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FROYO MEETS ROBO

Reis & Irvy's Robotic Vending Machines Have Arrived and are Changing the Way Consumers and Franchisees Experience Frozen Yogurt

AMERICA IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

SPECIAL RETAIL FRANCHISING FEATURE



Sarah Kulbatski, Director of JT Corporation



LOCAL STORE MARKETING SUCCESS



Sarah Kulbatski

Business owners can easily get too involved in the day-to-day operations of their retail stores, like spending time brainstorming marketing ideas or promotional events.

Some retailers worry that marketing is too expensive, others may find it too time consuming. Without announcing who you

are and what you sell, how will anyone know?

As a franchise owner, marketing is an integral part of your business. Without marketing, all aspects of your business will suffer. With marketing, you can achieve your ultimate goal – a profit.

Broadly, marketing is everything that you do – individually and in conjunction with the franchisor – to get your product from the manufacturing area and the kitchen to the guest. This includes suggestive selling on the part of your employees, your pricing, your menu, packaging, display,

advertising, promotion, community activity and public relations.

The most effective marketing plan, at the store level, should have more than just advertising or promotions. Your marketing mix, in order to maximize results, should have a combination of advertising, promotions, merchandising, community activity and public relations. It is the synergy of all of these elements working together, that will bring you the maximum return for your marketing investment. When you lay out your marketing calendar, be sure to consider each of these elements of your marketing mix:

INSTITUTIONAL ADVERTISING

To project the proper image as well as build and maintain consumer awareness within your trading area of what you are, where you are and why you should be patronized.

PROMOTIONS

To build traffic, you can emphasize certain days or hours for specific product promotions.

IN-STORE MERCHANDISING

To promote specific products, for example, your menu.

LOCAL STORE MARKETING / P.R.

To firmly establish your store as part of the community and further project a favorable image among your guests, particularly in your immediate trading area. Localized, "grass roots" marketing.

Franchisees benefit from both national and regional advertising: the store that has a local store marketing plan can achieve higher customer counts, increased sales, and better brand awareness in the local market than those who do not.

Local Store Marketing (LSM), one of the most valuable tools and a sales plan arsenal that is frequently overlooked, is also known as "neighborhood marketing". LSM is a specific program, targeted to a specific group or groups of potential customers, within a trading area, to create

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awareness and initiate trial purchases of your product with potential customers right in your own backyard - the three to five-mile radius around each store location.

Some programs that retailers have found successful:

1. Printing the products they sell on the back of their business cards.
2. Distributing specialty items such as pens or mouse pads with their logo.
3. Collecting customers' mailing addresses, by having a draw for a product or a gift certificate.
4. Donating their product to a charity event or auction, or volunteering their time to a charity or non-profit organization.
5. Picking the slowest day of the week to hold a one-day "special", for example, pairing up slow moving items with related products and repackage as a special buy.

Programs, such as the ones above, are created to:

1. Enhance the store's image in the community
2. Increase customer loyalty and build brand awareness
3. Grow store traffic and sales
4. Develop involvement and recognition within the local community

The key to success with Local Store Marketing is creating community partners, such as those business and non-business organizations, that interact with potential customers in the trade area, for example, the Yellow Pages, the Chamber of Commerce, local community newspapers, and even the building department. Select businesses or non-profit organizations that fit with the type of products your business offers. Determine what kind of potential

customers frequent the potential partner's place of business or interact with the activities of the potential partner. Focus on partners whose customers/employees you would want to make your own.

Local Store Marketing is an ongoing process intended to build sales over time. It is challenging and requires a consistent ongoing effort, commitment, creativity and lots of work. Plans need to be specific, measurable, planned, coordinated, executed all year long, with every store, consistently. This process ingrains the brand in the local community and the customer's minds. If one builds or opens a store expecting guests to become loyal patrons immediately - the store will suffer. Local Store Marketing, both internal (inside the four walls of the store) and external (within 1-2 miles of your store), needs to be part of the store's life. It is about building relationships, giving back to the community, creating a venue for activity or entertainment, and serving the needs of customers, within the 3-5 mile radius around the store for many, many years.

The best part of Local Store Marketing is its rewards. Local Store Marketing can make such an impact on a community and drive sales, frequency, loyalty and awareness, that it can eliminate the need for other forms of advertising expenditures. It builds store awareness and visibility in the community. It grows sales by tapping the resources you already have, both in the store and in your local store market and it energizes your local team, to take an active role in the store's success.

Sarah Kulbatski is director of JT Corporation, a company specializing in franchise consulting and risk management.

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