

DRIVING RETAIL SUCCESS

PEARL IZUMI

This editorial feature is sponsored by Pearl Izumi with Mercedes Ross.

RMSA
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EASY TIPS TO MAINTAIN YOUR APPAREL & KEEP YOUR STAFF TRAINED

FIVE TIPS FOR INCREASED PROFITABILITY WITH RMSA

Retailers can always count on change, but embracing new practices is the key—not just to survive—but thrive. Successful retailers proactively adopt new methods to manage their stores, so evaluate your needs and look for solutions either within the company or through outside resources.

A retailer's biggest challenge is how to manage their biggest investment—inventory. Specialists like RMSA offer tips to help improve cash and inventory management:

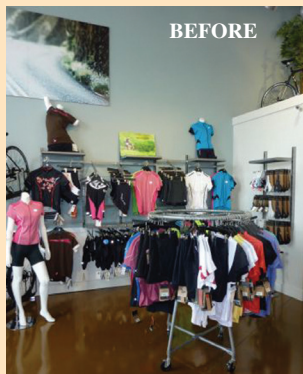
- Establish budget classifications that adjust to the monthly flow of business when making inventory purchases.
- Improve your turns to ensure a fresh flow of new products while minimizing aged inventory.
- Smooth out cash flow so that each month becomes more predictable.
- Seek out and use planning tools when opening new stores.
- Give buyers an accurate merchandise planning and allocation plan so they can focus on critical purchases.

RMSA, for instance, implemented these tips at a California store as the economy slid into one of its worst economic downturns since the Great Depression. There were significant challenges, but the outcome was far more favorable than if the retailer had failed to seek help.

Today, the owner has a merchandise budget and buying process that maintains control over the cost of goods while enhancing growth and prudent risk taking. Merchandise turnover improved with a fresh flow of stock each month. He successfully launched a new store and his buyers feel more confident managing the business with solid merchandise planning and allocation tools. For additional tips, see video at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E166ikwyZGU&feature=player_embedded.

AUGUST SALES - DEMAND A PERKY REVAMP OF APPAREL

Perk up your apparel department, excite your staff and re-train them if necessary. The Summer months are waning fast and it's busy on the shop floor, but now is the time to stay on top of apparel sales. Here's why: most preseason items have sold through, so re-orders are the rule while selling off broken size runs. Switching items up can spark renewed interest among regular customers. Take easily moved fixtures and rearrange them; staff and customers will like the 'feel' and the new look. An easy swap is to flip men's and women's apparel. Move gloves nearby and consider rearranging shoes as part of the move. These tips should give sales a pop.



MOTIVATE STAFF AND PICK UP SALES

Insist that your staff sells what's on the floor. It's absolutely vital if you want to boost your bottom line. Take a few minutes and give a refresher 'tech and pep' talk pointing out what needs to go. Review the following:

- It's important to keep size rings on hangers updated.
- Size shorts and keep racks stocked.
- Refresh them and boost add-on sales with gloves and socks.
- Go through back stock and put it on the floor.
- Consider an incentive program to move slow-selling inventory. Give your staff the 'savings' before passing on to the customer as a 'sale'.

5 TOP TIPS TO PERK UP SALES

- Evaluate your stock now. Take your broken size runs and colors and put them on a sales rack. It's August and customers are still riding, so sell them while it's hot.
- Are there items still available at wholesale that you could bring in to add some pizzazz to the apparel section? If so, call your Rep now.
- Spiff up that wall with new products like colorful event jerseys or shop jerseys. Create a story around them. Doing so adds sparkle for staff and customers.
- If Fall cycling wear starts to arrive, split the wall and "tease" your Fall lines. Still, it's important to make sure Summer apparel gets the prominence it deserves. It's a balancing act.
- Re-dress your mannequins. If you haven't done it all Summer (shame on you), now is the time.

Do It Now!

Now that you have brought in a second or third colorway, look at your sales reports and use them to track what sold in your soft goods categories to pre-plan your Spring 2012 order.

Create a plan of what to see at Interbike. Items that sold this season may have changed, so see what your key suppliers have to meet your customers' needs and gather catalogs for next season.

Get Ready

Fall apparel is arriving so get it tagged and on hangers.

Review your floor plan to accommodate the new Fall apparel and order any needed fixtures now so you are ready to display your 2011 Fall soft goods.

Get ready for next Spring with this easy tip: take pictures of your Summer display so that you can recreate it or improve it for next Spring.

What's Next?

Changing over to Fall apparel & keeping those Summer sales going.

Scheduling Rep clinics for the Fall selling season.

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