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trend
REPORT 2013

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from our desk to yours...

We are so thrilled to gather all the best in trends for 2013 and bring them to you here – in our third issue of PULSE. Our favorite ideas and inspiration for entering the New Year line these pages, as we hope to reinvigorate old and new ideas and make your Hospital Gift Shop the chicest, most amazing place to shop.

We believe there are always fresh ways to think about retail. This could mean ensuring your customers can always find (and beautifully present) the perfect gift for everyone on their list! Our “It’s A Wrap” feature puts a twist on gift wrapping with simple and stylish options

that also build sales. As we combed the pages of magazines and popular retail websites; gifts for the foodie, grill master, book connoisseur, chef and pet lover are cleverly presented again and again. Moving these concepts from the page to your shop would be fabulous and will inspire shoppers to look at your product, in a whole new light.

No matter what trends spark your interest, as you flip through PULSE, Suzanne Larsen with Midwest CBK offers visual design ideas that we love and we hope you will too! Other contributors inspire us with their passion for their Hospital Gift Shop; while your requests encouraged us to share a step by step guide for researching a new or replacement POS System. It’s a great jumping off point!

This issue is reflective of the passion we share for retail and we were excited to have so many Purchasing Power Plus Members and Vendors involved in the process. We hope that the ideas, inspiration and education will offer you fresh and creative ways to keep your gift shop - a shopping destination!

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Giftcraft

Noelle Enterprises



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“Shop Early. Popular lines move fast, so if you see something you like, don't delay!”

burton + BURTON



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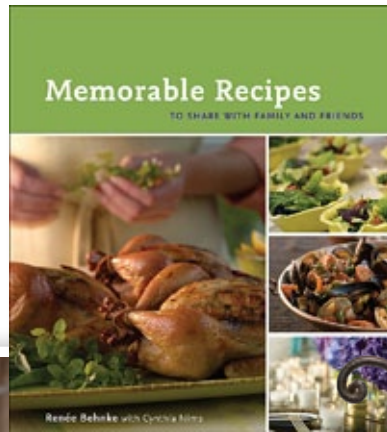
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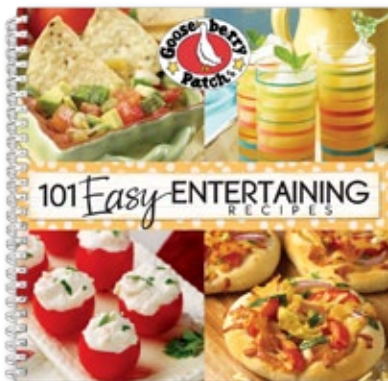
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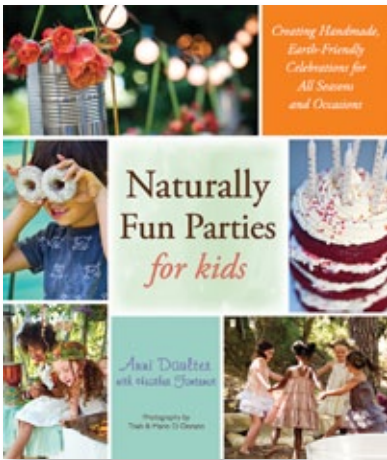


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SHOP HOURS

MON – FRI : 9 am – 6 pm

SAT – SUN : 9 am – 3 pm

HOLIDAYS : 9 am – 2 pm

Upon interviewing with the Volunteer Services Department, I was thrilled to be offered the position of Gift Shop Manager! Having spent so many years at the Hospital, leading up to my new role, truly helped with transition.

Your gift shop is lucky to have such a passionate proponent!

Thank you! Our Gift Shop is relatively small at just under 500 square feet, but we do a great business! There are 300 babies born in our suburban hospital every month, so baby items are

always a top seller. Our shop has a boutique atmosphere that translates to our customers. Visitors, employees and the community around us know and trust that they find one of a kind items and top quality gifts. We have a wonderful local flower shop that supplies and maintains our floral case with cutting edge floral and live plants.

What does a “typical” day at Overland Park Hospital Gift Shop look like for you?

Our gift shop is supported by 14 wonderful volunteers! I do work the shop occasionally, but generally my day consists of buying, vendor meetings, scouting new products, accounting and of course, working my way through emails. I do have a wonderful lady that opens my boxes, prices the items and places them in our store room (a true blessing)!

We know that motivating and educating your staff is an ongoing effort. What do you do to inspire your Volunteers and keep them abreast of the latest news?

I publish a periodic newsletter for all my ladies that keeps them informed of upcoming events and offers valuable reminders. We have also introduced a semi-annual luncheon, so I can truly express my appreciation for all their hard work. A 20% discount off every day merchandise is another way we say “Thank You” for all their efforts. After all, our volunteers are extremely important to the success of the shop!

THE MANAGER

Dianna Clark

THE GIFT SHOP


Overland Park Regional Medical Center Gift Shop

THE LOCATION

Overland Park, KS

Dianna, we are so appreciative of your willingness to contribute to PULSE and share your story! Can you set the stage by telling us a bit about your background and what led you to take the role as Gift Shop Manager at Overland Park?

I have been blessed to work for Overland Park Hospital for more than nine years now. The first seven and a half years, I spent as a Certified Nurse Assistance in our Mother and Baby Department. During that time, I was a regular customer of the Gift Shop. When the Gift Shop Manager position became available, in August of last year – I jumped at the chance to interview.

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How do you promote your Gift Shop? Are there any promotions or specials that you offer exclusively to Employees of the Hospital that you feel are of real value?

We are non-profit shop and so I employ a lot of creativity, to promote the Gift Shop. There are lots of avenues to explore! A time honored favorite is the Employee Discount, because it simply works! All our employees receive 10% in the shop and once a month, we feature

20% off selected items. I also encourage suggestions from the hospital staff since it is their shop as well! This encourages loyalty and vests them in the process.

That perfectly leads us into our next question: "What is your approach to buying?"

I have learned to break it down by percentages. Trusting your instincts is important (as is honing the ability to develop them) but once you understand your customers and your shop – you can base 50% of purchases on that. Keep in mind that it's a process and one that you develop, as you go along.

From there, I focus on trends. It's important to educate yourself about current trends in both the fashion and gift market. I choose to be a bit more conservative with "trendy" merchandise and lend 25% of my purchases to those buys. A smart way to approach trends is to merchandise proven categories, alongside something trending up. For example, we recently brought in a Keurig Coffee Maker. The aroma of coffee wafting through the air draws visitors and employees in and they love exploring the different flavors of coffee we offer. It's a small footprint but makes a big impact. Trending?

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& Cute Purse

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& Butler Group
Showroom #1212



smart retailing

TIPS FOR A
SUCCESSFUL 2013

- 1 **STEPHANIE DAWN:** It is important to go broad in Fashion Accessories as opposed to deep. Provide options in colors and styles. Be sure to carry accessories (wallets, eyeglass cases, coin purses, etc) that coordinate with the handbags and totes you offer. Our stores report that customers are purchasing an accessory to match the handbag or tote they selected.
- 2 **DOUGLAS:** Stay creative...vary your wares, offer collections and products you can sell together as gift sets. Display is everything and Customer Service (gift wrapping, kind help) is more than everything.
- 3 **GUND:** Concepts/statements pop in the consumer's eyes and turn product!

Music in the shop cannot be overstated.

It creates ambience, tone and can even lend itself to mood, which in turn, directly impacts sales in a positive way!

Cake Pops! We sell them alongside the mainstay of coffee and they have been a huge hit.

The next 15% of purchases goes to merchandise that is just not my taste. That is where valuable relationships with Sales Reps will serve you well! You may never understand the Singing Bass on the wall – but you can guarantee, you will have customers that love it. Cringe, buy it and ring up the sales. The final 10% is basic – greeting cards, sundries, novelty items and sundries round it out.

Once your buys are done – the next challenge: display! How do you plan your Seasonal Displays?

*I typically draw inspiration from a main focal item(s) and then consider the impact of color. Last Spring, I brought in two adorable large display wax bunnies, one of them on a bicycle, from **burton + Burton** and they were a huge hit! They piqued everyone's curiosity (what else is in the shop!) and established a fun and whimsical*

vibe for the month. Music in the shop cannot be overstated. It creates ambience, tone and can even lend itself to mood, which in turn, directly impacts sales in a positive way!

A main focal point can be so impactful and your display sounds like such fun. The final question is how do you continue to build on your success? What do you have “up your sleeve” for 2013?

Ultimately, my goal is to ensure that our Gift Shop remains a SHOPPING DESTINATION! Building on our success, means challenging myself to establish new contacts and explore new Vendors. It is so important to stay fresh and current. Our customers know that they can count on us for the products they love and I am committed to ensuring they find something, each and every time they visit our shop.

4 BASICGREY: *Freshen up. People are looking for a fresh, new start with clean and organized displays.*

5 burton + BURTON: *Shop early. Popular lines move fast, so if you see something you like, don't delay!*

6 ANNALEECE: *Be knowledgeable about your products. Today's consumers want to know that their purchases are versatile and of good quality. Retailers need to provide that information, in order to continue making quality sales and building a great rapport with their consumers.*

7 ENESCO: *Be cognizant that your customers are always on search for unique and unusual items that will make their current wardrobe fresh and on trend with statement necklaces, chunky bracelets, chandelier earrings, etc. In a challenging economy, women are looking for up-to-date accessories to stretch their wardrobe.*



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kikkerland design inc.
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The *Greatest is Love* collection of gift items feature beloved verses from 1 Corinthians 13 on a mug, cross, plaque, keepsake box and two unique magnets. The cross and plaque include an easel. Your customers will find the whimsical design and pink accent color perfect for Valentine's Day. SRP \$2.99 - \$12.99

lighthouse christian products
(888) 477-4031 www.lcpgifts.com



Soothing Sounds is a perfect companion to any crib or stroller with the ribbon tie on. This soft and cuddly bear plays over five minutes of soothing sounds that will help calm your baby for sleep. Volume control, on/off button and replaceable AAA batteries.

gund inc.
(800) 448-4863 www.gund.com



The *Faith, Hope, Love* series features 1 Corinthians 13:13. The bold red colors and fun heart designs on the mug, plaque and magnet will remind your customers what's really important. This series will appeal to all ages. SRP \$2.99 - \$12.99

lighthouse christian products
(888) 477-4031 www.lcpgifts.com



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apple pie jewelry
(866) 280-9032 www.applepiejewelry.com

SUZANNE LARSEN

*Regional Sales Manager
Midwest CBK*

ON THE OUTSIDE Looking In

It's Monday morning and you are running late. You stopped off at the coffee shop for a latte and now you're hurrying into the store. You end up having to park in the back parking lot. You walk the mile it takes to get inside – all while juggling a stack of packing slips, volunteer schedules and most importantly the latte. After flipping on the lights, you delve right into dealing with the 15 boxes that just arrived. Maybe your first customer is already at the door waiting for you to open. Your day has just started and you are already behind.



With this kind of start to your day it can be hard to notice the little things. Are all the lights working? Are the aisles clear and easy to maneuver? There just never seems to be the time to focus on the small details. This is where your sales reps can help you!

Ask a trusted Rep, if they have a friend or family member that would be willing to visit your shop as a secret shopper. It is always a great idea to garner some fresh perspective! Some points to consider, include:

- 1. Was the entrance inviting to all types of customers, male and female?** *Place topiary trees on either side of the front door to welcome customers in. You can put them in containers with wheels to roll them in at night. A large flower cart is another great option.*
- 2. Were they greeted and made to feel welcome when they entered or did they feel like they were interrupting someone's personal conversation?** *Be sure your sales people come out from behind the register to point out two or three new arrivals or offer their services. The secret shopper can also help determine, if your employee "over talks" not allowing the customer time to think....or shop. It can be a tricky balance!*

3. Have the secret shopper determine if it's easy to find price tags on your products.

Customers will pass on an item that they fear is too expensive. They don't wish to be embarrassed if they cannot purchase it, after learning the price from a sales clerk. In reality, it may be a great price that they would love, so be sure every item has a tag.

4. Ask them if they feel you have a good mix of product!

When you have payroll deduction for hospital employees, you need to be able to cater to all their needs since they are a captive audience. A successful mix includes gifts, such as jewelry, candles, purse organizers, along with girlfriend gifts. Home décor items including lamps, picture frames and clocks make decorating easy. Don't be afraid to offer a wide range of price points, since you have such a broad customer base.

5. Your secret shopper can let you know if they thought your displays were inviting. Did they come away with an idea they would like to try in their home? Did your displays encourage them to stay longer and buy more?

A good Sales Rep wants to be a partner in your success, so pick their brains. Most are in hundreds of stores and visit many cities and are exposed to great ideas every day. Ask them what fun successful promotions have worked at other stores. Ask if they have seen any great looks or hot products that would work well with their lines. Have they seen any unique display ideas they can share? Our designers took old books, tore the hard covers off, folded over several pages at a time to make a circle. Then tied them in the center with raffia and dipped the ends in paints that matched the displays. Voile! Instant risers to give your displays multiply heights. It's a cute idea that makes shoppers stop and take a second look!



Look for an old hutch on Craigslist or at a garage sale to add more character to your displays. Old furniture finds are great to break up all the glass shelves and slat board. The interest that they add will draw customers to the product you are displaying in and around it. Hang a metal grid from the ceiling, hang your ornaments from ribbons at various heights then offer your customers a pair of scissors to cut down the ones they want to purchase. This is great for small shops that are short on space.

Birdcages are terrific for displays and to sell. Give your customers ideas on how to use them once they get them home. Fill the bottom with ornaments then have some hanging from the top at different lengths. Stack a couple of old books inside with a mini lamp on top and light it up. Fill with pillar candles of different heights. These would make nice centerpieces, on a coffee table, next to a fireplace or kitchen island. Remember, if you see a garage sale; stop and look for old books or encyclopedias in a good color. They are wonderful to use throughout the store as risers to display. The key is make sure everything isn't at the same height. Creating more interest equates to the customer staying in your store longer. Cha-chaing!

So remember - the next time you book an appointment with your sales reps ask them to come prepared to share two or three tips. Anything from in-store promotions, to display ideas they have seen, to a new hot products they have seen selling well.

One last tip: if you are at market and are not able to work with your own sales rep, point out something awful. If the person helping you tells you "it's one of the hottest items in their line"...RUN!

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SMART RETAILING

POINT OF SALE

The evolution of Point of Sale (POS) technology has us very excited! The systems for 2013 will truly enhance your experience as a retailer and provide you with a valuable management tool. Still, we understand that when it comes time to consider your own needs; it can be a bit daunting. There are many factors to consider and you want to take your time before investing. Whether you want to upgrade your current system or are considering a whole new approach – we hope to offer you a basic guide. The goal is to provide you with a check list that will allow you to meet your personal goals!

WHERE TO BEGIN

The right POS system can save you money by improving accuracy and offering more efficient sales transactions. This goes a long way towards increasing margins and decreasing shrinkage! Inventory management will allow you to quickly reference those products that are selling and may require re-order. It will also shed light on those that may need to be marked down or moved to a new location. It's a valuable tool that ensures a more fluid approach to inventory control.

✿ continued on page 17

1. Clearly delineate all your needs/wants

POS systems are rapidly changing and evolving; know what system will work for you.

2. Network with hospital gift shop managers

Networking with your peers will save you time! Capitalize on the experiences of others; what are the pros and cons?

3. Research, research, research

Check on-line for reviews and feedback about each system you consider.

4. Narrow your selection to two or three companies that support small retailers.

Ask each for a demonstration of their product and prepare questions that address your needs. Compare each and select the one that will meet your objectives!

5. Set a timeline for installation

Select a time that will be least disruptive to your gift shop.

BUYER'S TIPS

Select the software first. Don't purchase computers, printers, scanners or other POS equipment prior to deciding on a software program. The software that best suits your gift shop needs to be compatible with your hardware. First things first!

Use the same vendor for all components. Many POS systems fail or are underutilized because the hardware and software are not fully compatible. This typically happens because a business will attempt to "piecemeal" the system. Buying everything from the same vendor ensures compatibility. Shop around - It's may sound simple, but it's the very best advice, to be offered. POS systems are a major investment. Make an informed choice!

Set up a demonstration. Explore a cash sale, inventory management features, refunds, purchase orders, credit card processing and reports to be certain you are comfortable with the basic functions. Trying out the software is the best way to decide, if it will work for you and your gift shop. Include another member of your team that works closely with your cash register system to join you.

THE TOP FIVE POS SYSTEMS USED BY PURCHASING POWER PLUS STORES, ACCORDING TO OUR 2012 NATIONAL SURVEY ARE:

ARBAPRO - www.arbapro.com

ARBA Retail Systems provides Retail and Cafeteria point of sale systems for healthcare facilities, corporations and independent retail stores. ARBAPRO point of sale software system offers fast point of sale, customer management, and item level control to an interface with the QuickBooks accounting system.

COUNTERPOINT BY RADIANT SYSTEMS

www.counterpointpos.com

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KEYSTROKE POS - www.keystrokepos.com

Specialized Business Solutions (SBS) offers the Keystroke POS point of sale software system. Thousands of retail stores, wholesale distributors, and service businesses use the Keystroke point of sale retail system to manage store sales and automate inventory control.

MICROSOFT DYNAMICS RETAIL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

www.microsoft.com

Microsoft Dynamics Retail Management System (RMS) offers small and midsize retailers a complete point of sale solution that can be adapted to meet unique requirements. This software package automates POS processes and store operations, provides centralized control for multi-store retailers, and integrates with Microsoft programs and applications.

RETAIL PRO - www.retailpro.com

Retail Pro has brought world-class automation to specialty retailers providing fully-integrated front and back-office functionality for your stores, warehouses, and headquarters in a single system. Ease-of-use, incredible flexibility, global retail point of sale, best-in-class inventory, customer management, comprehensive reporting, integration to accounting or ERP solutions, and real-time data access.

Choosing a POS system is time consuming, but ultimately worth the investment! The right system will take your business to the next level; saving time, money, and resources. Take your time and weigh all your options. The right choice is out there!

CHOOSE THE RIGHT RETAIL POS SYSTEM WITH OUR TOP TEN LIST:

1. How can a retail POS system help me run my business more efficiently?

2. I've seen retail software with hundreds of reporting options. How can I select which reports will be most important to me? Can I create my own reports?

3. Should I buy the point of sale hardware or the retail software first?

4. What type of database should I choose?

5. How much does a retail POS system cost?

6. Can your system integrate credit cards and payroll deduction as a payment option?

7. If my server goes down, can the clerks continue ringing up sales?

8. My staff is largely comprised of volunteers and elderly. Isn't it too complicated to teach them how to work a computerized retail POS system?

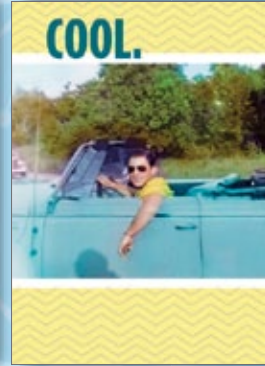
9. What type of training and tech support do you offer?

10. Do I need a software subscription service to keep my system up-to-date?

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it's a WRAP

all the joys of life, birthdays, anniversaries, baby showers, house warming's, career promotions, are occasions for celebration and often include sharing a gift with those we love! So while, Christmas only comes once a year, there is a steady stream of occasions for which your customers are hoping

to uncover not only great gifts, but a way to beautifully present them. After all, isn't it all about first impressions? Parents frequently joke that young children enjoy the box a gift comes in as much as they like the present. That's true of adults, too, when a gift is stylishly wrapped.

GIFT BOX CORPORATION reasonably priced gift boxes translate into high margins and great values. A dizzying array of sizes and shapes are available in the latest colors and trends.
(800) 443-8269 www.800giftbox.com

OFFERING FASHIONABLE GIFT PACKAGING will add a dash of style to your shop, and it's the sort of special detail that will have your customers coming back for more. Set yourself apart from the big box stores and web-based giants! Because no matter how hard they may try, internet sellers and department stores cannot offer the same personal touch.

AND YOU WILL BE PLEASANTLY SURPRISED, by how many men you can draw into your Hospital Gift Shop, once the news gets out. With a bit of ingenuity, you can also ensure that your gift wrapping services work to build sales! Cleverly used "containers" can be designed to appeal to the Foodie, Book Lover, Wine Connoisseur, New Baby, etc. They make gift giving a breeze for your shoppers and encourage sales.

ALL THE ESSENTIALS ARE HERE, to help you stylishly wrap and present gifts. If you are already offering this service; hopefully, we have sparked some new and creative thoughts for you to incorporate in your Hospital Gift Shop. And that is a wrap!



THE GIFT WRAP COMPANY/ PEPPERPOT knows that people want to dress up their presents and make the receiver smile. These adorable Barnyard Baby Gift Bags are the perfect way to package your baby shower gifts.
(800) 443-4429
www.giftwrapcompany.com



This cheery Happy Birthday Deluxe Gift Bag from **PETER PAUPER PRESS** features a repeated "Happy Birthday" message, coordinating handles, and gift card. Gloss highlights add an extra gleam.
(800) 833-2311
www.peterpauper.com



Brilliant design and divine details - **DESIGN DESIGN, INC.** provides gift packaging that makes a stylish statement in all the latest trends.
(800) 334-3348
www.designdesign.us



These treat Bags from **STUDIO OH!** may not come filled with goodies, but they're certain to make gifts of candy, small food items, party trinkets - even fragrant soaps - look dazzling.
(888) 757-0801
www.studiooh.com

IT'S A WRAP Tips

- 1 **Mix and match contrasting materials**, such as newspaper with elegant ribbons or pair gift bags with a metal tag. Even a child's toy can complete the perfect shower gift.
- 2 **Add ornaments to the top of packages** for a creative flourish! Other fun toppers include: hair bows, seashells, pinecones, measuring spoons, whisks, etc.
- 3 **Interesting baskets, large glass jars, nested bowls or storage boxes** are all great jumping off points for creative presentations! Even a child's lunch box can serve double duty.
- 4 **Scarves are still big sellers** – propose using a colorful scarf to wrap up a jewelry box – the packaging easily becomes part of the gift.
- 5 **Circular boxes and buckets are ideal** for odd-shaped presents, such as dishware, handbags, plush. Or create a gift that is filled with goodies as unique as the recipient!
- 6 **Consider wrapping different styles of paper** together to create an unusual look.



Bold patterns decorate storage barrels from **BASICGREY**. Designed with heavy-duty industrial lids for a secure yet fashionable touch. Store or gift anything you desire in the food-grade-quality containers with a laminated surface for easy cleaning.
(801) 544-1116 www.basicgrey.com



Add a Happy Ring Rattle from **RICH FROG** to baby shower gift packaging. Made of soft velour with stitched features and irresistible expressions.
(888) 742-4376 www.richfrog.com



Happi™ Set of 3 Storage Suitcase sets from **TWO'S COMPANY** are versatile and fun. An adorable option for decoration, gift packaging and storage.
(800) 896-7266 www.twoscompany.com



This set of three Nested Oval Handled Hand-woven Baskets from **EVERGREEN** are a stylish way to present gifts for the foodie, book lover, wine enthusiast... Two gifts in one, the recipient can store anything from magazines to towels and blankets - the possibilities are endless!
(800) 774-3837 www.myevergreen.com



Stylish storage caddies from **TREND LAB LLC** are a great way to clear clutter! It's also a unique way to package gifts. Fill the storage caddy up with gifts you know the recipient will love.
(866) 873-6352 www.trend-lab.com



Fill this metal bucket decorated with colorful team graphics from **BOELTER BRANDS** with favorite sports goods and memorabilia for the man in your life.
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www.boelterbrandsproducts.com

⊗ continued on page 24

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2012 National Survey of Hospital Gift Shops



AVERAGE
BED SIZE



AVERAGE NUMBER
OF HOSPITAL
EMPLOYEES



AVERAGE
VOLUNTEERS ON
STAFF



AVERAGE FULL TIME
PAID STAFF



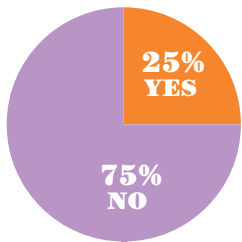
AVERAGE PART TIME
PAID STAFF



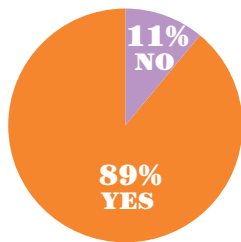
TRAVEL TO GIFT
MARTS



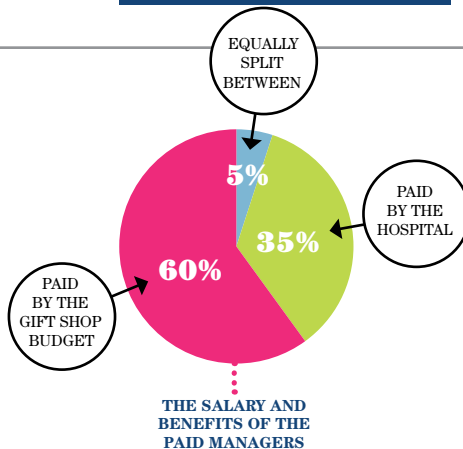
PLACE WHOLESALE
ORDERS ONLINE



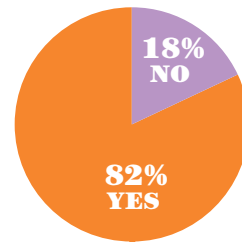
DO YOU GIVE
HOSPITAL STAFF A
DISCOUNT?



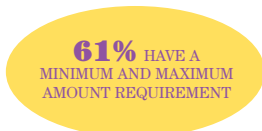
DOES YOUR GIFT
SHOP HAVE A PAID
MANAGER?



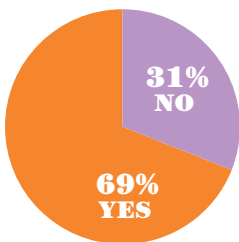
THE SALARY AND
BENEFITS OF THE
PAID MANAGERS



DOES YOUR GIFT
SHOP OFFER PAYROLL
DEDUCTION?



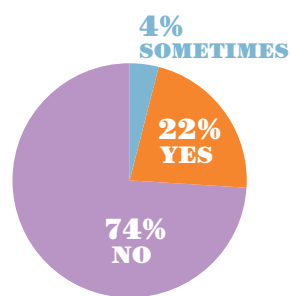
OF THE GIFT SHOPS
THAT OFFER PAYROLL
DEDUCTION



DO YOU HAVE A POINT
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tells holiday
stories.*



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"Blue Christmas"
while his ears
wiggle and his
head sways.*

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his guitar and sings,
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his head sways.*



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IT'S A WRAP

MERRY merry



Caffco International



CAFFCO INTERNATIONAL carries a variety of glass and fabric ornaments plus wired ribbons for accents with flair. (800) 390-1193 www.caffco.com



Gift Wrap Company



Influenced by nature **GIFT WRAP COMPANY/ PEPPERPOT** has provided trend forward gift wrapping solutions including these eco chic ribbons and bows. (800) 443-4429 www.giftwrapcompany.com



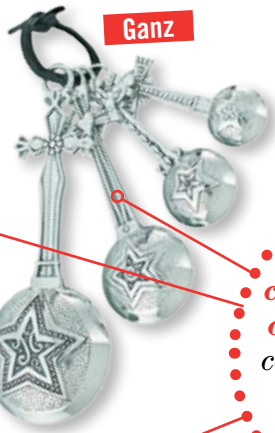
Mid-Atlantic Packaging



Choose from over 200 patterns from **MID-ATLANTIC PACKAGING**. Available in full and 1/2 ream counter rolls. All Occasion, Baby, and Holiday patterns make gift wrapping offering a breeze. (800) 284-1332 www.midatlanticpackaging.com



Kikkerland



Ganz

Provide customers with an oven mitt that they can fill with goodies! They will have fun "creating" their own gifts.



Brownlow



Two's Company



DRIVE YOUR Business

Don't let your business drive you!

Operating or owning a retail store in today's market is tough! If you survive the competition of surrounding big box stores, overcome the rising costs of freight, insurance, utilities, maintenance, payroll, etcetera and still show a profit at the end of the year - **Congratulations!**

As you read this, you may ponder: "Why in the world would anyone want to contend with all of that?"

Then you consider all the challenges that you face, as the Manager of a Hospital Gift Shop. Perhaps those challenges are not as overt, but they are certainly just as demanding. We deal with an employee base that is typically volunteer driven. We draw upon a customer base that is largely the same - day after day. We take direction from hospital management generally limited in their understanding of the retail industry. Still given these challenges and many more; hundreds of us do

it every day and with more passion and more dedication than the largest retailers!

We understand as an industry that running a Hospital Gift Shop requires excellence! You are surrounded by professionals who demand it every day, and in today's marketplace, you must always be aware of third party retail servicers. How we succeed is dependent on our management and ability to run our stores tucked away in corners, lobbies, basements and hallways.

The question becomes: **How do we drive our business?** While having a captive customer base presents its own set of issues - the reality is: we enjoy a captive customer base! We don't need to worry about the weather, road construction or the store down the road. Just open the door and they will wander on in!

Mary, the nurse manager on the eighth floor, stops in every month

to buy an arrangement of flowers, four "Thinking of You Cards", and two Angels totaling \$99 in sales. Consider the Environmental Service crew, who visit each evening for their stash of snacks and find themselves purchasing a frame, pillow or set of serving bowls...sales that add up! To borrow a line from a famous movie "If you build it they will come!" More than 75% of your customers are hospital employees and they love your shop.

Still, you wonder, how can you break the "ceiling" of yearly sales gains of only 4% to 6%, which frankly, is hardly enough to keep rising costs at bay? How can you increase sales? Excite your customers? Attract



DAVID HELMSTADTER

Gift Shop Manager
Allegheny General
Hospital Gift Shop
Pittsburgh, PA

WHAT'S ON THE SHELF



US Balloon



The Petting Zoo



Manual Woodworkers



It Takes Two



business; increasing sales and attracting new customers with subtle, yet consistent changes!

Review your sales report for a month and **determine which departments produce the most in daily sales.** You

already know that snacks, sodas, lottery are popular. Where are they located in your store? Are you making

your customers go look for them or are you making it easy to locate? Allocate those items to the very back of the shop, so your customers walk past new merchandise and eye popping displays each time they visit!

Next, consider your three lowest selling departments - you might be surprised to learn you are allocating too much space to your lowest

volume department. **Prioritize valuable space to categories yielding the highest return.** Take this same approach and apply it to every department; your customer base will begin catching on and it's a great way to generate a bit of buzz.

Another way, to generate positive chatter is to **start mixing up your product offerings.**

There are hundreds of great gift companies that are willing to work for your business! Take the time to look at those catalog mailings, travel to trade shows and establish great relationships with Reps. Be honest with your current Reps and let them know, you are serious about improving sales. If they are vested, they will really go to work with suggestions and inspiring ideas.

Still, you must remember that you are running a business! It's not all about friendships with your local

outside shoppers or encourage visitors to check out this gem of a shop that they hear hospital staff whisper about? It can be daunting to mix it up! After all, you don't want to alienate your volunteers and faithful customers that love things "just as they are!"

Start by rolling up your sleeves, taking the wheel and driving your

✿ continued on page 27



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Uplift the spirits of your customers by offering them inspirational and educational Wildlife Gifts and Decor.

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Did you know... Pheasants do not have sweat glands. They pant, like a dog, in order to eliminate their excess body heat.

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Reps. Look around your shop and see what percentage of gifts you have from just one company. Don't let your store become the "Brand X". The surest way to become stagnate is focusing your buying dollars with just a few major players. Check out the small and up and coming Vendors! They will keep your store fresh and interesting.

*Ultimately, buying is the roll of the dice and we all wish for the crystal ball that would reveal only best sellers. **Buying broad rather than deep will often serve you well.** Here again, trusting your Rep may be your best avenue. A small note of caution – be wary of Reps that wish to dictate your buying habits. It is up to you to establish the right balance and tone of each appointment. Set the parameters! For example, clearly delineate how much time you have to meet with them. Stay in the driver's seat.*

Advertise, advertise, advertise! The simplest place to start is with your Hours of Operation. Opening a bit earlier or a bit later, at least a few days a week, will entice a whole new group of customers to shop. Learn the times of shift changes – little details add up.

Utilize every available avenue. Make friends with the hospital mailroom! Create eye catching flyers (you can buy inexpensive and professional templates online) make copies and drop them by the mailroom. They can distribute them to every mailbox in the hospital. Encourage customers to share their email addresses with a signup sheet in the gift shop. Send out a monthly special advertising something NEW every month. Be creative and offer something unique month to month; year to year!

Your cash registers certainly facilitate sales, but they can also go to work for you, in other ways. **A good POS system is worth understanding!** Some allow you

Other Ideas Include:

- Have an April 1st Day Sale
- A good old fashioned coupon sale
- Flyers featuring new product can be included in every bag
- Obtain a photo Kiosk to develop pictures from a digital memory stick
- Run a promotion in a different location of the hospital
- Offer a free tasting of a new snack or food line.
- Be creative - It is supposed to be FUN!

to advertise on receipts. Share a note about a new line or expanded hours; change the message weekly. Create shoppers club or frequent buyers program that reward your customer's loyalty!

Go on a field trip...take a day to visit other hospital gift shops in your area. Check out the neighborhood gift store and the specialty paper shop down on Main Street. Remember, these retailers are not your competition, so take a moment to be inspired by their offerings. You need not worry about their prices. You have a unique setting and should always price what the market will bear!

Customer Service is paramount to your success. What do you offer that makes your shop both inviting and helpful? If you have fresh flowers; do you make patient deliveries? Do you offer gift wrapping? Are your volunteers/ employees kept "in the loop" about new products, so they can share them with shoppers? Make sure your staff knows that engaging customers is a priority!

Carry customer service over to promotions! When an important gift giving holiday is approaching, such as Mothers Day, plan a gift with purchase or an open house to highlight the gifts you have especially for Mom. The key is to promote the merchandise that offers the highest return! Gift giving occasions are the perfect time to share the unique benefits of shopping in your store with hospital employees.

Floral holidays present you with an opportunity to boost "add on" sales. Compare notes with your floral supplier and plan a promotion together that includes flowers and plush or balloons. With a bit of advance planning, you can circulate a flyer advertising orders for roses, along with an adorable teddy bear or large heart foil balloon. Encourage them to stop by to view a sample arrangement - It's a winning idea!

Candy is an easy sale for Valentine's Day. Request samples from your Candy Vendor, so you can share new flavors with your customers. Build onto your holiday successes, by extending a purchase with purchase promotion. Jewelry, photo frames and candles are all tantalizing when offered at promotional prices or as a gift with candy purchase – a great way, to encourage gift and specialty candy sales!

Again, your staff should be engaging your customers and sharing all you have to offer. Involve them in the process. Let them know that last week, the shop accomplished a 10% sales increase! If a promotion is coming up next month, share that information with them in advance. Bringing in a new line? Tell them why and what is exciting about it! Encourage them to listen to customers. They might just reveal the next best seller. If there are frequent requests for a hip new jewelry line – scope it out! Talk to your colleagues or surf the internet; but whatever you do, listen!

No matter, what business you are in – it can become easy to coast along and let the business drive itself. But it's so much more rewarding to stay in the driver's seat with the foot on the pedal. You can take your shop to a whole new level. I like to think the Gift Shop Manager has the best job in the hospital! The confidence you evoke will spill over to your staff, management team, and customers. Watch them notice – the passion will be contagious. Start driving your business today!

Introducing: An exclusive foil balloon line just for Hospital Gift Shops!

Order from the
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60 designs available in this exclusive program!



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Items Shown:
Happy Birthday (#829308)
Get Well Soon (#829438)
Baby Girl (#829544)
Balloon Weight (#792077)

TRENDREPORT 2013

VIBRANT VERVE

A harmonious blending of brights and neutrals; the 2013 color palette lends itself to creative combinations that are fresh and exciting.

This blending offering practicality and versatility; while the jewel tones and bright fun colors go a long ways towards lightening the mood!

- Muted gray purples; lively, but soft mauve hues ~ Purple is the new neutral.
- Poppy Red ~ This spirited, true red adds a sensual touch to every woman's wardrobe.
- This season's greens present a simply stunning backdrop for all other hues, to play upon.
- Rustic oranges, soft yellows, and olive greens. We love the bright effervescence of nectarine, and the burst of cheerfulness from shades of lemon.
- Turquoise will be hard to avoid in 2013, but really, why would you want to? Familiar and fresh; embracing both nostalgia and modernism.

Glass Eye Studios

Dichroic eggs and round paperweights - Brilliant colors meld with dichroic glass to create a breathtaking collection of treasures. Each weight is signed and dated. Featured: Harmony Series (800) 237-6961 www.glasseye.com



Ganz USA, LLC

Bottle vases in shapes of whiskey, wine, beer and soda bottles add a vibrant splash of trendy color to every room. (800) 724-5902 www.ganz.com



Candym Ent. / Accent Imports

Nutcracker Designs square (18" #N40696 SRP \$54.99 each) or rectangle (20" x 14" #N40710 SRP \$39.99 each) knife-edged ikat pillows; two designs made from 100% cotton with down insert. Shipping February 2013. (800) 263-3551 www.nutcrackerdesigns.com



Outside the Box, LLC - Badge A Peel

This multi-colored chevron stripe background is covered with clear mylar to keep the button clean and easy to maintain. Velcro on the back for easy attachment to your Badge A-Peel Reel. (910) 964-2859 www.badgeapeel.com



Mary Meyer

Motley Zoo is a fun hodgepodge of characters sporting an array of textures; Motley Monkey brings an irresistible jumble of fabulous fabrics, bold patterns, and fun embroidery. SRP \$17.00 (800) 451-4387 www.marymeyer.com



Noelle Enterprises Inc.

The Key Largo Jewelry Collection is bright and bold featuring the hottest colors for the upcoming season. 18 piece Necklace or 18 piece Bracelet assortments include a display. (910) 270-4047 www.noelleenterprises.com



African American Expressions

This 15oz Mug is a great gift idea for the royal people in your life. It reminds us to strive to be the best we can be! Text - I Thank God. (800) 684-1555 www.black-cards.com

MODERN BUDS

Look for the buds showing up in 2013 to be a touch more modern; more painterly. You will also notice Scandinavian-influenced posies blossoming on fabrics. The epitome of spring; florals exude an elegance through prints, embroidery, and even shaped metals.

Chesapeake Bay Candle

The Jasmine Mint Reed Diffuser is a sparkling and radiant blend of elegant white jasmine with accents of mint leaves and lemon zest. Set includes a distinctive glass bottle with oil and reeds. (877) 916-6550 www.chesapeakebaycandle.com



Papier de Maison

The tri-fold portfolio opens to hold a regular notepad, an iPad or tablet device and a stylus. The folios come in a variety of decorative hardcover designs in a handy counter merchandiser. (888) 267-1567 www.papierdemaison.com



About Face Designs

The lively Sweet Juniper wooden wall plaques combine design with light hearted messages. Each includes a wooden peg to stand on a shelf or table and a saw-tooth for wall mounting. (800) 742-1766 www.aboutfacedesigns.net



GOLD RUSH

Cynthia Davis, Marketing at Annaleece shares... "The jewelry industry is definitely seeing a 'Gold Rush'. Gold is making a strong comeback within statement necklaces and attention-getting cocktail rings." Look for this trend to hit its stride in the summer!



Fashion Alert Medical Jewelry

Double strand medical ID strand featuring golden colored seed beads and topaz colored fire polished faceted beads. Bracelet strand is 7-1/2 inches when attached to a medical ID tag. (816) 746-0014 www.fashionalert.com

Annaleece by DeVries

Answering the demand for gold statement jewelry is Annaleece's new "Intricate" necklace, earrings and ring, made with a 22k Gold finish and clear Swarovski elements. (866) 401-6700 www.annaleece.com



GeoArt by Cynthia Gale

The two tone filigree quatrefoil earrings and bangles are made from sterling silver and 14K vermeil. The unique design is accented with eye-catching birthstones. (888) 436-2781 www.geoartnyc.com



GLOBAL CHIC

The global chic trend keeps local traditions alive across the world, as artisans create one-of-kind-items, and handmade textiles. Accentuate with bold prints, rich reds, blues and yellows. Pillows and throws warm your surroundings, while handbags and jewelry add bohemian flair.

Aden + Anais Inc.

The bamboo fiber muslin is luxuriously soft; the ideal fabric to use on delicate baby skin. The fashion forward prints are perfect to swaddle your baby in luxury and comfort. (718) 801-8429 www.adenandanais.com



Stephanie Dawn

Mosaic is a new fabric introduction from Stephanie Dawn. Pippa is the perfect petite tote for your stylish little one with button closure to keep her favorite things snug inside. SRP \$16.00. (419) 238-6037 www.stephaniedawn.net



burton + BURTON

The global print design emblazons the cotton tablet case with padded interior and zipper top. Perfect to protect your tablet or e-reader in style. (800) 241-2094 www.burtonandburton.com



Pictura Inc.

This Purse Pad is adorned with intricate foil detailing and fully designed interior pages. The magnetic closure makes it perfect for tossing in your purse for all of your quick note needs. (800) 742-8872 www.picturausa.com



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LIGHT, AIRY LINEN

A must have for spring, linen is a warm neutral that provides a nudelike backdrop perfectly suited for home décor. Pops of color will enhance the appeal – consider shades of blue, gray and jade for a dramatic display.



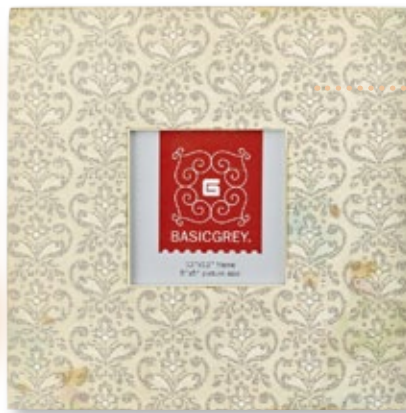
Ollin Arm Candy

It's a smaller version of the popular Around Town Handbag. Not too big and not too small. This bag is very practical for everyday use with protective bottom corners and a chain with adjustable leather strap. (732) 460-1900 www.nahuioollin.com



Enesco LLC

Flourish is a new take on natural elements, carefully crafted and layered, build a multi-dimensional scene. As your perspective changes, new details appear. What might be flat is now emerging and revealing. Let your view Flourish... (800) 436-3726 www.enesco.com



BasicGrey

Fashion for your photos! Designer frames that are so awesome, your floors will be jealous of your walls! The 12" x 12" Avalon frame fits 5" x 5" photos; part of the Serenade Collection. (801) 544-1116 www.basicgrey.com



Snazzy Beads

Cappuccino Necklace ~ Frothy jolt of neutral colors, cappuccino is as timeless as black; the neutral tones are a year round favorite. Clay jewelry beads are custom made with beautiful colors that do not fade or wash off. (518) 392-2135 www.snazzybeads.com



Primitives by Kathy

High quality linen pillows woven to look like well-worn flour sacks; The perfect way to define your style with the popular vintage look. Choose from whimsical, sentimental and uplifting messages. (866) 295-2849 www.primitivesbykathy.com



Peepers Reading Glasses

Vagabond - Travel in style! Introducing our new travel reading glasses in great pastel stripes. These readers have a matching tube case for fashionable and compact protection. (800) 348-2508 www.peeperspecs.com

Lyn Dorf

Rhinestone and stud appliqué Pashmina scarf incorporates jet black stripe design on one end and fringe on both ends. For day or evening wear, this lightweight scarf is stylish and stunning. (954) 458-4765 www.lyndorf.com



Alexa's Angels

Start a trend with an Emma Rose Hobo Bag... Faux leather handles, magnetic snap closure and inner pocket for cell phone. The multi-stripe satin design is eye-catching and on-trend. (877) 264-3576 www.alexas-angels.com



STRIPE ME UP

All the rage at the Spring/Summer 2013 Fashion Week? Stripes. From wide horizontal stripes, to narrow vertical ones; stripes offer movement and an element of drama. There will be no escaping the influence of stripes on fashion or home décor. This trend lends itself to a visual display with a lot of wow factor.

SMART RETAILING

PRODUCT REVIEW

North American Bear Co.

Venturing into a new product category, **North American Bear Co.** makes a splash with **SQUEAKY CLEAN™**, a collection of soft screen cleaning mice for techno-gadgets. Made of 100% anti-static microfiber, these mice keep digital devices squeaky clean. Available in a choice of 3 solid colors and 3 safari prints. The pre-packaged assortment with a countertop display that makes merchandising a snap. (MSRP \$12 each)

So what happens when four Purchasing Power Plus Members sell this new collection, in their shop? Each store was sent the full display in September, free of charge, to sell for thirty days. Here are their reviews:



BETTY LONG

Catawba Valley Medical Center Gift Shop, Hickory, NC

Thank you for this opportunity. We put out the Squeaky Clean Mice as soon as they arrived. The display was great and the footprint worked for the location we selected. As of October 8th, 4 squeakers were sold.

We believe more squeakers would have sold by now if the cost was lower. Some customers requested more color availability for each design. The feedback overall was that squeakers were a great gift idea!

NORA SIMMONS-DALY

University of Colorado Hospital Gift Shop, Aurora, CO

Squeaky Clean – Mousy Sales

We all loved Squeaky Clean, it's a cute concept and very well made. The merchandiser was convenient and easy to assemble; however, we thought it needed a header to better explain the product. They work well and we opened one for customers to test. It would be nice if a test mouse was included.

We placed the merchandiser at our cash wrap in our main shop, prime real estate in any of our shops. We priced them at \$11.95 and customers were interested in the product. My staff and I all felt like the \$12.00 suggested retail was a bit high for our customer base. We left them at that price for 4 weeks and only sold 5. About a week ago we marked them to \$7.95 and have sold 7 additional pieces.

Considering the placement in our shop, we feel the product should have done better. The price is a bit high for the size of the animal. If they could be sold for \$7-8, I think they would be a bigger hit. We are a high-volume shop in a large teaching hospital (400+ beds). Thank you for allowing us to "test drive" this item.

KIM BANTLE-TAYLOR

The Beehive at St. Mary Medical Center, Langhorne, PA

I must say that it was not a very good seller for us. We put it in a prime location, so people could see it and it was very easily accessible. Unfortunately out of the 24, we have 15 left. I think some of the issues were that people really didn't get it. They really thought it was a squeak toy for their pets. I think most people just use a cloth to clean their screens and didn't want to be bothered with this kind of an item. I also heard many people say that \$12.00 was much too expensive. Although a very cute item, it wasn't a good fit for the Beehive. I look forward to testing other products in the future.

JUDY MARKHUM

Riverside Medical Center Gift Shop, Kankakee, IL

We put the Squeaky Clean display out in the front of our store on September 5, and we have sold 15 of the 24 as of this date. I think it is a very good product, and one of our customers even came back to purchase one for a friend because she said it did such a good job. I also used it on my car screen and it worked very well. I would recommend it highly, and will probably re-order them some time in the next month. It is very catchy display, but we do usually have to explain what it is for. That fact is not initially evident to the customer.

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