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Working Together - Ideas That Work

Tips and strategies that will stand the test of time.

BY GAIL MARKERT AND BENNO DUENKELSBUEHLER

WOULD YOU WANT FREE ACCESS TO A TEAM OF INDUSTRY SPECIALISTS TO SUPPORT YOUR SALES EFFORTS AND HELP GROW YOUR BUSINESS? AS IT TURNS OUT, YOU'VE ALREADY GOT IT. THE GIFT AND HOME TRADE ASSOCIATION (GH TA) RECENTLY SPONSORED SEVERAL INDUSTRY EVENTS TO IDENTIFY STRATEGIES TO OPTIMIZE SALES THROUGH A COLLABORATION OF MANUFACTURERS, RETAILERS AND REPS. HERE ARE SIX PROVEN PARTNERSHIP TACTICS:



1 | Partner for exposure. Retailers and manufacturers can support one another's sales efforts. Manufacturers can offer a store finder function on their website; retailers can offer detailed product knowledge of the suppliers' products on their store site. Case in point: C.R. Gibson recently updated its website, listing more than 6,000 retailers, which resulted in increased sales for both manufacturer and retailers.

2 | Partner for a strong brand. Don't limit your thinking about brand to logos and graphic fonts, but define your brand as a "compelling promise, delivered." A compelling promise that's consistently delivered builds loyalty and profitable growth. Neither stores nor suppliers can fully deliver a compelling and thrilling experience to the end consumer alone. Successful stores, sales reps and suppliers collaborate to enrich and deepen each other's brand experience.

3 | Partner for consumer education. Manufacturers can share what's hot, emerging and declining in their line, as well as practices that have been successful in growing their business at retail. Retailers have direct customer contact and can report back to manufacturers on consumer likes and dislikes on styles, packaging, type

of customers buying and new uses for the product.

4 | Partner for image. An attractive product display is as important to the manufacturer as it is to the retailer since well merchandised products always sell better. In addition to offering fixtures, manufacturers can share images of successful and inspiring displays from other stores and trade-shows. Retailers can apply their own creativity to create appealing displays in store and communicate those ideas to manufacturers to grow sales.

5 | Partner for promotions. In-store promotions are productive and popular with consumers. Manufacturers and reps currently participate in all manner of line launches, trunk shows and trend seminars at retailer events. Other types of manufacturer support may include giveaways, discounts, signage and web images for retail use. Co-op advertising and even co-branded catalogs can increase excitement, spark sales and enhance brand recognition for everyone.

6 | Partner to win. Communicate regularly with your industry partners. Manufacturers, retailers and sales reps all have information and resources to help one another succeed.



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