

Nov. 22, 2011

Small Business Saturday tips

By [Mike Benbow](#)

More Small Business Saturday tips:

The National Federation of Independent Business is offering a web portal for small businesses to use to promote their deals.

The plan is to list the stores by state so consumers can use the site to buy from a local business.

To check it out, [Click here](#)
also

John Tschohl, author of *Achieving Excellence Through Customer Service*, urges store owners to keep their eyes on service throughout the holiday season and especially on this Friday and Saturday, which will be mobbed with shoppers.

“Regardless what your business is, you are always first and foremost in the service business,” says Tschohl. “Take your eyes off the customer experience and it could be the kiss of death. You have a store full of customers in your shop supporting Small Business Saturday, but why not really wow them and turn them into loyal customers who come in during the rest of the year?”

His tips:

Empowerment is critical on this day. Not everything is going to go as planned. Employees must make empowered decisions in favor of the customer. Managers need to let their employees know that it's okay to make a decision in favor of the customer and there won't be any repercussions for doing so.

Small businesses spend so much money on advertising, but they don't take care of the customers who are standing right there in front of them. Make sure you are properly staffed; that your employees can answer questions and direct customers to specific areas of the store; are friendly, smile, and show a genuine attitude of concern and wanting to help.

Service is key to small businesses, and it's how you're going to keep customers from going to the big chains. Taking care of the little things will make all the difference. Offer plenty of free samples, free gift wrapping, free coffee and drinks, and make sure your employees are knowledgeable about the items in their departments.

Give your customers these five things on Small Business Saturday, and they'll be coming back the rest of the year. They are price, quality, service, empowerment and speed.