lisbon" map and card



Combination retail event/sale

- Done in conjunction with local Christmas tree farm
- Coupon books given to all farm visitors (combo package with various inns)
- Littleton Main Street put together the “Discover Historic Downtown Littleton” piece
- Retailers offered the discount coupons

Calendar rack cards placed at all visitor centers, inns, motels

Rack cards

- Listed specific calendar of events on one side
- Listed generic things to do in town – sights to see, activities for families and individuals – on the reverse side



In Lisbon: Not exactly a retail sales event... Not exactly a retail promotion...



More of a “get acquainted with our businesses” promotion



Use social media for promoting

- Use it as a tool
- National Trust is on FaceBook (and Twitter)
- Do not expect everyone to be using it (in other words, don't rely on it solely)
- In remote, rural regions, these have limitations



Resources

- National Main Street listserve
- Other Main Street or Downtown Programs (NH motto: “steal with zeal” – share our successes)
- Visit other towns in other states and regions – look for their promotional materials
- Attend conferences like this one!
- And...encourage your retailers to attend!
(easier said than done... those who do it will thank you)



Questions?

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Lisbon's
Historic Railroad
Station
2009 recipient of
NH Preservation
Alliance Award
...come visit!

