

Marketing for Small Retailers

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Marketing in SMEs may not be as high up on the agenda on the daily 'to-do-list' as it is for larger corporations, but starting a new business or trying to grow an existing business requires extensive marketing efforts. Subsequently, here are some tips for small retailers in Ghana:

1) Location, Location, Location

You need to attract customers to your retail space and be able to close sales with them, therefore it is beneficial to be in an area that has high footfall i.e. many people who will be in the area where your store is located.

2) Outdoor displays

If you have a window or space outside your store, think about how you can use a display to grab the attention of passers-by and then 'pull' them into the store.

3) Advertise

Advertising your business need not be very expensive. With the smaller marketing budgets that SMEs have, options such as adverts in your local paper, radio station or community notice boards and handing out pamphlets can raise awareness of your business.

4) Cost-effective promotions

It's important that once you've managed to get a potential customer inside your store that they are exposed messages to encourage them to buy. There are few simple ways of doing this for example:

- a) Point-of-sale displays* to highlight the key benefits of the product.
- b) Price promotions should be used seasonally to encourage customers to try a product – it should not be used over a long

period of time. Price reductions can be offered on single items or a range of products together to encourage of your products.

**Point- of- sale displays - can include dummy packs, display stands and banners etc.*

5) Trained staff

Your staff are the face of your business, they need to believe in your vision. They need to be interested in the product/service being sold and understand your customer's needs to be able to sell effectively.

6) Customer service

Success in retail is not just about offering good quality products at good prices, it's also about having excellent customer service. Essentially your shop environment and staff should add value to customers and create a pleasant shopping experience and most importantly, encourage customers to return. Competition is everywhere, so having excellent customer service is a real advantage.

7) Communicate with customers

Where possible, collect your customers contact details and find simple ways to keep in touch i.e. sending newsletters or the occasional SMS to tell them about a special offer. It's less expensive to sell to an existing customer than it is attract new ones so it makes sense to keep in contact.

8) Get creative

It is always a good idea to try and create a buzz around your store which often requires some creative thinking. For example, having a competition or sponsoring a local church could be a good way to help build you database and generate interest.

9) Networking

Part of the marketing process is to network - always think about different ways to connect with people. Networking is a good way to form meaningful and even profitable connections irrespective of a company's size. Set aside time to network – relationships aren't built overnight.

10) Internet/Online

Investing in your company's online presence can be a good way of raising awareness as well as building credibility and trust in the eyes of your customer.

- a)** Social media - helps create engagement with customers but also provides opportunities to share business related news and updates as well as a means to offer customer support. It is important to evaluate which platform best suits their target audience.
- b)** Email – as mentioned earlier it's important to collect data from your customer where possible. The simplest way to do this is by having an up to date mailing list so you can e-mail them seasonal greetings, special offers and anything else that will keep you top-of-mind, without becoming a nuisance.
- c)** Website - having an update to date, clear and easy to navigate website provides your business with credibility and should contain key information about your product/service.

Marketing plays an extremely important role in the success of SMEs and there are actions that can be taken for a business of whatever size even on the smallest budget. A clear marketing strategy/plan can add real scale and profitability to your business.

Thank you for reading!

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