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**4 Strategies For Seasonal Selling – Planning For Retail Cycles**

**By Chris Malta & Robin Cowie**

Every product has a natural life cycle and a season where it sells best: some early buyers come at the beginning, and then the mass of buyers come. Prices peak and retailers begin running out of stock. Sales slow, and trickle down to a few last-minute shoppers.

As an online seller, it's critical you prepare for the natural retail cycles throughout the year. With some simple strategies, you can make the most of the opportunities presented by the changing seasons:

1.Keep the Flow Going The way to maintain sales volume is to be ready for the next selling season. Phase in your new seasonal items for early shoppers while your other product line sales are winding down. You can keep the momentum going in your store and your income if you plan accordingly.

2.Make Advance Preparations Don't wait until the holiday is upon you to get your products lined up and ready to go. You should begin pushing your promotions two to three months ahead of time, according to Lisa Suttora of

<http://WhatDoISell.com>

. Says Suttora, "The advantage to having your

products ready several months before a holiday season is you capture the early bird buyers...You'd be amazed how many people shop months in advance of a holiday."

Another benefit of early marketing is it provides lead time for the search engines to pick up the pages for your holiday specials. Include the season or holiday name in your titles, because people are searching for those terms.

3.Use What You've Got You don't necessarily have to change your entire product line every season. Evaluate your current product line and see what can be promoted as a seasonal item. Use your imagination—create unique gift baskets and kits. Shoppers are pressed for time and are looking for solutions, so put together product bundles to solve their holiday needs.

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4. Adjust Your Website Your web store should reflect the season—feature items that work well for the approaching holiday. Put a seasonal spin on your ads and listings. "Your sales don't have to drop," advises Suttora. "Evaluate what you're selling and how you want to position it—freshen up the look of your site. You've got a whole new group of buyers coming in [with each new season], so you want to be ready for them."

Chris Malta and Robin Cowie of WorldwideBrands.com are the Writers and Hosts of The Entrepreneur Magazine EBiz and Product Sourcing Radio Shows.

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### **Summer Sales Doldrums – What To Do**

**By Kerri Salls**

Last week I talked about how to take a vacation when you're the leader of the band. This week I want to talk about summer sales. Many sales people and just as many business owners bemoan their annual summer sales slump. Their numbers are down and they just can't understand it.

It's as if their whole business is paralyzed because sales dry up or customers are on vacation. In my experience, that's hogwash. When you take that attitude, you are selling yourself a bill of goods not worth the paper it's printed on.

There is no need to punish ourselves about this (perceived?) seasonal drop in sales, or slower pace of sales. Instead, it's important to realize the natural cycles people and businesses go through.

In sales for 15 years, I found July and August were totally different than the rest of the year. Peoples' heads are somewhere else – they don't want to be sold anything.

That said, there are a number of things those of us on the vendor side can do to offset this tendency.

1. These seasonal sales slumps are an opportunity to do aggressive marketing – which can range from:

– developing promotional copy ( web, direct mail, newspaper/magazine advertising) – writing articles for a publication – pounding the pavement for speaking engagements – small and large, near and far – researching new niches – use the "extra" time to identify new markets – visiting potential strategic alliances – build your marketing channels

2. Remember, that a week off always precedes an off week. Don't beat yourself up about it. You need the time off too.

#### 4 Strategies For Seasonal Selling – Planning For Retail Cycles

3. Use this situation most wisely by allocating time during this season to seriously work on both your vision and your 3 year plan. From those two pieces, you can continue on to developing new strategies, promotions, products, services, and offerings.

My attitude is that these summer doldrums create the opportunity to build a new level of momentum in your business. That momentum can set you up for a strong and busy fall schedule.

So if sales and business activity are lighter or quieter right now, take advantage of the time that is freed up to lift your sights to the long term vision you have for your business. Spend some time on the pieces that will get you there.

Kerri Salls, MBA runs a virtual business school to train, consult and coach small business CEO's and entrepreneurs in 10 key strategies to make more profit in less time. Learn more at

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