



Meetings & Events

December 2009



December 2
5:00 PM
Oak Park Business Association
Holiday Mixer
Old Soul
1716 L Street, Rear Alley, Sac. 95811

December 9
6:30 - 8:00 PM
Oak Park Redevelopment Advisory
Committee Meeting
Oak Park Community Center
3425 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Sac. 95817
916.808.6151

December 3
5:30 - 7:30 PM
Cops & Coffee and the Oak Park
Neighborhood Association Meeting
Oak Park Community Center
3425 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Sac. 95817
916.808.6151

December 17
5:00 - 6:30 PM
Weed and Seed Steering
Committee Meeting
Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services
3333 3rd Avenue

December 3
12:00 NOON
Safety on Stockton Meeting
Stockton Blvd. Resource Center
5625 Stockton Blvd., Sac. 95824

December 3
Stockton Boulevard Partnership
Holiday Mixer
For more information call the
SBP Office at 916-454-2469

December 10
6:00 - 8:00 PM
Stockton Boulevard Partnership
Redevelopment Advisory Committee Meeting
5625 Stockton Blvd., Sac. 95824

Dec 21-Jan 3
CLOSED
Our Office will be closed
beginning on December 21st
and will be back January 4th 2010

*Happy Holidays
&
Happy New Year*

5625 Stockton Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95824

Community Pride Project

A combined publication of the Oak Park Business Association and the Stockton Boulevard Partnership

Business
Connects

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A combined publication of the Oak Park Business Association and the Stockton Boulevard Partnership

50 Things Specialty Retail Employees Should Never Do During The Holidays

By **Bob Phibbs**, the Retail Doctor®

The holidays are almost here so I've come up with my blunt reminders for both staff and owners of specialty retailers after seeing Bruce Buschel's blog in the NYT. They're by no means all the "Don'ts" but especially at the holidays, they can make the difference between hearing, "I'll take it," and "I'm outta here."

1. Do not let anyone enter the shop without a warm greeting. If you can't or won't do that, go work at Macy's.
2. Never say it's "slow," "dead," or voice any negative thought, we get enough of that from cable.
3. Leave your problems at the door – no one wants to work with high drama whether that's your daughter's lost keys or your boyfriend's mom had a facial appointment.
4. Don't come to work sick – ever.
5. Don't complain about Christmas music, it's playing for the customers, not you.
6. Don't arrive late saying there was "traffic." Of course there was traffic, it's the holidays. Plan accordingly.
7. Don't change into work clothes that you've had scrunched into your backpack all day – leave the wrinkled homeless look for the streets.
8. Don't keep asking if you can go home early unless you are prepared to ask if you can come in early for the day after Thanksgiving or Christmas.
9. Never reply to a customer inquiry with, "No" unless it is immediately followed with, "But we have..."
10. Don't just ask questions that can be answered with a "yes" or "no."
11. Don't ask if there is "anything else?" Suggest one item that logically goes with what they are purchasing.
12. Don't say you're "not authorized" to give a discount, they'll just ask, "Then who is?"
13. Saying, "No problem" is a problem. It sounds condescending like, "it's just you – I'd do the same for my dog." "You're welcome" is the "A" answer.
14. Don't walk past a discarded wrapper, used diaper or other leave-behinds of customers. Pick it up and dispose accordingly.
15. Don't stand in front of the store looking bored.
16. If you ask, "Did you find everything OK?" listen to the answer and fix whatever is not right.
17. Never say, "I don't know" to any question without following with, "I'll find out."
18. Know before approaching a customer who has been waited on. Do not ask, "Have you been helped yet?" Open your eyes!
19. Never take a return without asking what went wrong. Obviously, something didn't work and many times it can be fixed or exchanged without refunding the cash.
20. Do not have a personal conversation with another employee within earshot of customers.
21. Do not eat or drink in plain view of customers. That means no food visible on a shelf or the counter either.
22. Never reek from perfume, cigarettes or body odor.
23. Do not call a woman "lady," or refer to two women as "you guys."
24. Never acknowledge one customer over and above any other, especially the one in line behind others you do not know. All customers are equal, even if the one at the back of the line is your best, wait until all others have been helped.
25. Do not gossip about co-workers or customers within earshot of customers. Better yet, don't gossip.
26. If there is a service charge, delivery charge or special order charge, alert your customer before you ring them up. It's not a secret or a trick. Likewise if something can't be returned for a full refund after the holidays.
27. Know your products inside and out. If you sell Zoobie plush toys that are also a soft pillow and a comfy blanket, know something about Zoobie plush all-on-one toys.
28. Do not ignore a customer because they are not your customer. Stop, look, listen, lend a hand.
29. Do not stand behind someone who is looking at product. Make eye contact and stand next to them or in front.
30. Never blame the boss, the part-timer, the vendor, the weather or the economy for anything that goes wrong. Just make it right.
31. If a customer is having trouble making a decision, help out by giving them a choice like, "Do you prefer something lighter or darker?" "Something hot or cold?" Don't just stand there like a dead fish or walk away like they have swine flu.

Continued on page 2

Continued from cover page

THE PARK

THE BOULEVARD



Mission Statement

Working as a catalyst for collaboration to attack disorder, improve safety, attract new business – advocating for the economic vitality of our diverse Oak Park community.

Oak Park Business Association

P.O. Box 5783
Sacramento, CA 95817
Phone: 916.452.9222
Fax: 916.454.6021
staff@oakparkba.org
www.oakparkba.org

Board Chairman: Stuart Eldridge
Exec. Director: Terrence Johnson
Project Coordinator: Lisa Cordell



Preserving Our History...
Creating Our Future

12/03 OPNA General Meeting
Oak Park Community
Center 5:30 pm

12/09 OP Redevelopment
Committee
Oak Park Community
Center 6:00 pm

12/12 2nd Saturday -
Morning Clean up

12/17 OP Weed & Seed
5:00 pm -6:30 pm
at the Sacramento
Food Bank and Family
Services, located at
3333 3rd Avenue
(enter on 34th Street)

Happy
Holidays

- 32. If someone wants to know your life story, keep it short.
33. Don't tell customers you are out of something before they ask for the missing product.
34. Do not disappear.
35. Do not ask, "Do you still need some time?" Shopping is not work — until questions like this are asked.
36. Never suggest ringing someone up until the customer explicitly asks for it.
37. Do not stop your exceptional service after the order is rung up.
38. Never dismiss or patronize a customer who has a complaint; listen, take it seriously, address it.
39. If someone is yelling or swearing on a cellphone, politely suggest they go outside.
40. Never hover long enough to make people feel they are being watched or hurried, especially when they are figuring out what to buy.
41. Do not show frustration. Your only mission is to serve. Be patient; it's not easy.
42. Don't ask how customers are. You don't care, they know it.
43. Don't ask customers if they have a budget- of course they'll say cheap-no one willingly says the "sky's the limit" even if its just for a box of Crayola crayons.
44. Don't talk to customers' backs. Either get in front of them so they know who's talking to them or shut up.
45. Don't thank customers as they are opening the door to leave if you never spoke to them after they arrived.
46. Don't hide behind the counter – customers shouldn't have to come to you, you should go to them.
47. Don't stock when any customer is in the store.
48. If you are in a mall, be prepared to give directions when people ask if you know where they might buy a particular item.
49. Don't call other stores to see how busy they are.
50. Don't look at your employees as serfs. Chronic short-staffing, distracted, nickel Napoleon managers—make it nearly impossible to give good service.

7 Small Business Tips for the Holidays

- 1. Got enough staff? If you assume your business is completely unaffected by holidays, consider the importance of having enough staff on hand to continue business as usual.
2. Make physical preparations in advance. Get your business in holiday shape well before the actual holiday itself.
3. Consider advertising and marketing. Magazines and other publications plan holiday issues several months before Christmas and New Year's.
4. Don't limit your thinking to December. Although mid- to- late December is often considered holiday prime time that may not be the case when it comes to the relationship with your business.
5. Don't assume all will go smoothly. No matter how comprehensively you may plan for a holiday, something may still go awry.
6. Don't lose a good holiday idea. A solid holiday-related brainstorm can get lost in the shuffle of the holiday itself.
7. Keep your personal life organized as well. The stress of the holidays from a professional standpoint can often wreak havoc on your relationships with family and friends.

STOCKTON BLVD.

6 Year End Small Business Tax Tips
Year End Tax Tips to Reduce This Year's Income Tax

By Susan Ward, About.com

As the fiscal and tax year draws to a close, it's important to review your business tax situation to see what you can do yet to minimize the income tax you'll have to pay.

Small Business Tax Tip # 1: Maximize your Capital Cost Allowance claim.

Purchase necessary equipment and technology now rather than waiting for the new tax year to start. Although you'll only be able to claim 50 percent of the normally allowable Capital Cost Allowance on your new assets, you'll still be increasing your Capital Cost Allowance for this tax year – and setting yourself up for an increased CCA claim in the following tax year.

Small Business Tax Tip # 2: Delay disposing of depreciable assets.

If you're planning to dispose of depreciable assets, such as manufacturing equipment or computer equipment, don't dispose of them until the new year. Otherwise, you'll be reducing your Capital Cost Allowance Claim for this tax year.

Small Business Tax Tip # 3: Delay or defer income.

Any income your business receives in January rather than December will reduce your business income for this year – thereby reducing the tax on your income. Delaying or deferring income makes especially sound tax sense when your business income is higher than usual, or when the tax rates in the coming year are going to be lower.

Small Business Tax Tip # 4: Increase business expenses.

Another way of "managing" your income for the year is to increase your business expenses. Think about your upcoming needs for products or services and fill them now. Review the categories of potential business expenses, and see if your expenses are "low" in any one area.

Small Business Tax Tip # 5: Make your maximum RRSP contribution.

This is the best available tax deduction for any business set up as a sole proprietorship or partnership. In any given year, you can contribute up to 18 percent of your earned income, and your RRSP contribution is deducted directly from your income.

Small Business Tax Tip # 6: Maintain your calendar year reserve.

Thinking of winding down your business operations? Rather than closing down your business before the end of this year, wait until next year, so the remaining portion of your calendar year won't be taxed until the following year. That's right; staying in operation for a few more weeks will defer this income inclusion for a year. We can't avoid taxes, but it's wise business practice to minimize the income tax payable.



THE Stockton Boulevard
PARTNERSHIP

Mission Statement

To advocate on behalf of property and business owners in matters of public policy and economic development and to improve the safety, cleanliness and image of the Stockton Boulevard business corridor.

Stockton Boulevard Partnership

5625 Stockton Boulevard
Sacramento, CA 95824
Phone: 916.454.2469
Fax: 916.454.6021

stocktonblvdpartnership@msn.com
www.stocktonblvdpartnership.com

Board Chairman: Ken Worsham
Exec. Director: Terrence Johnson
Project Coordinator: Lisa Cordell

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