



**Small Business Development Center
at Volunteer State Community College**

A public service program of the Division of Continuing Education & Economic Development

December's Newsletter:

5 Tips for Selling During the Holiday Season

Black Friday is over and now it is time to focus on sales for the holiday season. During a recession consumers will focus on the bottom dollar. With consumers analyzing almost every purchase, you must offer an incentive that will motivate buyers to take action. Let's take a look at five ways to motivate consumers during the holiday season.

1. **Generate online sales.** Many consumers now do their shopping online. You can use Facebook, your website, or online ads to sell online. Even if you do not sell your products or services online yet, you use the internet to get customers to call, email, or physically come to you by offering special incentives and exclusive sales. At some point you may want to check out services like PayPal, Google Checkout or any other method of receiving payments online for your products or services. You already have them there and if they were in your store, you would not let them leave without the opportunity to give you money.
2. **Sell gift cards/certificates for your product or service at a small discount.** It's no secret that many people are giving gift cards/certificates for Christmas. To make your gift card/certificate stand out, offer it at a small discount or give a small gift in addition to it. This offer could also allow you to solicit the recipient on other products or services once they redeem their card/certificate. Just make sure that you track the sale of your gift cards and certificates and discuss the accounting with your CPA.
3. **Create time-sensitive offers.** Shoppers respond to deadlines and this time of year is ideal for getting people to buy your product or service in a timely manner. A call to action can get someone who is on the fence to make the purchase now. Examples would be, "visit our website before midnight to register for your chance to win or buy this item before

4. **Send Christmas cards and gifts.** It's a no-brainer to send out Christmas cards to customers, vendors, and anyone else you deal with, because it's a great time of the year to reach out and show people how much you appreciate them, and remind them how your business can help them. Don't be afraid to include a coupon or any other call to action in your card, just do it in good taste. Also, if it is a very good customer or vendor do something less generic and more meaningful. Taking the time to find a personally appropriate gift will mean the world to your customers, vendors and other people that can send you business.
5. **Work your business into the season.** Almost every business can be linked into the holiday season. Obviously if you're business sells products, such as a restaurant or retail, then this should not be difficult. However, if you're part of the 70% of business that sell services you may have to get more creative. You should ask yourself the following question: What do people need from me during the holidays to have more balance, relaxation, or even a plan for how they're going to do something better in the coming year? The answer to that could give you a competitive advantage and give customers a reason to buy from you.