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Ways to Boost Footfall in Retail

Regardless of whether your shop is based in a competitive retail environment like a mall, or located in a hidden-away side street, getting customers to notice you can be tricky. Obviously, you want to catch their eye and encourage them into your store, but you're up against a lot of competition, as well as longstanding shopping habits.

Bringing in more customers – and attracting them away from your competitors – is one of the biggest challenges in retail that businesses of all sizes have to tackle. Including the huge supermarket chains. You're certainly not alone!

To help, we've pulled together some tips that could help reboot your shop's takings...

1. Create a welcoming shopfront

The first thing you'll need to do to increase footfall is to assess your shopfront. It's necessary to have it uncluttered, welcoming, up-to-date and attractive. Preferably with the door open, inviting customers into your store.

2. Demos and deals

It's also a great idea to take your business out into the streets and engage with people. Get among the shoppers, chat to them, find out what they're shopping for. Offer demonstrations, free samples and discount vouchers to encourage people to pay you a visit. This isn't the time to be shy – you need to literally get out there, and raise your profile as a friendly retailer that has its customers' interests at heart.

3. Loyalty scheme

To boost your brand and build repeat business, why not start up customer loyalty scheme? It's a great tool for bringing people back time and again. Whether you're a coffee shop or a hairdressing salon, giving your customers rewards in return for their ongoing custom is a powerful customer engagement method. They feel

valued and have an incentive to grow into a regular customer, which is the bread and butter of any business.

4. Local marketing

It's vital to market your shop to the local community using tactics like direct mail, leaflets and magazine ads. You could also buy a street sign to place in a high-footfall area, which displays clear directions to your shop and your special offers. There's also the option of sponsoring local events - from charity runs to business breakfasts. You could find the perfect opportunity to get your brand in front of the right people. Just be sure you're marketing to your target audience, otherwise you could end up wasting precious budget.

5. Go online

There may be low footfall on your street, but there's enormous traffic online. Even a basic retail website, combined with astute use of social media can draw attention to both your online and offline presence. While many customers may prefer to buy online, you can also use an online presence to drive in-store footfall. Find out if you can sell through Amazon and eBay, and if you're more 'crafty' try Etsy.

6. Tell people why you're different

Generating new business begins with thinking about how your shop is different to the others and why your customer should care about this. What can you offer that nobody else does? How do the customers benefit from your unique selling points? Based on your assessment, develop a marketing strategy that makes you stand apart from the competition. You may want to consider investing in something like a local ad campaign.

7. Invest in CRM

Don't forget customer relationship management (CRM). By gathering data on your customers you can spot where you're *not* servicing them, allowing you can formulate a strategy to change your approach. It's vital when holding on to existing customers and building a reputation among new ones. Try customer surveys, which

can be done online, by email or in person. Or check your social media regularly for customer comments.