



Main Street Moberly!

“Downtown: Where tradition meets today”

A SIGN OF THE TIMES

Shop Talk is a continuing series of consumer-oriented retail articles by Margie Johnson, president of Shop Talk, a retail consulting firm that specializes in showing organizations how to become leaders in their marketplaces and industries through customer-centered training. Over the past 15 years, Margie has worked in many Main Street towns throughout the nation. She is passionate about helping small business owners become more successful.

“A *sign* of the times” is often a response from underperforming business owners as they comment on business and reflect on the volatile economic climate. As I consult with numerous specialty businesses around the country, I often muse about a “*sign* of the times” from an entirely different perspective – that is, what *sign* does your storefront deliver to customers or commuters? First, let’s reframe our thinking to reflect the fact that your storefront/façade is a “large billboard” or a business card on a grand scale.

This *sign* can be one of the most effective, yet least expensive advertising tools that a business owner can use to convey the store brand or message. The storefront (or the *real sign*) should at a glance tell customers or prospective customers what a store is about – its image, its products, its price range, its mood. This overall *sign* can dramatically affect the success of a business. It is critical that store owners “grab” the customer’s eye/mind by communicating with a fresh and inviting façade. Think of this façade as a great *sign* that serves as a “welcome mat or an initial handshake.” Remember, many people decide to visit a business based on their initial impression. The old adage “you don’t often get a second chance to make a great first impression” resonates as we think about what the front of a business is saying. Research tells us that within two-and-a-half to five seconds, a “mind’s eye” will assimilate all of the subliminal clues from that initial glance at a storefront.

Setting the Stage

This *sign*, or signal, sets the stage for the customer to enter or turn away from a business. In Main Street towns across the country, the assistance of the Main Street design committee, grants for façade improvements, economic development options, and other local resources can be key resources in helping a business owner make a “powerful opening statement.” The ultimate goal of this façade/signage optimization is to create a “visual magnet” that will pull customers in!

The *signs* that a business sends are multi-dimensional. When I critique a specialty business, I always walk through this sequence of questions with the business owner. I’ll title this exercise as “take a close and critical look at your strong and weak *signs*!”

- Let’s quickly walk through a visual audit of your business and look at the *signs*, or clues, that customers are seeing.
- Start by stepping outside and standing at least 15-20 feet back: what does your storefront/billboard really say? Remember, the selling floor starts well outside your store.
- Are your *signs* easy to read? Do they clearly communicate what your business is? Does it have a tag line? Is the paint fresh? Are your awnings in good condition? Are the plants alive?
- Walk through the front door of your shop and pretend you are the customer. Ask yourself the following questions about the *signs* the store interior is sending: When I entered the business, was there an area where I could “decompress” and get a sense of the store layout?

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A SIGN OF THE TIMES (continued)

What immediately stands out? Do you get a positive or negative feeling?

Do you feel a sense of welcome? What store image and personality are being conveyed through merchandise, décor, fixtures, and point-of-sale signage?

- Is there a punch of color to add excitement?
- Is the layout easy to move through?
- Are aisles wide enough?
- Is the store visually easy to understand and shop?
- Is the store clean? Housekeeping can have a dramatic effect on the total visual presentation.
- How does the shop smell? How does it sound?
- What type of customer would enter the store based on what they see and feel initially?
- Where are the sales associates? Do they reflect the image you're trying to create both in style of dress and manner of service?
- Where's the cash-wrap counter? What is its condition? Is it neat or cluttered? Since it is often the last "moment of truth," does this area reflect what you want customers to remember?
- Is the shop name displayed in two or three places inside the shop? Remember, branding takes several ***impressions*** to make ***an impression***.
- How effective is the store's lighting? Does it complement the merchandising? Are there highlighted areas that attract customers to different areas of the shop? Do you leave some key lights on in the evening to better display your "billboard"? Are interior signs doing a great job as silent sales associates, and are they current?
- Does your packaging enhance the store's image? What *sign* does it send as it goes out the door?
- What aspects of your store give customers a compelling reason to make purchases, to come back and shop again, and to tell others about your business? Based on the answers to these questions, would you return? Remember, the impression the store makes will linger long after the sale or visit.

Listen, Learn, and Launch

All of these physical and psychological factors can influence customers' purchase decisions. The fact that 80 percent of purchases are made on impulse gives store owners solid justification to make the "emotional" experience a top priority.

After completing this "critical visual audit," reach out and engage employees and customers to get their impressions! Listen, learn, and launch! Yes, ***launch*** into implementing some low-budget, yet high-impact, ways to grab the attention of shoppers and lure them into your business. Remember, the "eyes lead the feet" and the brain tends to judge the book by the cover!

I hope the "cover" of your shop is exciting and that it immediately lures customers in and keeps them engaged! The best "*sign of the times*" is when customers "vote with their feet" by returning to your business and urging others to do the same. No media is more powerful than word-of-mouth advertising. Start sending a powerful *sign* by enhancing your storefront, display windows, and store interior.

Meanwhile, just know that a clear visual merchandising and positioning statement will not only improve your image and make your customers happier; it will also have a major impact on your bottom line and that is a wonderful and welcoming *sign of the times!*

**Veterans Day Parade
November 6, 2010
Anyone that is interested in making donations or
volunteering please contact Art or Dorothy at the
Moberly VFW 263-6030.**

Merrell University Extreme Makeover Raffle
Makeover includes :Color, Cut, Style, Brow Wax, Make
Up Application Lesson.
A \$75.00 value
Tickets \$5.00 per ticket

Come by Merrell University to purchase tickets

Community Calendar of Events – Sept 2010

September 5, 2010

Family Life Fellowship, 1614 E Hwy 24 in Moberly, will be hosting Pastor Ray Bevan at 9:30am & 11:00am for the morning services. Pastor Ray Bevan is Senior Pastor of Kings Church in Newport, South Wales in the United Kingdom. For more information please contact Family Life Fellowship at 660-263-0488 or visit their website at www.flfministries.com.

September 7, 2010

Little Dixie Squares – square dance club – is hosting a Free “Beginner – Get Acquainted with Square Dancing” event, from 7 to 9 pm at the Student Commons in Moberly Area Community College to introduce people to the art of Square Dancing. If they have a good time that night, they can sign up for lessons (\$2 per person per week) which will begin the next week, Sept 14th and run for 12 weeks. For more information call 660-651-1842 or e-mail mdarwent@orscheln.com.

September 10, 11 2010

3rd Annual Fall Open House of Moberly Antique, Crafts, Floral, Gift and Home Décor Retailers. Seventeen merchants in Downtown and throughout Moberly participating in this exciting coordinated event.

September 18, 2010

Main Street Moberly presents their annual Piccadilly Auction.

September 23, 2010

The Moberly Monitor-Index will present the popular Taste of Home Cooking Show and Merchandise Show held at the Moberly Area Community College Activity Center. Booths will be set up from 11am-5:30pm and the Taste of Home Cooking Show will begin at 7pm with doors opening at 6pm.

September 24, 2010

Moberly Homecoming Parade at 4pm.

September 25, 2010

Kid's Fall Festival from 10am-1pm and Craft Show at the Lodge from 9am-3pm, Riley Pavilion, and Agriculture Area.

September 27, 2010

Moberly Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Membership Banquet. 360 project presents a must see for all locally owned businesses.

September 2010

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 MSM	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9 Piccadilly Donation Begin	10 Fall Open House	11 Fall Open House
12	13	14 Design Meeting 8 a.m.	15 Org/Eco 8:00 a.m.	16 Last day For Piccadilly Donation	17	18 Piccadilly Gala
19	20	21	22	23 Board Mtg 8:a.m.	24	25
26	27 Chamber Banquet	28	29	30 Promotions 8:00 a.m		

ATTENTION MEMBERS: WE NEED YOUR HELP FOR PICCADILLY 2010

The Piccadilly is our primary fund raiser for the year. We've learned a lot from our previous three events and have made several adjustments which we think will increase our profits this year. But, we can't do it without the help of ALL our members.

Date: Saturday, September 18

Time: 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Place: 517-519 West Reed (the former location of Lynn's Country Originals)

Admission: \$15

What we need:

Donated items for our auction (this is where we make our profit)

Cash donations to purchase food or any of the following grocery items:

Frozen meatballs	Cream Cheese
Cocktail wieners	Flour tortillas
BBQ sauce	Shredded cheddar cheese
Party toothpicks	Strawberries
Cheese Cubes	Chocolate Chips
Frozen cream puffs	Veggie tray
Frozen éclairs	Bags of ice

(By getting food donations, we don't have to purchase these items)

Manpower:

Help clean up the building

Help set up and take down tables and chairs

Work at the event

2-3 people to serve the wine

Work at the ticket table

Help tabulate the silent auction

Help in the tray prep area

PLEASE CONTACT DIANE AT THE MAIN STREET OFFICE TO MAKE YOUR COMMITMENT TO ASSURE THE SUCCESS OF THIS EVENT!

Downtown Tree Project Update

The suppliers for the Spring Snow Crabapple trees, Holly bushes and Ajuga has been contacted. The Hollies are ready for pick up anytime, and the trees won't be dug up until late Sept. or early October. This is the best time for transplant. We will probably try to do the Holly bushes just a week or two before the trees. The watering requirements and weather will be much better for the transplants then. At somewhat of an additional cost, we have reserved 2.5" diameter trees, which is significantly larger than the 1.25" trees we put out in front of City Hall, so we should have some very desirable trees right off the bat.

Thomas E. Sanders

Director of Community Development/Public Works

City of Moberly, Missouri

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<http://www.moberlymo.org>

PEOPLE YOU SHOULD KNOW

Name: Liz Sosniecki

Business Affiliation: Coach Light

Job Description: I do everything, and what I don't do ... Dale does!

Years lived in Moberly: I graduated from high school here, gone for 18 years and back for the last 16.

Education: Bachelor's degree from the University of Montana

Community Involvement: Past president of Moberly Public School Foundation, board member of Main Street Moberly, book club and soccer Mom.

Professional Background: Catalog Coordinator for Palmer Marketing—a nationally syndicated catalog company.

A local businessperson I admire and why: My Mother (Helen Johnson) —she was able to run a great business, be instrumental in organizing Main Street Moberly and still be an awesome Mom and grandma.

Why I'm passionate about my job. I get to come to work everyday to a place that I love, work with my best friend and be around great people all day.

If I weren't doing this for a living, I would be... Living in Italy, running a winery!

Biggest career obstacle I've overcome and how: Working with both my husband and my father. I'm not sure that I have overcome it so much as I have learned to tune it out!

What people should know about this profession: It may look easy, but we put in incredibly long hours and occasionally dealing with the public is a challenge. And we certainly don't do it for the money!!!!

What I do for fun: Watch soccer, spending time with family & travel when we can.

Family: Husband Dale, kids Dane & Ian, parents Homer & Helen Johnson and extended family.

Favorite place in Randolph County: My house and the high school soccer field .

Most people don't know that : Have a sister and a brother.





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Sidewalk Bazaar 2010 Questionnaire Results

Q. Did you have a good day for sidewalk sale?

A. 5 yes and 3 no

Q. Were your sales up or down?

A. 4 up and 4 down

Q. Did the streets not being closed affect your business?

A. 1 not sure, 3 yes (negative) 1 yes positive, and 3 no.

Q. What would you like to see next year?

A. The consensus was that we close 4th and 5th street, leaving Reed street open to traffic. Several comments were made that they would like to see more entertainment and games for next year.

If you have additional comments regarding Sidewalk Bazaar, please contact Diane Harlan at the Main Street office at 263-5251.