



10 ways to make your in-store holiday event stand out

With the season of goodwill upon us, there's no better time to invite people in to explore your store.

So how do you promote and host a well-attended in-store event during the busy holiday season?

This article offers some ideas to make people aware of your event, create a welcoming atmosphere on the day and tempt attendees back for a return visit.

Before your in-store event

1. Promote your event to everyone in the neighbourhood



A freestanding vertical banner outside your store is an ideal way to encourage the local community and commuters who haven't yet popped their head through the door to stop by.

In terms of design, large event banners should be clean and simple for maximum impact.

To promote your event, you can keep the info you include to a minimum: your name, logo, event time and date is plenty.

2. Promote your in-store event with postcards

In the run-up to your seasonal soiree, hand out postcards to customers and store visitors to build buzz. Their versatility makes them an accessible and affordable choice for raising awareness, encouraging recommendations and increasing return visits to your store. But their uses don't stop there.

3. Make your invitations personal



Despite advances in communication technology, one thing remains: getting a handwritten invitation through the mail feels special. Especially when you least expect it. The feeling you get as you peel open the envelope and realize someone sat down, pen in hand, and took the time to invite you personally is powerful. And it shouldn't be overlooked.

You can always follow up with a reminder of the event via social or email mentioning the specific time or details of refreshments and giveaways.

At your in-store event

4. Attract more walk-ins on the day of your event

Catch the eye of shoppers walking by with outdoor signage that stands out. Indoor events can often look private and exclusive if the cold winter chill makes shutting the door necessary.

If you want to keep numbers limited to friends and contacts, that's fine.

But what if you're keen to embrace the festive spirit and open the invitation beyond your guest list?

Encourage more walk-ins by leaving your vertical banner by the door to entice passersby to join the celebrations and take a look around your store.

5. Welcome your guests in style



Once you've tempted a crowd through the door, it can be challenging to greet everyone in person without breaking up conversations with people already inside. An easel sign is great for welcoming guests with a warm message like "Happy Holidays, help yourself to a drink and a bite to eat."

Or use the easel-mounted sign to make your guests aware of:

- A unique in-store offer
- A holiday raffle
- An upcoming New Year sale

6. Share promotions that draw people back



Business cards are an affordable way to tempt your party guests back to your store – especially if you add an incentive. Include an exclusive in-store offer that runs into the new year to encourage sales during lackluster January.

Or add a handwritten note thanking people for attending to shopping and swag bags.

7. Reward the early birds with a branded keepsake

When it comes to hosting well-attended in-store events, giveaways are a tried and tested way to get people through the door.

Give people a reason to show up early by rewarding the first 25 shoppers with a branded promotional item, like a handy tote bag. This generous gesture not only

gives your guests something to carry their gifts home in, but it also gets your name around town and creates lasting positive associations with your business.

8. Lavish your guests with festive treats

Nothing makes a holiday party more merry than festive snacks. Even if you can



only stretch to sparkling water and a couple of bags of chips, offering your guests refreshments is essential, especially during the holiday season.

On the other hand, if you're a handy in the kitchen, handmade gingerbread is a nostalgic sweet treat you can customize with your business name and a personal message. Or fill mugs with candy canes and other festive favourites for your guests to enjoy at the party or drop in their complimentary tote bag.

9. Define your brand with subtle design details

Your logo displays your brand identity and values with just a symbol, emblem or wordmark.

It has the power to attract attention in the blink of an eye.

Adding something as small as a sticker with your logo, can make an ordinary wrapper, box, carton, or container look like a visual feast for the eyes. So, in the spirit of festive feasting, why not offer premium gift wrapping for all products bought at your event?

You needn't spend a fortune on packaging accessories either. A few foraged festive sprigs turn the ordinary into the extraordinary. And make gifts stand out under the tree.

After your in-store event

10. Follow up with guests while memories are still fresh

After welcoming people into your store, a brief thank-you card keeps the positive momentum of your event going well into the new year.

According to Erin Shea, Marketing Director, North America at Vistaprint, “your interaction with customers doesn’t end when you pack up. Make sure you follow up with any leads gathered at the event as quickly as possible. Do your best to contact them within 48 hours via email or, even better, follow up with a personal note on a customized, event-themed postcard.”

Wrap-up

I hope you found these 10 ideas helpful. Any advantage you can get over your competitors means more money to the bottom line.

If you choose not to implement any of these ideas within your company, I would love to help you out. We can start with a conversation which will give me a basis to see if we will be able to work together. Contact me, Rob Payne at www.rhp-marketing-services.com/contact-us. Or text/call me at 403-615-2982.