

## The Power of Your Window

As small business owners, we often underestimate the “power” of our storefront windows and the impact of the displays we build. The art of displaying products and showing off services by utilizing storefront windows is a *visual* way to both stimulate and educate the customer. In pedestrian heavy locations, the visual display a business creates in their windows is often the difference between **walking in** and **walking by**.

Most small businesses have heard about or know the most important techniques for a great window display, including:

- Always start with clean windows, inside and out, and never have dead bugs
- Change your displays at least every four weeks, more often if located in a high pedestrian area
- Good lighting is essential, even during the day.
- Know the impact of sunlight on products and displays
- Make sure mannequins have hands and feet
- Use themes and holidays to help develop a window display calendar
- No handwritten signage, no exceptions

But what techniques and trends are businesses using today to really stand out and have **powerful** window displays? In today’s world of hodge podge, the real stand outs are those that do it with style, class, consistency, and quality. In fact, service businesses are, now more than ever, using visual methods to sell themselves and create an environment that is exciting and set them apart from the competition. Some trends in today’s powerful windows include:

- Less is best, keeping window displays simple and uncluttered. Let the product be the display, not the chaos of the display.
- Use motion, color, and/or excitement in the display to catch the customer’s eye and create curiosity. Be creative, think outside the box, and remember paint is cheap and easy to change.
- Experiment with fun, crazy, and off the wall ideas or celebrations. Pick Groundhog Day instead of the traditional “retail” holiday such as Valentine’s Day. There are lots of themes, holidays, and special celebrations that can be used as the bases for building a display to showcase your products and services.
- There is no wrong way to create a powerful window, just less effective techniques or ideas. Ask your customers what they think. Did they like the window display? Did they notice? Take a field trip and see what other businesses are doing to create excitement and build powerful window displays.

Bottom line, small businesses have to be different and leverage those areas that can help attract customers. Maybe you can’t match the investment in technology or sell at the same price, but you can use the power of your windows and create fun, cutting edge displays to make your business stand out and attract attention. Doing it right will imbed a

positive image of your business in the customer's mind. Positive images translate into customer loyalty, and that's what you want to achieve, customer loyalty.

Lani Lott is President of L.L. Consulting and consults with small business owners throughout the Southwest helping them to develop cost effective strategies for attracting customers. Ms. Lott will be presenting two workshops: *Advertising & Marketing Strategies for the Small Business Owner* on January 25, 6-8pm and *Visual Merchandising: Image and Branding Your Business* on January 26, 7:30-9am. One-on-one consultations are available! Call the HDA office to make your reservations!