



November Retail Tips

Top tips

Pro-active v's Reactive

Strangely enough, this is a definition I only thought about recently when my personal circumstances changed enough to make my usual manner of doing things begin to look a little ropey !

In business its pretty much accepted that proaction rather than reaction is what it takes to be successful – Moto's like "seize the day" and "go for it" perfectly illustrate this. But being proactive is a skill like any other and it has to be developed over time. Its rather like just going to the gym once, there won't be much benefit and you'll probably strain something. So being proactive just the once will have much the same effect, you need to build up a system and a support network for it.

The definition of proactive is planning ahead and anticipating problems. Whilst the definition of reactive is waiting for problems to appear before dealing with them.

If you think about it, how much of your day are you a reaction to what is going on around you ? Grumpy customers? Having to do jobs that you don't relish doing ? Calling the council ? Tackling staff about things they do that drive you crazy ? Setting budgets ? Dealing with things that you don't like dealing with (whatever they may be for you ?)

Not dealing with things that you know are looming causes Stress, because at the back of your mind, you know its coming anyway....! Its also pretty unsatisfying, and leaves you in a kind of limbo where you can't make decisions because you haven't looked forward enough.

Being proactive can help eliminate problems before they appear, and since you can plan how to deal with things, you can act faster before all is lost ! Its also, believe it or not, less stressful, as taking control of any situation puts you in the driving seat, not the back seat, while the car slowly slides into a skid !

Being proative means planning what you want to do with your store, your staff, your stock, having budgets in place, advertising and marketing plans, and more importantly back up plans for when things just don't go the way they're meant to..... It takes a little longer and is a bit more effort, but the rewards are that you are in control, not buffeted by other peoples demands and caprices.

Being reactive is normally fairly stressful. You don't know what's coming up next, so you have to be ready for anything, and you're not in full control of your life or your business.

So, just for fun, have a quick tot up of how much of your day is spent being proactive – or heading off next weeks or next months problems – so you'll have a peaceful Christmas trading season - Go on, take the challenge and write down the list of 10 things that you know you should be dealing with, that you've been putting off :

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Now, make a plan for carrying out number one..... Keep it simple, put it in your diary and tell everyone what you're going to do – that way you have to do it ! Strangely enough this simple system works almost all of the time

Good luck & a peaceful November !