

60 Ideas in 60 Minutes

(Best Practice lessons shared by your fellow businesses)

Operations/Security

- Check your business insurance policy to be sure you have loss of business insurance coverage and fraud insurance.
- Know the phone number of your neighbor business in case of emergency.
- Let the police department know your emergency numbers.
- Keep a light on at your entrance and inside your business. It deters intruders and helps the police in their surveillance efforts.
- Do not smoke in your business entrance, it often turns potential customers away.
- QuickBooks online is fantastic, it offers remote access wherever there is internet service and it is very secure.
- Do not keep all of your business documents in your store only. Create backup or take hard copies with you. If there is a fire or flood and you lose your only records of the value of your business it will make processing a valid claim nearly impossible.
- Put a security camera on your register and your entrance door.
- You can question a customer inside your business if you suspect a theft.
- You can ask someone to surrender their bags when they come into your store.

Customer Service

- Be friendly and helpful to your customers. Paying attention to what the customer is saying will help you make a sale and provide an opportunity to recommend other businesses in the district.
- The more quality time that a customer spends in the district the more they are apt to come back and tell a friend about their good experience.
- Participate in the "Live After 5" campaign.
- Be "open" based on your customer's needs.
- The only thing you are guaranteed when you are not open is NO SALES.
- Greet your customers, not only is it good for business but it also is a security benefit. You are less apt to be a victim of shoplifting if you make verbal and eye contact with your customers.
- Make sure you have clear pathways in your place of business. It helps with wheelchair access and it also is more difficult for a shoplifter to slip something in their bag if there is a clear line of site around them.
- Do not be on the phone or "texting" when you have a customer.

- Excuse yourself to take a call and ask the caller to hold or offer to call them back since you are taking care of a customer.
- Offer assistance carrying bags out.
- Converse with your customer, find out if they are here for the day or might be staying over. Always refer to the Information Center of Corning for information on accommodations, restaurants, etc. The Information Center staff will even call and check availability for overnight stays and make dining reservations at no charge! Their phone number is 962-8997
- Recommend other Gaffer District businesses, encourage people to spend as much time as possible experiencing the Gaffer District.
- Visit your neighbor stores to know what is out there so you can be confident in your product...The Gaffer District.
- Remember...The Information Center has 362 days of access to public and wheel chair accessible restrooms.
- Link other Websites to your site, examples of very highly rated sites are below:
 - www.corninggafferdistrict.com
 - www.corningfingerlakes.com
 - www.fingerlakeswinecountry.com
 - www.corningny.com
- Attend meetings to gain information and knowledge about successful business practices, the Gaffer District Business Association and the Gaffer District meeting schedules are on www.corninggafferdistrict.com
- SBDC/CCC a great resource for information FREE and confidential, call Chris Ward at (607) 962-9461. SBDC is BEST resource for anyone interested in starting a business. Also can help with developing or revisiting marketing plans, etc.

Marketing/Advertising

- Add a quote to your bags to grab your customer's attention.
- Loyal customer reward coupons/certificates to bring them back.
- Giveaways/donations are focused on bringing people into your store.
- Use the internet/your website to develop a database to get to know your customer and contact information.
- Send your customers birthday rewards or even a birthday email.
- Ask your suppliers for giveaways or to do product demonstrations.
- Check with trade associations for assistance writing media pieces.
- Include a thank you item with your invoices or sales.
 - i.e. Thank you truffle, Tea Bag, coupon for monthly specials
- Cross-marketing with another business in District.
 - i.e. Marketing Street Coffee & Tea, Pips, Beyond Baskets, Bottles & Corks

- Attach a teaser to your brochure and place them in the Information Center of Corning to get customers into your business. They have over 50,000 visitors every year call 936-4686 if you would like more information.
- Be creative with signage, tell your story, entice people on the street. The Gaffer District's Visual Merchandising program is a complimentary service which is a great asset in this area see: www.gafferdistrict.com/businesses for details.
- Use some teaser/sample to lure festival goers' inside, example: Market Street Coffee & Tea puts a coupon for a free chocolate sample on a set of beads and has someone hand them out at the festivals. It's a GREAT way to lure people into her the store and they buy!!!
- RickSegal.com – make sure you check this out!!!!
- Utilize your sidewalk (within city code that is)
- Check out the new home-owners list from the surrounding counties, check the papers these are all potential new customers.
- List gift ideas on back of business cards.
- Light up your business inside and out!
- Do not smoke in your entrances, it is very offensive to most consumers.
- Your E-mail address should reflect your business name.
- Remember to flip your sign OPEN/CLOSED.
- Make sure your sign reflects TRUE hours.