

Building Better Buy In

INCREASE YOUR SALES PROFITABLY



Building Better Buy-In

by Wayne Ens

When you are planning a huge event which places additional demands on your staff, what is in it for them to buy-in and participate?

A regional department store chain in the North-East wanted to boost traffic and sales on Tuesdays; their slowest day of the week. They began to promote \$1.99 Tuesdays, where shoppers could buy anything at the regular price and purchase a second one for \$1.99. Basically, it was a way of promoting a half-price sale every Tuesday.

The good news is that after the first three weeks, the event became hugely popular, and Tuesdays became their highest traffic day of the week.

The bad news was two-fold:

1. As consumers became aware of the regular Tuesday event, they quit buying regular-priced merchandise in favor of waiting until Tuesday when they knew there were huge savings. Profits took a major hit, and
2. Employee absenteeism was rampant every Tuesday. You see, employees soon realized their workload would be excruciating on Tuesday when all of the bargain-hunting transactional shoppers rummaged through the store. However, there was nothing in this event for the staff.

When you are planning a huge event which places additional demands on your staff, what is in it for them to buy-in and participate? Or are they likely to phone in sick when you need them most?

Before you plan your next event, use this Guide to Building Better Buy-in to help you rally your troops behind your marketing extravaganza.

The Guide to Building Better Buy-In

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Much of the success of special sales and events is dependent upon the attitude and effort of your staff. The way customers are greeted and treated has a direct bearing on sales, referrals and repeat business.

All too often the role of front line staff and sales people is under estimated by businesses which only share the workload, not the success. Here are guidelines to help you win the buy-in, participation and passion of your people for your next marketing event.

1. Involve your key players and staff from the outset. Explain the problems or opportunities as you see them, discuss their ideas and your proposed strategies with them. Employees who feel like part of the plan will work harder to execute the plan.

2. Expose them to the advertising campaign before the public is exposed to it. Make them feel like insiders and like they had a special sneak preview of what was about to happen.
3. Where warranted, run a special related pre-event for employees, their friends and their families. Your staff and their sphere of friends and family can be your best customers if you have won their hearts.
4. Get a supplier to contribute product or prizes to the staff members who reach certain sales targets of that supplier's goods or services.
5. Train, train, train. Make sure your staff understands the products, services and special offers you are presenting during your marketing event. Staff that are caught off guard or who do not feel confident or knowledgeable about what they are selling, will suffer low self-esteem and will not be passionate about working with you.
6. Have some fun launching the event with a staff barbeque or pizza lunch. Employees who are having fun will be more likely to greet your customers with a smile.
7. Recognize extra effort. Offering a day off, a special award or trophy, and publicly acknowledging your front line people creates a much more positive environment for them and your customers.
8. Set overall and individual goals. It's hard to feel successful if you don't know what your employer's definition of success is. When setting goals, make sure they are realistic, but challenging.
9. Put mechanisms in place to measure intangibles beyond sales. A customer service survey gives customers the opportunity to acknowledge certain employees, and also helps you to understand customer expectations.
10. Announce the event results. After your people put in extra hours or get excited about the launch of a particular campaign, they need to know the results; what worked and what didn't work.
11. Don't just rely on advertising and staff incentives to create excitement for the event. Make sure the theme and the advertised products or services are front and center in your merchandising.

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