

working together

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Friday, Friday, Gotta Get Up on *Friday*

Be an Early Bird that Gets the Worm. Politely.

Aptly named Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving can bring out the worst in those who join the masses to kick off the holiday shopping season.

Though the word “black” refers to profitability, it can also be used to describe the dark side of the day—long lines, pushy shoppers, low inventory and irritable cashiers who can provoke register rage in even the merriest of customers.

If you’re one who can’t resist a 4:00 a.m. bargain, make a pact with yourself that you will be a good consumer, even in the face of challenging shopping conditions.

Here are some ways to help curb retail angst.

- Do your part. Call ahead and see if a popular item is in stock before taking out your frustration on innocent store employees. Or look online for the “must-haves” of the season. You can also take a store’s sales ad to its competitors and ask about price matching. Just remember it’s the manufacturers who largely control inventory, not the store staff.
- Treat the store you’re shopping in with respect. If you drop something, pick it

up. If you move something, put it back. If you spill something, clean it up.

- When you’re checking out, hang up your cell phone. Clerks may not need you to scan and bag items, but they might have a question and do require prompt payment. Plus, you’ll avoid dirty looks from the shoppers in line behind you.
- Play by the rules. Don’t use the express lane if you don’t have an express load. Don’t ask clerks to change a price for you or to accept expired coupons.

Most of all, be friendly and smile—you’ll be amazed at the positive response you’ll get from store employees. Let a manager know if you appreciate an employee who went above and beyond for you. Mood is contagious, and positive reinforcement works.

And if you didn’t get the bargain you were bargaining on, keep looking, especially online. While Black Friday may be a great day for deals, you can often find the same prices at other times during the holiday season.

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Passing Glance

One of the biggest mistakes people make when sending direct mail is not formulating a follow-up plan. Once you have that mailer in your target audience's hands, what are you going to do next? Make sure you have the next step in place before sending out a marketing piece.

Spread It On Thick

According to one popular brand of peanut butter, choosy mothers know what to choose. But if you really want to get picky, the best peanut butter may not come from a jar at all—it may come from your own kitchen.

Peanut butter is surprisingly easy to make and it's often healthier than store brands. Many manufactured varieties often contain added sodium and fats that you can opt to leave out when you make your own.

In honor of National Peanut Butter Month, here's how to whip yourself up a batch. (Look for a way to add it to a little nosh during your holiday festivities.)

Ingredients:

4 cups natural peanuts
3 teaspoons peanut oil
1 teaspoon salt

Step 1:

Roast the peanuts.

If you purchase roasted peanuts, you can skip this step. If you want the ultimate in homemade peanut butter, it's easy to roast peanuts yourself.

- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
- Remove the peanuts from their shells.
- Spread the peanuts across a baking pan. The peanuts can be close to one another but make sure they are not piled on top of each other.
- Bake the peanuts for 15 to 18 minutes.
- Remove promptly from the oven and allow to cool.

Step 2:

Make the peanut butter.

- Put half your roasted peanuts into the food processor or blender.
- Add half the peanut oil.

- Grind the peanuts for two to four minutes. The mixture will appear clumpy.
- Pour the remaining peanuts and peanut oil into the food processor or blender.
- Continue chopping the nuts until you achieve the consistency you desire. Creamy peanut butter will require more blending time.
- Add the salt and mix for another minute.
- Refrigerate the peanut butter as soon as you have finished preparing it. It will last for about two weeks.

The oil in the peanut butter may rise to the top when it is stored. Simply stir before eating to blend it back in.

Sentiments

"Nothing takes the taste out of peanut butter quite like unrequited love." – Charles M. Schulz

Good Will Hunting

Most business professionals would volunteer their time and talents, but finding opportunities that cater to their skills can be a challenge. Enter Catchafire.

A sort of mashup between Idealist.org and eHarmony, Catchafire pairs the right business professionals with appropriate nonprofits. The organization has been successful in its home base of New York City, and is now allowing professionals outside of the city to sign up, as well.

Insights

Almost one-third of U.S. adults prefer to be reached by text message rather than a voice call on their mobile phone, according to a recent study by the Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project. Three-quarters (73 percent) of U.S. adults text and 83 percent are mobile phone owners.

Hold the *Phone* Know the Basics About Mobile Marketing Before You Start

Mobile marketing spending is up, according to eMarketer, which estimates U.S. advertisers will spend over \$1.1 billion on mobile marketing this year. And that number is expected to rise to \$1.5 billion in 2012.

Short Message Service (SMS) marketing, in particular, can be very effective—98 percent of SMS are opened and responded to within 60 minutes, according to Mobile Commerce Daily. One reason for this is that proper mobile marketing is opt-in, meaning that customers choose to subscribe to your company or organization's messages.

But before you embark on an all-out SMS

marketing campaign for your business, be sure you're poised to engage customers, not turn them away.

1. Ask permission. Before sending any kind of message to your customers' mobile devices, find out how they want to receive them. The option should be clear on your website or on an in-store survey. Would they prefer updates and sales announcements by email or text message?
2. Don't inundate. Unlike messages sent to the customer's computer, text messages are typically checked immediately, which is why you want to avoid untimely message arrivals.

Scheduling an email message to go out at 3:00 a.m. is okay, but not so with texts. Getting a text in the middle of the night will make most people think "emergency." Be mindful of timing.

3. Target your message. Don't send text messages about child-related products or services to customers who don't have children. Sounds basic, but when it's a text, the message must be even more personalized than an email campaign. By inviting you to text, a customer is allowing you into a the personal space that is their mobile phone. Think of your customer as your friend. What do they need to know?

Five Tips for Mobile Marketing Beyond Text Messages

1. Develop a mobile-friendly website.
2. Use location-based apps.
3. Create your own mobile app.
4. Use quick-response codes on direct mail pieces.
5. Publish mobile content.

—according to Entrepreneur.com

Choose your words *carefully.*

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According to Catchafire CEO and founder Rachael Chong, 95 percent of nonprofits want access to pro bono work, but they don't know where to find it. On the flip side, professionals often find volunteer sites difficult to wade through and without specific requests.

Catchafire makes the process easier for everyone.

Nonprofits pay a sliding scale membership fee and submit descriptive

calls for volunteers. Professionals submit their qualifications on the site, and with Catchafire's algorithm, they are matched up to nonprofits in need. Once limited to just New Yorkers, now any interested professional can apply to do pro bono work.

The model is proving successful. Catchafire has registered nearly 1,800 nonprofits and 10,000 professionals. It's no surprise that Catchafire is catching

on—in a competitive job market, people are anxious to hone their skills, make new connections and beef up their resumes. That's one reason LinkedIn added a Volunteers and Causes feature so users could tout their volunteer work.

Next up for Catchafire—expanding to organizations that need volunteers on-site, but don't have a New York City presence.

First Impressions

Spread It On Thick
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What's better... *direct mail* or *email blasts?*

Creative Graphics recently put it to the test.

We sent the exact same promotion, using the same images and text copy, via direct mail and email blast.

Check out our results below.

Direct Mail

We mailed a postcard to **727 customers**, which generated **11 orders**, totalling **\$5,419 in revenue**.

Email Blast

We sent emails to **747 customers**, which generated **4 orders**, totalling **\$1,378 in revenue**.

And the winner is...Creative Graphics. By combining both print and electronic distribution of our marketing message, we **generated \$6,797 in revenue** on a total **investment of \$841**.

Call Creative Graphics today to learn how we can help you efficiently reach your prospects and customers with marketing messages that turn promotions into sales.



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