

## TRAINING TIP – PLANNING FOR THE FALL

Well if the saying, “Pride Cometh before the Fall”, I am going to suggest that “Plan cometh before the Fall”

With the passing of Labor Day now most of us are looking at winding down in sales a little. School is back in session and the general public is settling in to normal day to day routine. Now is a great time to take some planning time and make some decisions as to what you are going to achieve over the coming Fall and Winter months.

Now if you are a seasonal business and are looking at closing at the advent of winter, then maybe the only decision you need to make is where you will be holidaying this year. I say that tongue in cheek, people; I know you have lots to do.

May I make some suggestions?

### **EDUCATE YOURSELF**

This is a great time of year for trade shows and conventions. A few that you should probably be aware of are:

**NEICRA** Convention is taking place at the Biltmore in Providence RI on the 26<sup>th</sup> through the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2008. (For details see [www.neicra.org](http://www.neicra.org))

**NICRA** Convention is taking place at the Hilton Bayfront in St Petersburg FL from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2008.

**SIGEP USA** is the old Frozen Desserts Expo that was run last year in Las Vegas.

During this time period we are also running Batch Freezer and Custard/Soft Ice Cream Courses at our facility in St louis MO.

### **STORE AUDITS**

I am a huge believer in Store Sensory Audits. In order to have your customers have a memorable experience in your store you have to appeal to all of their senses. So I wrote a little article on Sensory Store Audits I would like to refer to here....

You will need to take 15 minutes out of your busy day and evaluate what senses your customers are using when they are in your store. Are you utilizing more than one? Are there areas that you can improve on?

## **SIGHT**

First of all, stand back from your location and take a good look at the external image you portray to your customers. Walk from side to side. Take note of the signage and/or displays you have and consider the following questions.

- *What do you see?*
- *Is there adequate signage in your business?*
- *Is it visually overpowering?*
- *Do you have many signs with different fonts and sizes?*
- *Is the facade of your premises outdated, faded or dirty?*
- *Can you see into your location through your windows?*
- *Do the sidewalks need power washing?*
- *Are there pillars that block important signs or attention getters?*
- *Do you have attention getters?*
- *Does your location fade or merge into your neighboring premises?*
- *Is your parking lot in need of repair or cleaning?*

## **SMELL**

Now locate where the main entrance that your customers use, close your eyes and step inside (We don't want any crashing through a plate glass window)

- *What do you smell?*
- *If anything at all, is it pleasant?*
- *Is it stale?*
- *Do you smell scents from neighboring businesses (Good or bad)?*
- *When you smell what you smell, what images does that scent conjure in your mind?*

## **HEARING**

Now that you've taken a nasal impression of your business, keep your eyes closed and pay close attention to what you are hearing.

- *What do you hear?*
- *If there is music, is the volume appropriate?*
- *Is the type of music playing appropriate?*
- *Can you hear staff movements in the rear of the premises (washing dishes etc)*
- *Are appliances / refrigerators / registers too loud*
- *Are your hearing noises from neighboring businesses?*
- *Is the street noise overpowering?*

## **SIGHT**

OK now we are going back to sight. Yes I know we did this outside, but inside is a whole new ball game. Take a good look around in the area that your customers are standing and what do you take in.

- *What do you see?*
- *Are your displays and / or menu boards easily read?*
- *Do certain products catch your eye?*
- *Is product in display look orderly and well organized?*
- *If you can not see what you are selling, do you have illustrations or photographs visible?*
- *Does your staff look uniform and presentable?*
- *Are your floor and counter area's free from clutter and look clean?*

## **TOUCH**

We are slowly making our way down through the senses, and touch is always a difficult one to utilize, particularly when our product our surface doesn't really involve any tangible object that is, well, touchable. That being the case, there aren't too many questions associated with this section. Some are as follows:

- *What can you touch?*
- *Is there something your customers can touch or demonstrate?*
- *Do you have catalogue or table-talker customers can flip through?*
- *Is there a monitor / screen or demonstration model you can touch or use?*

## **TASTE**

Similarly, you either have items for your customers to taste or you don't.

- *What can you taste?*
- *Are samples able to be selected by customers?*
- *Are your staff members offering taste tests to your customers?*
- *Is what ever you are able to taste complimentary to the business?*
- *Is it nice?*

If your store is lacking in sensory experiences, you may be missing to opportunity to really impress your customers on 5 different levels.

Anyway, Enjoy your slower season and please make it fruitful.