

Table of Contents

Foreword	6
----------	---

Planning the Event

Why Have a Retail Event	10
Selecting an Offer	11
Selecting a Date	13
Obtaining Employee Buy-In	15
Incentives	16
Conduct an Employee Meeting	17
Vendor Support	18
Door Prizes	19
Marketing Plan	20
Food	23

Count Down

5 to 8 Weeks Out	26
3 and 4 Weeks Out	27
2 Weeks Out	28
Week of the Event	29
Day of the Event	30
Week After the Event	32
Financial Analysis	33

Tools 35

Planning Calendar	
Budget Worksheet	
Employee Meeting agenda and script	
Marketing samples:	
Flyer	
Postcard	
Email announcement	
Door Prize Form	

Foreword

During the majority of the 1990's I was a Regional Franchise Manager for Pearle Vision in the New England area. I was responsible for a six-state region which included over 50 optical stores owned by over 30 different franchise owners.

Although each store has the Pearle Vision name, each of the franchise locations is owned by a different franchise, each possessing a variety of business skills and marketing ideas. The Pearle Vision franchise agreement requires that a certain percentage of sales be allocated for advertising and is spent by the corporation. Additionally, many franchise owners spend incremental dollars and time devising ways to drive traffic into their store.

One such location decided to host a Customer Appreciation Day with the goal of driving a lot of customers into their store over a short amount of time. There wasn't a model to go by and so everything they did was done for the first time. Some of it worked and some didn't. However, the bottom line was, a successful a one-day event.

Throw a party – spread the word – and people will come.

No different than Kevin Costner's "build it and they will come," the Customer Appreciation Day event worked.

I learned about this event and spent time asking questions and learning what went well and what they would do differently the next time. I wrote up their thoughts and results and shared it with the rest of my store owners.

One owner, Walter Warme, of Bangor, Maine, decided that he wanted to try an event in his store...in the middle of winter. His manager, Tamara Arrico, took the information that I had written and began to plan an event for their store. Learning from the first event and making modifications to suit their market, they planned the first ever "Free Lenses with a Frame Purchase" in Bangor, Maine. I had the privilege of taking part in the event and seeing its success, first hand.

That was in 1994. Walter, Tammy and the folks in Bangor have been having a successful event each January ever since. In fact, the event is so well known, customers drive down the night before to avoid bad weather just so they can participate in this exciting event.

Over the years I have shared the idea of special retail events with other regional managers of both the corporate and franchise stores. At one point Pearle Vision launched the idea nationwide in all their corporate stores. What happened? It wasn't as successful in every store across the country. Why?

Planning and commitment.

A successful retail event requires planning, commitment, caring and attention to detail.

The formula for a successful event:

Planning + caring + a committed, excited team = a successful retail event.

In the following pages, I will walk you through the planning process, offer tips for success and a few things to be cautious of so that your event can be successful. However, remember, your event will only be as successful as the effort and energy you and your team put forth.

How do you measure success? It isn't just the ringing of your cash register, although that is a beautiful sound.

A successful event is one that:

- Drives traffic
- Brings new people to your store who haven't bought before
- Educates your customers about the products you carry
- Builds relationships with vendors and local businesses
- Bonds you with your team through the effort of planning and executing the event
- Creates an excitement and an awareness of your business in the community

Best of luck and HAVE FUN!

Deborah Chaddock Brown, President, AllWrite Ink



Why Have a Retail Event?

Before we begin planning an event, we first need to determine why we are having an event. Is it to:

- Celebrate a Grand Opening?
- Make people aware of our location?
- Spotlight a new product line?
- Clear out inventory at year end?
- Generate cash in a short period of time?
- Create a local buzz?

All of these are good reasons for having an event. Set your expectations and objectives and then make sure that everything you do is working toward that end goal.

The most common reason for having an event is to bring people into your store. In particular, people who have not shopped there in the past. How many times has someone called your store asking for directions and then exclaimed, “I didn’t know you were THERE? How long have you been there?” You sheepishly reply – 10 years; for whatever reason this person never connected your store with your geographic location.

When I worked for Pearle Vision, most customers knew of our location but not a day went by when someone would say, “You have a doctor? I didn’t know that.”

People tend to be aware of what they need at any given moment. How often do you frequent a coin dealer? Probably not very often, and yet when you need a coin dealer, you want to know that one is convenient, and the staff is knowledgeable and able to help with whatever service you need – whether that is to sell or buy or both.

So – we’ve determined that we want to bring people into your store. What is the next step?

What will drive potential customers in to your store?