

Spring 2016



Newsletter

The Quarterly Merchants Newsletter of the Southern Boulevard Business Improvement District

Upcoming Events

May 14, 2016

Salsa in the Park (Kick Off)
Bronx Week Celebration
Hunts Point #6 Train Station

May 14, 2016

Salsa in the Park
Hunts Point #6 Train Station

May 14, 2016

Salsa in the Park
Hunts Point #6 Train Station

May 14 - October 29, 2016

Sidewalk Sales
Every Saturday, 10:00 am to 8:00 pm

August 20, 2016

Back to School Street Festival
Southern Boulevard from 163rd
Street to Westchester Avenue



Preventing Criminal Activity on Southern Boulevard

Southern Boulevard is on the Rise. Every day we have new stores coming in from clothing to restaurants, to a new grocery store located on Southern Boulevard between Westchester Avenue and 163rd Street. As the weather begins to break we see more foot traffic on the Boulevard and maybe more criminal activity and loss for the businesses. Most of the crime in our commercial district is shoplifting and burglary. This issue of the newsletter will offer some ideas and strategies for protecting your businesses and employees.

Shoplifting Prevention

While teaching your staff to spot and handle shoplifters properly is a crucial deterrent, you can also implement store design tactics to help prevent stealing. Here are 10 of the best ways your retail small business can deter shoplifters today:

1. Maximize Visibility:

Keeping an eye on merchandise is the first step in loss prevention. Place shorter displays close to the register and taller displays near the perimeter of the store so all merchandise is completely visible from your perch. Use mirrors to eliminate any blind spots, and be sure to keep your store neat and tidy, so employees can tell at a glance if something is missing or out of place.

2. Share Your Shoplifting Policy:

Determine your shoplifting policy and communicate it to your customers with posted signs. Posting statements such as, "Shoplifters Will Be Prosecuted," can act as an effective deterrent.

3. Have Visible Security Systems:

Whether you use security mirrors, faux cameras, motion sensors or security guards, make sure your security systems are visible to customers. Knowing you have security measures in place will stave off shoplifters.

4. Lock It Up:

Protect merchandise by monitoring and limiting access to display cases and dressing rooms. Requiring employee assistance with certain products provides an extra line of defense.

5. Relocate Your Register:

When cash registers are next to the entry and exit points in your store, customers are forced to walk past employees when they come and go. Make sure registers are manned at all times and employees know to keep a watchful eye on customers.

6. Be Aware:

Employees should be alert at all

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Inside the BID From the Director

Dear Businesses and Community Members:

The spring is here and it brings with it new beginnings. Changes are occurring every day and on every corner of the BID. I myself have decided to move on to other work outside of the BID. It's a mixed blessing as other opportunities have opened up for me, yet I will be sorry to leave you all. My last day will be April 30. Until then I am reachable by phone or email as usual. Though I'm sad to go, I leave with pride in all that I have seen occur in this district. I wish you all the best and leave you in good hands with the BID leadership.

For the past seven years, we have worked together to make this district a better place to live and shop. We have improved the lighting and cleaned up the streets, we have attracted new better looking stores, and brought summertime entertainment back to the Boulevard. I know that the improvements will continue because so many of you worked hard to make things better.

Spring and summer events in the BID have already been planned. Starting with our Bronx Week, Salsa in the Park kick off on May 14 at the park at the Hunts Point Avenue Number 6 train station. Events are scheduled for once every month including our annual Back to School festival in August. Permits have been secured for our every Saturday Sidewalk Sales also beginning on May 14. Please take advantage of these events by encouraging customers to attend and offering special discounts in conjunction with Bronx Week and the Sidewalk Sales Saturdays. Events information will be delivered to each store to ensure that your customers know about the events and that you are able to coordinate discounts and other enticements.

I have loved working with you all and hope to stay in touch in the future.

With much love,

Medina Sadig

Five Habits of Successful Retail Stores

There's a saying in retail that the "customer is always right". While this motto is often relevant for retailers and other business owners alike, letting customers call all the shouts won't make a retailer successful. And while every merchant is different and every store has its own demands and goals, the following habits are repeatedly observed among many successful retailers.

Habit One: Prioritizing is Key.

Retailers are busy folks, with those not in the industry often misjudging just how much is on their to-do-lists. From ordering inventory to researching market trends to merchandising displays to training staff and planning in-store events to scheduling online marketing and more, running a retail business means constantly having something to do. With this in mind, successful retailers recognize the value in scheduling what is necessary to do and eliminating what is not. This also means recognizing that while some responsibilities are more enjoyable than others, all responsibilities must be prioritized to effectively run a successful retail business. Scheduling time limits and deadlines – even as your own boss – can help make retailers stay focused and on schedule, eliminating extra time spent where it shouldn't be.

Habit Two: Letting Go Is a Must.

With a lot on a retailer's to-do-list, who has time to dwell on the past? Sure, it's easy to fall into this habit when mistakes are made or opportunities are missed. But more importantly, it's better to learn from these scenarios. Retailers are bound to make poor inventory investments or have a slow month; however successful retailers analyze these situations as opportunities to learn from versus beat themselves up over. It's important for retailers to move forward since after all, their customers already have. One of the best ways to do this is lean on data, which successful merchants implement into their store operations through a variety ways. This

often includes incorporating a point of sale (POS) system, using social media monitoring software and tracking customer loyalty. The more retailers know through hard data, the better they are in supporting their customers.

Habit Three: Training Staff is Vital.

Stores spend a lot of money to open their doors and keep them open, which is why it always surprises me when a sales associate has no idea how to support the customers in their store. The people of any business are the faces of that brand... whether they want to accept that role or not. As employers, it's key to understand this reality and train associates to best represent their stores. Retailers who successfully run their businesses recognize the value in their associates and not only train them, but train them often. New hire trainings are very important, but don't stop there. Opportunities to train staff can range from store operational procedures to customer service updates to product training to seasonal staff meetings and more. The key is to invest time and dollars into your employees to reap the rewards of strong associates and as a result, strong sales.

Habit Four: Knowing the Competition is a Priority.

Whether it's your big box competitors or your local Main Street stores, successful merchants know who their competition is. And while it would be easy to simply read about their competition, savvy retailers take the time to actually visit the stores that compete with their business. Analyzing their product assortment, customer service experiences, in-store displays, online shopping opportunities, special events, dress code, store packaging, visual displays and overall consumer impressions are just a few of the things smart retailers look for when it comes to checking out their competition. Often, this type of routine analysis allows retailers to recognize new

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Sagal grocery store on Southern Boulevard

For the past 7 years Stephanie's Pet Center had been located at 1091 Southern Boulevard. However after a long struggle with the rents and other issues Stephanie's Pet Center relocated and in came Sagal grocery Store at that same location. Opening in late March of this year, Sagal has been given a warm welcome from community residents who are keeping the store filled to capacity with shoppers all day long. The store is open 7 days a week from 8 am to 9 pm. For more information call 917-473-6650.



Shoplifting (cont.)

times in your store, especially during opening, closing and restocking hours. Know which merchandise is most appealing to shoplifters (hint: small and/or expensive items) and place it in prominent areas, where employees can see it.

7. Know How to Spot a Shoplifter:

Certain behaviors should put your employees in alert mode. Watch for customers who appear nervous, stare at employees or other customers, wander aimlessly around the store, hang out in hard-to-monitor areas, and repeatedly leave and return.

8. Have a Presence:

Greet every customer and offer help throughout the shopping process. Not only will your presence remind potential shoplifters they're being watched, but your vigilance will give you the added opportunity to track merchandise, especially items that go in and out of a dressing room.

9. Implement a Bag-Check Policy:

Don't let customers bring bags and backpacks into dressing rooms as they can be used to hide merchandise. Welcome customers to check bags with an employee before they enter.

10. Inspect All Purchases:

At the register, take a minute to double-check merchandise, like purses and baskets, that can be used to store and steal additional items. Even if you've got a customer making a purchase, there's still the chance an extra item or two ended up inside.

While it may not be possible to completely eliminate shoplifting, you can certainly make it more difficult for would-be thieves to rob you. Follow these tips for store design and customer service to make your retail store less attractive to shoplifters. ■

Burglary and other Crime Prevention

Small businesses enrich their crime prevention efforts by building partnerships with other businesses as well as with neighborhood groups such as the Business Improvement District and the Community Board. The state of a commercial strip is often an indicator of the quality of surrounding residential areas. Yet it is equally true that the small business community needs the patronage and goodwill of residents. Good relations with the community enhance crime prevention in small commercial areas. Some would suggest that a store in an otherwise high-crime area may not have been robbed as a function of local protection

by the residents of the area, since the store may have served as a support for some of the residents. In the Southern Boulevard area, working with the NYPD Conditions Unit and Community Affairs Officers is key. Community Affairs Officers may be reached at 646-373-5036. Although burglaries do occur in our district from time to time, there are several things that business owners can do to reduce the

Burglary accounts for a significant component of all crime. Its effects can range from irritating to devastating, both personally and financially. Despite evidence that burglary rates declined in many districts in the past decade,

the prevalence of burglary remains high in our commercial district. Business people can dramatically improve relations with the community by creating jobs for teenagers or by supporting youth oriented programs. Store owners and operators can help themselves and the community through leadership and the provision of goods, money, and services.

Some Burglary Prevention Steps:

- Post signs indicating that only small amounts of cash were on hand.
- Increased visibility through store windows (by such means as removal of advertisements).

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Prevention (cont.)

- Blocking of escape routes (e.g., fences behind buildings) Use lighting to illuminate potential access points and keep them maintained properly.

Security cameras and signage for alarms serve as a deterrent. Test alarms often and consult a professional to match an alarm system to your basic needs.

Doors should be of sufficient quality and provide control access to entrances with key fobs, touch pads, or high security keys. Secure all other openings to the building such as skylights, hatchways, basement openings, balconies, HVAC openings and other vulnerabilities specific to your building.

Keep windows free of obstructions and make sure they are of sufficient quality to provide adequate security.

The key to crime prevention in our district is a concerted effort. Business leaders and local community residents should start to work together to create a more stable and supportive community. ■



Checking your overnight video surveillance footage can warn you of suspicious activity and potential threats to your business.

Five Habits (cont.)

industry trends, missed opportunities, new strategies to compete for sales and other ways to stay afloat in the competitive retail marketplace. Note – what they don't do is ignore their competition. Consistently analyzing the constantly changing retail environment is key.

Habit Five: Shifting Store Inventory is "Okay".

Often, retailers open a store because they love a particular product category and as a result, they enjoy buying inventory to sell in their stores.

Unfortunately, this isn't always a recipe for retail success. Merchants who have become successful and more importantly, stayed successful, are

willing to shift their inventory plans to accommodate their customers versus themselves. This may mean eliminating a product line or an entire category of inventory, as well as introducing a new product category that even the retailer is surprised by. When merchants listen to their customers, react to consumer trends, work with their vendors and respond to what their customers want, they are able to more effectively buy inventory for their stores. Using data will once again help monitor this, as well. And as a result, retailers are able to sell more.

Finally, successful retailers typically have one more thing in common... and that is the acceptance that they can't

run their stores alone. For some, this means hiring great people to effectively manage all the necessary operations of their stores. For others, this means investing in outside consultants, service providers or companies that can aid their retail stores in a variety of ways that the store owner alone cannot. For all, however, it means willingly investing in people and companies to help their stores achieve success. And on a final note, each of these habits wouldn't exist without the willingness to accept change. Recognizing that retail is always evolving and that consumers are, as well, can help retailers stay competitive and relevant in today's modern marketplace. ■



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