



The Two Different Types of Sale Circular Programs

by Gabe Trahan



There are two types of sale circular programs. One is an in-store event where circulars are placed throughout the store and supported by window signage and in-store signs. In-store sale events are not designed or expected to draw new customers, but instead delight loyal customers with the surprise of extra savings on different types of merchandise. These include discounts on private label, “buy one, get one” offers, bonus sizes, seasonal items, and, almost always, vitamins. The attractive aspect of in-store circular programs is that they have no distribution cost. In-store programs should be considered as another form of a reward program.

OUT-OF-STORE/PUBLICITY EVENTS

The other sale circular program is a publicity event, where circulars are not only placed throughout the store and supported by signage, but are distributed throughout the local community and among the store's customer base. Common distribution methods (ranked from most effective to least effective) are direct mail to the customer's home (most costly), shared mail (circular distributed with other ads), and newspaper insertion.

The success of a newspaper insert hinges on the popularity of the paper and the day the insert is to be delivered. Avoid Mondays and be cautious of the popular weekend edition—weekends mean that your circular will most likely

be one of many, and it will most definitely be nestled next to your competition, begging for comparison. Instead, consider placing your ad on Wednesdays.

Out-of-store distribution (publicity event) programs will offer easily recognizable savings on popular seasonal items, brand OTC items, some private label, household commodities, deep discounts on food and drinks, and something for all age groups. The purpose of out-of-store distribution programs is to attract new customers and entice loyal customers to make an additional visit to the store.

What these two types of events have in common: both should be treated as sales events inviting customers to shop and become more familiar with what the store has to offer.

GET YOUR STORE READY FOR THE EVENT

You need to have sufficient inventory and sales staff to support the sales event. Prior to the event, use a copy of the flier as an inventory sheet to confirm that you have enough product to meet the expected needs of your customers. You can also use the flier to check the promotional sale retail prices to confirm that they coincide with your marked sale retails.

Purchase a package of inexpensive shower curtain rings and clip the rings in a hole through the top left-hand side of the flyer. Hang the promotional

material throughout the store, starting on each side of your end-caps.

Finally, get the mop and bucket out. Much like inviting people to your home for a party, the store, like your home, should sparkle and look inviting.

A FEW WORDS OF CAUTION

Very few sales events, if any, should run for longer than 10 days, especially if the sale involves discounting some of the store's best-sellers. Giving up the profit margin on popular items for a month at a time will hurt your net profits in the end.

Hosting a sales event and not having sufficient inventory to back up the sale can be disastrous. Do not invite people to shop your store and then let them down. The only way to judge the success of your sales event is by knowing how many people you have made happy and how many new customers you have gained. Do not judge a sale by what is left over on your shelves, but instead by the number of happy consumers leaving your store. Good luck! ■

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