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Alliance**
316 Mill Street, Suite B
Danville, PA 17821

Pennsylvania Downtown Center **Managers' Market Memo**

*Relevant information and suggestions for
distribution to your local businesses.*

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Prepared by
PA Downtown Center

130 Locust Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101
(717) 233-4675 p.
(717) 233-4690 f.

www.padowntown.org

During tough times, retailers and business owners hope that customers will long for the comfort of hometown shopping among people they know and trust. Customers like to feel important and valued. With this in mind, here are some things you can do to enhance that feeling and build sales during this trying economic period:

- Address customers by their names (when you know them). If you don't know their names, try something like "We haven't seen you in awhile, welcome back!" In short, let customers know you recognize them.
- Listen to your customers' wants, ideas and criticisms.
- During staff meetings and focus groups, ask for new business building ideas and new services that can be offered.
- Remind your employees to focus on the positive. Customers don't want to come in and hear doom and gloom or they may not return.
- Many customers may plan to scale back on their purchases, so offer more services to build on the perceived value.
- Learn customers' preferences and respond to them. For example, ask "Do you still prefer?" in order to let the customer know that you remember them, and in turn help you fine tune your merchandise selection.
- Get to know your customers and potential customers as individuals. Learn something about their families, professions, interests, etc.
- Compliment and reassure customers on their purchases.
- Keep in touch with your customers via newsletters, e-mail, phone calls, events, and local paper advertisements. Now is the time to clean-up and build your contacts database. Remember, monthly e-mail newsletters don't cost a thing to distribute. Make such publications informative, and be sure to include your special events, added services, new merchandise, etc. Don't forget to include your complete contact information somewhere in the publication, including your website, complete phone number, and your business address with the city, state, and zip code.
- Get to know your local newspaper editor and help him/her work on a human interest story about you and your business. This is far better and cheaper than advertising.
- Take customers' pictures. For example, if you own a pet supply store, take photos of your customers in the store with their pets and post them on a bulletin board or on your website (with permission).

What a great way to bring them into the "family of happy customers!"