

Creative Corner

How is Your Curb Appeal?

Chances are you have spent the past several weeks getting ready for the SUMMER SEASON! First there is Mother's Day, then Memorial Day, Father's Day and 4th of July ...so many holidays to celebrate; so many sales to promote! We get so busy on the inside, we can forget about the outside. Before the season starts -- Check out your curb appeal -- Make time to take a look at your store from the curb and from across the street. It is like that quick final "look in the mirror" before you go out the door to a big event.



Checklist: Are your windows clean? Are your signs straight? Sidewalks clear? Do all your lights work? Does anything need to be painted? Or fixed? How is your store's curb appeal? You may have great products and sales going on inside but if your curb appeal is un-kept, customers will



never make it to the door. If your store front is fading into the landscape, potential customers will just drive by. Curb appeal is what grabs a person's attention and makes a first impression – good or bad. What is your curb appeal saying about your store? Fun and vibrant place to be or old and tired place that's there? So, take that last look to "Freshen Up" and "Stand Out" before the season gets in full swing.

And, if you find that your store's curb appeal is lack luster, here are a few great ideas to spruce things up:

1. **Storefront Art** - Partner up with a local artist; preferably one who creates large outdoor pieces. Offer to display a large outdoor piece outside your store (and perhaps a few smaller pieces inside for decorations). Traffic passing by will notice the new addition. (You can sell the pieces on consignment if you like.) AND, to get new traffic into your store, have a small art show. Let your local artist show off their work and invite their clients to your store. You can also invite your current customer list to the art show as a summer event. Set out some lemonade and cookies and you are ready to go! It is an easy and fun way to attract new business!
2. **Get rid of the White Noise** - Take everything out of your storefront window and everything off your storefront. Everything! Clean it up and then put back only what really counts. Sometimes our signs, posters and displays (even overgrown shrubs and stray branches) become white noise to us and our customers. It has been there so long, no one sees it anymore. A clean, less cluttered storefront will get noticed, (mostly

because there is something different). When people drive by, their heads will turn...because something is different! New and different inspires people to stop in.

3. **Create Entrance Envy** - Let your store front be a destination. If your storefront is interesting, clean and welcoming, people will stop and linger (instead of trying to get by as fast as they can). Add a small bench for sitting (“Sure Honey, you go in and shop and I will just sit outside here”). A pot planted with aromatic flowers will make your entry smell nice. Add a large pet bowl and keep it filled with water each day – pet owners will head to your store to be sure Rover can get a drink. Add a bright flag or wind sock that creates gentle movement. These are small, inexpensive additions that roll out the welcome mat and cause passers-by to pause. Bring people in close, let them feel welcome and comfortable and they will discover your store and shop! Make your entrance the envy of the neighborhood.

Finally, if your storefront is on the internet, all of the tips above will still apply. It is easy to let your site get cluttered with old information. When visitors get to your home page, is it cluttered? Or is it clean, attractive and welcoming? Does it make them want to linger a bit? If not, what can you do to change that? What could you offer to grab their attention? Have you checked your keywords and search optimization recently to be sure people are finding you? Put an e-twist on the tips above. Be creative and see how you can spruce up your e-store curb appeal too!



We would love to show off your storefront!

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