

THE TECH BEAT | BY JAMES HARDING

A Grand Holiday Plan

They say the holiday season is supposed to be a joyous time filled with love and togetherness. But those of us who work in retail might have difficulty remembering the last time we actually *enjoyed* the holidays. Interestingly enough, many of our clients feel the same way.

The Black Friday shopping routine has lost its luster in favor of “at home” deals on Cyber Monday. Those who do brave the malls and big-box stores bemoan the long lines, rude people and the perceived inhumanity of the entire process. The whole scene has become about as tired as the people stuck within it.

Maybe — just maybe — it’s time for a fresh look for holiday retail. Here are a few ideas that we can all do to make our holiday season bright:



‘Take the time to make your store a holiday fun center and get your staff in on the celebration.’

to unwrap this year? You know they won’t find that online! Make up some holiday cards with your store’s logo on them and write personal notes to the people who mean a lot to your business. You could even email them a customized gift-giving guide to help them find fun and affordable gift ideas for their loved ones! However you decide to do it, just remember: It’s the thought that truly counts.

CHRISTMAS KARAOKE

Holiday music is a central piece of any family celebration. Why not set up a place in your store for Christmas karaoke? Whether you use a MIDI capable piano or a karaoke machine, you can give your clients a chance to share their favorite holiday songs with friends and loved ones via your Facebook Live feed. You can also record student performances and offer a free CD or MP3 download.

A HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Is your store warm and welcoming? Does it feel like “home?” Or does it look dirty, cluttered and chaotic? What would happen if you set up a comfort center in your store with a lighted tree, comfy chairs and a “fireplace.” You can build a simple and safe one with a flat-screen TV, a DVD player and a “yule log” DVD.

Would your clients be delighted and spend extra time in your store? Why not diffuse some holiday scents and top it all off with homemade cookies? Who wouldn’t stick around for a special holiday treat from time to time? So what if that treat is positioned around a featured instrument or holiday gift item.

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

One of my favorite things to do on Christmas morning is open presents, and I’m sure I’m not alone. Why not wrap up some secret coupons, service products, extended warranties or even gift certificates and give your best customers a little something special

MEET & GREET

There is no substitute for Santa. Kids of all ages love a fun, free photo with jolly old St. Nick. Why not have someone in your store play the part? Make it special and let folks know when to expect him, and Santa will definitely draw a crowd.

Even if all you decide to do is offer a couple of classic Christmas movie nights in your store, don’t carelessly throw up the old tree and a few obligatory Christmas decorations this year. Take the time to make your store a holiday fun center and get your staff in on the celebration.

If you and your team can enjoy the holidays this year, your clients will, too. Christmas can once again be “The Most Wonderful Time of the Year.” **MI**

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