

Getting Your Small Store Noticed

Daniel Lange and his brother David are third-generation pharmacists and the owners of Lange's Pharmacy in Schenectady, N.Y. Like their father and grandfather before them, they do not miss a trick. Within just a couple of miles of the pharmacy are four grocery stores, three chain stores, and one big box store, each sporting a pharmacy and consistently deploying big budget marketing programs. The Langes do not play fair. They understand that **growth comes from two sources: existing customers and new customers. A crucial step in attracting new customers is being seen.** Roll in the van! When you have a "lean"-sized store like Lange's Pharmacy (total area, including the OTC section, measures 400 square feet), it is a Herculean challenge to be noticed. Remaining independent, enterprising, and daring keeps the Langes' legacy strong.



What about your store? Do potential new customers approaching your store instantly recognize your location as a full-service pharmacy? In today's retail environment, it takes more than just a sign nailed above the entrance to be noticed.

When it comes to banners, most local zoning laws implement a time limit on how long they can be displayed. A banner reading "Flu Shots Available Here" may only be allowed to hang for two weeks. However, that may not mean a different banner can't take its place. **Time to read the fine print!** I know of one pharmacy that rotates banners on a biweekly basis using eight different banners in all. Perhaps you have reached the time limit allowed for a sign to hang on the front of your building. **Explore any space available on the side of the building that can be seen from the highway.** Many times, signs on the side of a building will offer better exposure than a sign on the front – it never hurts to check. **If you have pedestrian traffic, consider putting out a sidewalk sign,** but remember that they typically need to be brought inside at the end of every business day.

When not in use, **park your delivery vehicle where it can be seen by oncoming traffic.** A delivery vehicle with the right signage becomes a mobile billboard. No delivery vehicle? Purchase magnetic vehicle signs and place them on your vehicle and that of anyone else who is willing to offer a door or trunk.

It's not time to play fair; it's time to be seen.

-- Gabe Trahan, Senior Director of Store Operations and Marketing