

How Retailers and Etailers Can Boost Profits When Consumer Spending is Down

By Jeffrey D. Jordan

How Retailers and Etailers Can Boost Profits When Consumer Spending is Down

Jeffrey D. Jordan
jdj@netmarketingresults.com

How Retailers and Etailers Can Boost Profits When Consumer Spending is Down
<http://www.netmarketingresults.com>

"Retail Merchandise Spending is Forecast to be DOWN in Every Single Category for the Next 90 days".

This was the forecast in BIG Research's January briefing.

- * Electronics
- * Dining out
- * Clothing
- * Groceries
- * Etc.

SPENDING ALL DOWN!

What marketing tactic can you do to consistently increase your business during tough times and get a cash surge when you need it?

This tactic works for brick and mortar retailers, restaurants, etailers, and many service businesses. It is especially powerful when you combine both online and offline marketing. It is also inexpensive to do.

What is this secret?

Simple. Send email discount coupons or special offers to your opt-in newsletter or customer list. If you don't have an opt-in email list of your customers, you need to start collecting their email addresses NOW.

If you have a retail store or a restaurant, you might be thinking "my customers will never respond to my email".

Guess again!

Considering That...

* 70% of individuals in the US have e-mail.

* One regional US clothing retailer produces \$0.68 of in-store revenue per email sent. They send email coupons out twice a month to thousands.

* Nine West reported a 50% store visit rate of customers that received their email offers.

* In six months one restaurant owner built an email list of over 1000 customers. 15% of the customers on the list redeem the offers.

The examples go on and on.

This tactic is too powerful to pass up.
Best of all...

It is easy and inexpensive to start an email marketing program. Here's a simple way to get started. You can then expand and get more creative as time permits.

**** Collect The Email Addresses of Your Customers in Your Store****

1) Get a drop box, POS display or fish bowl to collect the cards with your customer's information and place it at check-out counter.

2) Create signage that describes what your customer will receive when they sign up for your program and entices them to sign up. It could say something like "Free Preferred Customer Program. Receive Free Gifts, Discounts and Special Offers. Sign up Now and Save!"

3) Print a set of sign-up cards to place by the display (with pens or pencils). At a minimum the cards should request their name and email address. If you already have a customer loyalty program, you can add email to your current card and use that.

**** Sign up Customers on Your Website ****

This is an easy way to increase your list size. When someone visits your site, make sure that you promote your special offer program and encourage them to sign up.

There are a couple of different ways you can collect your customers sign-up information.

The simplest way is to set-up a mailto: link. The customer clicks on the link, their email program is launched and they hit send. Their email is then sent to your email box. Here's what the link

would look like.

mailto:signup@yourcompany.com?subject=preferred_customer_program

A better alternative and essential if you have a lot of participants is to set-up a sign-up form on your website and link it to a sequential autoresponder.

**** Managing and Sending Email to Your Customers ****

Now that you are collecting your customers email addresses, here are a few options that you can use to manage your list and send out special offers to your customer.

- 1) Create a list in Outlook or your email program by creating a distribution list. You can start for free and this can work fine for a small list. As your list grows this method will not be practical and is time intensive.
- 2) You can use a desktop list management and mailing program such as infactas' group mailer. This is a better option and works quite well but you still need to manually unsubscribe your customers, send the email from your computer over your internet connection and manually enter all sign-up requests including the ones that came from your website.
- 3) Sign up for an autoresponder service. This is my personal preference because it enables you to automate most of your list management and you do not have the headache of managing the software, computer or network. These services will run less than \$20 per month.
- 4) Install your autoresponder software on your web server. The advantage is that you have a onetime payment to purchase the software (\$50 - \$200) but you will need to install, configure and manage it.

With either of the autoresponder options you can set up automated welcome messages and follow-up sequences to send to your customers as well as send out messages to your list whenever you want.

Now you are ready to put your program into action.

- 1) Place your box on the counter and instruct your clerks to ask each customers to sign-up for the preferred customer program.
- 2) Regularly (daily or weekly) collect the cards and add the customer information to your list.
- 3) Send out a welcome message to each new member. Thank them for becoming a member and include a special discount.
- 4) The simplest form of a coupon would be a text message but you could use a graphic, html or direct the customer to a web

page. Be aware that if you use a graphic or html, you some of your customers may not be able to read your message.

5) Once a week, twice a month or monthly and for special events send out your discount offer to your list. Just don't send messages to often or your customers will stop looking at your email. The combination that works best is to combine your offer program with a useful newsletter that will appeal to your customers.

6) Make sure that your email Subject Line will catch their attention and stimulate them to open the message to see your offer.

7) Have your customers print out the coupon and redeem it. This way you can track the results and change your special depending on what gets the best results. If you don't want to do this, you can just send a message to your customers announcing the offer.

Start today and use this strategy to inexpensively pull in more customers and boost your profits even in down times.

Jeffrey Jordan, 20 years experience enhancing profits of small, mid and Fortune 500 businesses
Subscribe free at <http://netmarketingresults.com> , Pocket Big Business Profits with a Small Business Budget at <http://instantprofitpower.com/a/>

Get-Articles.com : 1000's of reprintable business and internet marketing-related articles.

[Submit your article for reprint.](#)