BEST PRACTICES FOR
RETAIL EVENTS

MAIN STREET
SOLUTION CENTER

ABOUT THE SOLUTION CENTER

The Main Street Solution Center is a free access portal to resources for communities and organizations working to revitalize and strengthen their local economies. The Solution Center's curated resources are designed to help guide and inspire local leaders and advocates as they navigate the complexities of downtown and neighborhood business district revitalization and economic growth.

ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

This Main Street Solution Center publication was underwritten by Michigan Main Street and Main Street Iowa. Their generous support demonstrates a shared vision and ongoing commitment to freely share knowledge, experience, tools, and best practices to fuel revitalization and economic growth in their own communities, and in locales spanning the nation.

ABOUT THE CREATORS

Leigh Young, AICP is Senior Main Street Specialist with Michigan Main Street and a driving force behind the creation of the Main Street Solution Center. Her deep passion for planning, placemaking, community engagement, and sustainable urban development is evident in her work to advance the cause for revitalization and economic development in downtown and neighborhood business districts across Michigan.

Jay Schlinsog, CMSM is the owner of Downtown Professionals Network (DPN), a Franklin, TN-based firm specializing in innovative, market-driven downtown and business district revitalization and economic development solutions. He brings more than thirty years of experience gained while serving as chief executive with chamber and district management organizations, and through his work with communities and organizations across the United States.

Ben Muldrow is a partner at Arnett Muldrow & Associates, a consultancy renowned for its creative approach to economic development, branding, and marketing strategies for small towns and cities across the nation. He brings an innovative mindset and a deep understanding of the unique dynamics of community branding to each engagement, blending traditional community values with modern marketing techniques to help communities and districts unlock their potential.

PRODUCTION DETAILS

PLANNING FOR RETAIL EVENTS

Organizing retail events is a key strategy for organizations aiming to boost local business and community engagement. Here are some best practices for successfully planning and executing these events:

Community Collaboration:
- Engage with local businesses, community leaders, and residents to gather ideas and support. Involvement from various stakeholders ensures diverse perspectives and wider community buy-in.

Event Planning and Organization:
- Clearly define the event's purpose and goals (e.g., increasing foot traffic, promoting local businesses, seasonal sales).
- Choose a theme that resonates with the community and aligns with local culture or seasonal festivities.
- Plan logistics well in advance, including date, time, location, and necessary permits or licenses.

Marketing and Promotion:
- Utilize various marketing channels like social media, local newspapers, community bulletin boards, and email newsletters.
- Create eye-catching promotional materials that highlight participating businesses and special offers.
- Collaborate with local influencers or community figures to amplify event reach.

Incorporating Local Businesses:
- Encourage businesses to participate with special promotions, extended hours, or exclusive products/services for the event.
- Offer workshops or demonstrations that showcase the unique offerings of businesses.

Creating an Engaging Atmosphere:
- Utilize music, street performances, and decorations to create a festive atmosphere.
- Consider adding elements like food trucks, local artisans' stalls, or children's activities to attract a broader audience.

Leveraging Technology:
- Use social media to create buzz before, during, and after the event.
- Consider a digital event map or guide to help visitors navigate the event and discover all participating businesses.

Accessibility and Convenience:
- Ensure the event is accessible to everyone, including adequate parking and facilities for people with disabilities.
- Provide clear signage and information booths to assist visitors.

Safety and Security:
- Plan for crowd control, emergency responses, and general safety measures, especially if the event draws large numbers.

Feedback and Evaluation:
- After the event, gather feedback from businesses, participants, and attendees to assess what worked well and what could be improved.
- Use this feedback to inform the planning of future events.

Building Community Relationships:
- Retail events should strengthen the bond between local businesses and the community, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual support.

By following these best practices, organizations can create retail events that not only drive business to the area but also enhance the community's spirit and cohesion.

PLANNING FOR RETAIL EVENTS

Retail promotions are essential for organizations looking to attract customers, boost local business, and create a vibrant community atmosphere. Here are some effective examples of retail promotions that can be implemented:

Seasonal or Themed Events: Organize events around holidays or seasons, like a Christmas market, Halloween festival, or summer sidewalk sale. These can include special store decorations, themed products, and related activities to draw in crowds.

Shop Local Campaigns: Encourage shopping at local businesses through campaigns that highlight the benefits of supporting the local economy. This can include loyalty programs, discounts for local shoppers, or special "shop local" days.

Pop-Up Shops: Invite artisans and vendors to set up temporary pop-up shops. This creates a sense of novelty and can draw in shoppers who are eager to see new and unique products.

Fashion Shows and Product Demos: Host fashion shows featuring local clothing stores or product demonstrations by local artisans and businesses. This not only promotes the products but also provides an entertaining experience.

Joint Discount Programs: Develop a discount or loyalty program that spans multiple businesses. For instance, a customer who makes a purchase at one store might receive a discount voucher for another store in the district.

First Fridays or Evening Markets: Host monthly events where stores stay open late and offer special deals, entertainment, and refreshments. These can turn shopping into a social event and attract more evening foot traffic.

Art Walks and Cultural Festivals: Combine the promotion of local art and culture with retail opportunities. Art walks, where local artists display their work in various shops, can be a great way to attract a diverse audience.

Social Media Challenges and Contests: Use social media to engage the community with contests, scavenger hunts, or challenges that encourage participants to visit multiple stores.

Collaborative Giveaways and Raffles: Organize giveaways or raffles where customers earn entries by shopping at participating stores. Prizes can be donated by local businesses, further promoting their products.

Interactive Workshops and Classes: Offer workshops or classes hosted by local businesses or artisans. For example, a DIY craft workshop at a local art supply store or a cooking class at a kitchenware shop.

Charity Partnerships and Community Give-Back Events: Partner with local charities for events where a portion of the day's proceeds goes to a good cause. This can drive traffic while supporting the community.

Historical Tours and Heritage Events: Leverage the historical aspects of the district by organizing tours or events that highlight the area's heritage, possibly in collaboration with local museums or historical societies.

Each of these promotions can be tailored to the unique character and needs of the district, creating a vibrant and engaging shopping experience that draws customers and supports local businesses.

EXAMPLE: ACTION PLAN WORKSHEET

Event/Project: Trick or Treat Trail				
Committee: Promotion				
Team Leader: Kathy Bennett				
Team Members: Kathy Bennett, Rich Jones, John Svitak, Mary Mill, Marilyn McHugh				
Tasks Necessary to Complete Project:	**Responsibility:**	**Start Date:**	**End Date:**	**Budget:**
1. Develop a schedule of activities	Kathy	7/1	7/31	0
2. Solicit businesses and create list/map	Rich	8/1	9/20	$200
3. Design and print coloring contest	Kathy	8/1	9/20	$250
4. Select costume categories	Mary	8/1	9/20	0
5. Solicit volunteers	John	8/1	9/20	0
6. Select prizes	Kathy & Rich	8/1	9/20	$300
7. Design decal for participating businesses	Marilyn	8/1	9/20	$200
8. Assemble marketing plan for the event	Rich/Marilyn	8/20	9/20	0
9. Arrange for McGruff appearance	Rich	8/20	9/20	0
10. Hire entertainment	Rich	8/20	9/20	$400
11. Secure locations to display coloring entries	Kathy	8/20	9/20	0
12. Advertise for window painting contest	Marilyn	8/20	9/20	$300
13. Execute plans; monitor event	Kathy	9/21	10/31	0
14. Review and evaluate event	Team/Committee	10/31	11/15	0

Anticipated Results/Measures of Success:

- ☐ Attendance of at least 1,000
- ☐ At least three media placements
- ☐ At least 40 businesses participating

EVENTS PLANNING & LOGISTICS CHECKLIST

[Event Title]

ACTIVITIES AND TASKS	DUE:	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
Insurance:		
☐ Consult insurance professional(s)		
☐ Determine sponsor/participant liability coverage needs		
☐ Determine needs for special coverage (i.e. weather, alcohol, prizes, key person, etc.)		
☐ Solicit quotes or issue Request for Proposals		
☐ Procure coverage as necessary		
☐ Other:		
Set-Up & Staging:		
☐ Map entire promotional area		
☐ Check sites for acoustics		
☐ Ensure proper and adequate electricity, staging area and mechanical system screening		
☐ Ensure all sites are accessible		
☐ Execute contracts with vendors involved in set-up		
☐ Ensure adequate (excessive) volunteer coverage for set-up		
☐ Other:		
Fire Codes/Ambulance/Medical Provisions		
☐ Research applicable fire codes and verify compliance		
☐ Discuss plans with Fire Department and provide a copy of events area map		
☐ Locate and identify (sign) secondary/emergency exits for indoor or contained events		
☐ Determine needs for on-site ambulance, first aid station, EMT and/or RN		
☐ Notify ambulance of location and time of event(s)		
☐ Other:		
Security & Crowd Control		
☐ Discuss plans with Police Department and provide a copy of events area map		
☐ Determine need for additional/private security firm personnel		
☐ Determine need for volunteer security personnel; provide adequate training		
☐ Provide adequate signage for all areas - both private and public - as needed		
☐ Walk through event grounds and note special features on locational map		
☐ Other:		
Parking		
☐ Identify all lots on events area map		
☐ Ensure all lots are lighted and cleaned prior to event		
☐ Provide adequate security to patrol and monitor lots		
☐ Identify and sign accessible parking spaces		
☐ Install adequate signage leading to and out of lots		
☐ Install "disclaimer" signs at all parking areas		
☐ Other:		
Traffic Control		
☐ Provide volunteers/security/police for directing traffic		
☐ Provide adequate signage for all entries, exits, one-way patterns, etc.		
☐ Conduct several drive-throughs prior to event		
☐ Other:		
Accessibility		
☐ Research all applicable local, state & federal regulations		
☐ Ensure compliance throughout entire event grounds, including indoor sites		
☐ Provide adequate signage both as required and appropriate		
☐ Ensure adequate provision and accessibility of parking for all events in promotional area		
☐ Other:		
Music		
☐ Execute contracts with all performers, specific as to time, place, duration, fees, etc.		
☐ Research applicable copyrights with ASCAP (ascap.com) and BMI (bmi.com)		
☐ Ensure all performers are properly ensured		
☐ Verify and provide adequate electrical systems, sound systems, acoustics, etc.		
☐ Other:		

DP DOWNTOWN PROFESSIONALS NETWORK

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EVENTS PLANNING & LOGISTICS CHECKLIST

[Event Title]

ACTIVITIES AND TASKS	DUE:	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
Street Performers		
☐ Execute contracts with all street performers, specific to time, place, duration, fees, etc.		
☐ Research and comply with all applicable local, state and federal regulations		
☐ Ensure performers are adequately insured		
☐ Other:		
Exhibits & Exhibitors		
☐ Execute contracts with all exhibitors, specific to time, place, duration, fees, etc.		
☐ Ensure exhibitors and property are properly insured		
☐ Other:		
Food Vendors		
☐ Research and ensure compliance with all state and local regulations, including permits		
☐ Execute contracts with all food vendors, specific to time, place, duration, fees, etc.		
☐ Provide adequate and appropriate signage		
☐ Coordinate logistics with local health inspector		
☐ Other:		
Alcohol		
☐ Research and ensure compliance with all local and state regulations, including permits		
☐ Verify qualifications of vendors		
☐ Notify security and police		
☐ Restrict consumption and serving/consumption area		
☐ Provide adequate and obvious posting of consumption area, age requirements, etc.		
☐ Designate persons specifically responsible for monitoring		
☐ Procure adequate alcohol liability insurance		
☐ Ensure all servers/vendors and monitors are properly trained		
☐ Other:		
Sanitation		
☐ Provide adequate signage marking available restroom facilities		
☐ Ensure restrooms are clean, sanitary and safe - before and during event		
☐ Ensure restrooms are handicapped accessible		
☐ Provide adequate refuse containers		
☐ Other:		
Advertising		
☐ Ensure all advertising is truthful		
☐ Ensure the activity or event will live up to advertising		
☐ Ensure news releases and social media posts are timely and accurate		
☐ Ensure marketing/advertising projects a positive image of all involved		
☐ Research and verify adequate insurance coverage for advertising damages		
☐ Other:		
Prizes		
☐ Research and verify compliance with applicable local and state regulations		
☐ Ensure prize descriptions are honest and accurate		
☐ Implement a system for keeping detailed and accurate records		
☐ Obtain prize insurance coverage as appropriate and necessary		
☐ Other:		
Clean Up		
☐ Ensure adequate (excessive) volunteer coverage for clean up		
☐ Plan for swift termination		
☐ Arrange for prompt pick up, collection or disposal of refuse, sanitary stations, etc.		
☐ Drive and walk through event grounds and surrounding areas upon completion		
Evaluation		
Provide a comprehensive review and critique within ten days of event culmination		
Other / Special Provisions		
☐		
☐		
☐		

DOWNTOWN PROFESSIONALS NETWORK

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WINTER DAZE

THURSDAY DECEMBER 8, 2016

PARADE ~ SANTA ~ BONFIRES ~ FIREWORKS

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MAIN STREET
OF MENOMONIE

TWO RIVERS
WINE
WALK
DOWNTOWN

Uncork the Day!

Ready.
Set.
Go.

TWO RIVERS
MAIN STREET

PRESENTED BY MAIN STREET   Panera BREAD   SPONSORED BY PANERA BREAD

Chocolate Lover's Day
DOWNTOWN

M DOWNTOWN

April 12, 2014   11:00 am- 3:00 pm

Chocolate Lovers' Day is a one-day chocolate extravaganza inviting the public to indulge themselves in an array of chocolate creations. For only $5 per person (children under 5 are free), registrants may sample tasty chocolate treats at each business while accumulating points towards the grand prize drawing. This year the grand prize is 4 tickets to Hershey Park in Hershey, Pennsylvania.
On Chocolate Lovers' Day, registration will begin at 11:00 a.m. at Monongalia Arts Center (107 High St., beside Hotel Morgan) and Arts Monongahela (201 High St., beside Huntington Bank). Registration will end at 2:30pm.

DOWNTOWN
events!
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Wednesdays and Fridays Downtown

Farmers Market
DOWNTOWN MARTINSBURG

ACTION PLAN WORKSHEET

Event/Project:				
Committee:				
Team Leader:				
Team Members:				
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