

How To Add MOJO To Your Shop

by AnnaLee Waite

Exactly What Is Mojo?

The answer to that question is “adding something special to your shop which makes your customers want to visit your place of business time and time again.”

Retailing continues to become more and more competitive (especially in the USA) and we find our stores competing against big box retailers and internet store fronts.

How Can We Compete?

One way is to offer “Marketing Plus.” What does this mean? Operating your retail store while adding special events into the mix. The general shopping public has come to expect something in addition to simply going into a store to buy product. They want to come to your store to shop but expect to be entertained and enjoy an event. These days you must go above and beyond selling to keep customers coming to your store.

Here are some examples of “special events” which retailers in my area offer to get their customers excited about visiting their stores and then staying to shop.

The local Lululemon Athletic shop offers a complimentary yoga class each and every Sunday. Don't have a yoga mat? They'll provide one for you along with a certified yoga teacher which results in about 18 yoga enthusiasts showing up and being lead through a 40 minute class by a professional. Once the class is over Lululemon has an area set up to serve customers lemon flavored water and fresh fruit which allows the people to relax for a few minutes, socialize and shop.

My local Banana Republic store sends me an email about once a month inviting me to an early bird special beginning at 8:30 am on Saturday morning which includes a discount on all clothing merchandise along with donuts and orange juice, I don't go for the early bird shopping every month but have gone several times and do end up buying a skirt or blouse that I might not have purchased without an email reminding me to shop while getting a free donut.

My design studio is located in a town house close to the Houston Galleria (a major retail mecca). During the Christmas season quite a few people come to Houston to shop at the Galleria. You guessed it - many of the national retailers located at the Galleria are competing for those holiday sales dollars. They have figured out that it is well worth their investment to offer “special events” to their customers. That same store - Banana Republic puts



**Get Customers
Excited About
Visiting Your Store
& Staying To Shop!**



**In Store Events
+ Food & Drinks
= Relaxed Shoppers
= Increased Sales
Cha Ching!**

a holiday spin on Thursday and Friday evening events. Around Christmas last year they had a live DJ playing music in the store and served soft drinks and snacks allowing shoppers to enjoy an event while they shopped.

I just spotted a sign in a local Anthropologie store advertising “Rainforest Crafts for Kids.” A smart retail strategy—entertain the kids allowing parents to focus on shopping.



What Kind Of Event Will Work?

So how do you go about planning and financing an event in your shop? It would be wonderful to encourage regular customers to stop by along with finding new customers. What kind of event will work and how will you finance this gig?

First, check out www.NeedleworkRetailer.com for some great archived

articles such as...Planning Events Checklist (Article Reprints) and Store Promotions.

Second, sit down and make a list of all the business owners you know in your area and through business associations or the Chamber of Commerce. Put together a co-op event and help each other out. For example, in your shopping center or local area you have a florist. Make arrangements for your florist acquaintance to put on a 15 minute flower arranging class followed by a your staff teaching a cross stitch class using a floral pattern with bright spring and summer threads. The florist will bring their supplies and set up in your shop on the class room table. This is called "marketing plus" because you are getting stitchers into your shop by offering them something free that they will enjoy in addition to them shopping and taking a class. Everyone benefits - the customer is very happy, the florist gets great exposure for their business and you have increased your shop profile. Many of these happy customers will hang around after the event to shop and purchase items from your store.

Do you have a favorite local restaurant or a bakery close to your shop? How about an "early bird special" with the bakery supplying the donuts and you providing the coffee. Set up your goodies in the middle or towards the back of the store so the customers will walk through the store and view your gorgeous displays. There is a good chance they will see a new pattern and purchase it. People want to do business with folks they know and like. They will like you if you do something nice for them.

Invite a local chef from a nearby restaurant to give a talk at your store. The chef could discuss great recipes for summer food followed by a "Needlework Show and Tell" by your regular customers. The Chef can hand out a simple recipe booklet along with menus from his restaurant or a discount coupon. Ask a local jewelry store owner to provide a 10 minute program on new jewelry trends followed by your cross stitch class where you stitch a project with lots of bling! Your local gift shop owner would be thrilled to get free advertising for their shop by offering a gift wrapping instruction class around November followed by your special demonstration or display

of holiday related kits and patterns or a class with a holiday kit.

How Do You Get The Word Out?

Third, once you have decided on a partner to work with - How do you get the word out about your event? The best place to advertise your event would be a shop newsletter or local newspaper. In my area we have a small newspaper called The Examiner. The staff at that newspaper is always looking for "local" news and are happy to print stories about upcoming events. If you have an apartment property close by leave flyers in the leasing office and ask them to include a write up (you provide) of the upcoming event in their apartment property newsletter. Use social media to create an Event on Facebook. Announce your event via the bulletin board at Starbucks. Finally, people love to see themselves and others having fun so take a few photos of your event and post them on your shop Facebook page and in your store.



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AnnaLee Waite is a Houston based needlework designer with 15 years experience in property and retail management. Prior to founding her design studio she specialized in opening retail stores for Linens n' Things and apartment properties for Lincoln Property Company. She is a designated CPM (Certified Property Manager) whose goal is to impart knowledge and offer support to independent shop owners in order to help them increase traffic and sales thus increasing profits.

Visit www.annaleedesigns.com to view AnnaLee's New Cowboy Boot Design Series!



Strawberry Seed

Yummy strawberries in a lovely punchneedle design by Nancee Ariagno with The Cooperage. Buy the "Strawberry Seed" pattern from the designer at www.flew-the-coop.blogspot.com and the hand-dyed colorfast cotton floss from Valdani. Phone toll free 866-VALDANI or visit www.valdani.com.

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