



# Historic Downtown Dahlonega A Georgia Main Street City

## BUSINESS TIPS NEWSLETTER

January 2013

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### BRAND ESSENCE: THE SECRET TO ATTRACTING LOYAL CUSTOMERS, BY JOANNE STEELE ON DECEMBER 13, 2012

We've talked about how we should TREAT loyal customers, but how does one actually ATTRACT one. Everyone including me talks endlessly about customer experience and sales funnels and attraction and retention. And all you want is for someone to buy your product or service!

I have discovered a simple truth about how to do that: **Brand Essence**. Stay with me here, you're going to actually love this simple and doable concept.

This weekend my granddaughter came up for a rare and wonderful visit. (Note picture of Grandma and Brooke visiting with Santa, a good friend who looks like the Red Suit was tailor made for him.) We crammed a week's worth of activity into 2 days and her response was, "Grandpa, Grandma, Dunsmuir is FUN!" The people are fun. The activities and recreation is fun. Our restaurants are fun. "Fun" is the thing that people feel when they visit here, that is somehow different from the feeling they have in any of the nearby towns! FUN is Dunsmuir's Brand Essence! In a recent post, Your Brand is More Important Than You Think, Brian Solis talks about the concept of brand essence.

Stop rolling your eyes – this is not about a kicky tagline or fancy logo that will take months to come up with. Your brand, according to Amazon's Jeff Bezos, "...is what people say about you when you're not in the room." You don't have control over the words people use, you only have some control over the feelings that your business evokes – that is your brand essence.

All the work we've been doing in Dunsmuir with art-walks and good restaurants and big fish planted in our river and Santa strolling down the street all day and down home, locally made Christmas decorations and everything else has contributed to our Brand Essence.

Nobody leaves here saying, "Dunsmuir, The River Runs Through It!" (a proposed tag line). But they are saying, "Dunsmuir is Fun!" We have our brand essence.

"How," you might be asking, "does this relate to my business?" Businesses run on their brand essence. Think about Harley Davidson motorcycles. What is the Harley brand essence? Freedom! Liberation! Other motorcycle brands try to capture that essence, but people associate those feelings with Har-

leys, and they're willing to spend more money for a Harley than a Kawasaki because of it!

Disneyland = "magic"  
Volvo = "safety"  
Dunsmuir Hardware Store = "friendly"

And here's a secret that Dunsmuir Hardware teaches: We residents know that they don't always carry what we need, but we ALWAYS try there first, because they're friendly, and the help and advice they will give is more valuable than the package of screws we went in to buy. What is your brand essence?

Go to [9 Criteria for Brand Essence](#). Give them your name and email address and prepare to be enlightened and inspired.

It will take you 10 minutes to read through this 72 page ebook, so don't delay thinking you need to wait till you have several hours. You will emerge understanding brand essence and be ready to think about your customer and your business differently.

Visit, [ruraltourismmarketing.com](http://ruraltourismmarketing.com) for more information.



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## 4 NEW SBA ONLINE TOOLS THAT CAN TAKE YOUR SMALL BUSINESS TO NEW LEVELS

Whether you're starting a business or managing a growing one, entrepreneurs and business owners wear many hats and have many questions. SBA is here to help with a new selection of tools that can guide you through writing a business plan, finding local events and more!

[READ MORE](#)



[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT "TARGETING" YOUR POSTS ON YOUR FACEBOOK BUSINESS PAGE.](#)

*Have a specific topic you would like to suggest for a future newsletter?*

*Email [Rebecca](#) and she will research the topic.*

Thanks for helping us provide the most relevant material for our business community!

## TOP 11 VISUAL MERCHANDISING IDEAS, RICK SEGAL, JULY 2012

Visual merchandising is the art and science of presenting the products you sell in the most attractive way possible, in order to generate traffic, create interest and buzz—and of course, generate sales!

Many retailers struggle with visual merchandising. After all, we're retailers, not artists or designers! Luckily, this is one area where you can improve quickly without having to spend a ton of time or money. Below, you'll find eleven tips, hints and strategies you can use to improve your store's visual merchandising today. These range from the simple and obvious—because the simple and obvious is often also overlooked!—to those a bit more creative. Give them a try, and see how well your customers react to the new displays!

**1. Identify Everything:** Customers are in a hurry. Use signage to identify not only departments, but categories. This will help customers pinpoint what they need and inspire additional purchases.

**2. Set the Mood with Your Windows:** Store windows are incredibly valuable merchandising territory: use them to set the mood of the event or sale you're having. This mood should match the mood your customers want to experience after buying from you: do they want excitement, family fun, romance?

**3. Embrace All the Senses:** Great merchandising appeals to more than the eyes. Consider how your store sounds, smells and even feels. Are all of these "messages" you're sending with music, scents, and other environmental factors in keeping with the displays you create? You can evoke senses without addressing them directly. For example, putting a pair of red bowls and spoons with a display of tomato soup can get mouths watering!

**4. Show Them How It Will Look at Home:** Use your displays to

show customers how the merchandise will look in their home. If you're selling furniture, set up a grouping of chairs; jewelry presented in the gift box, perhaps with some curls of ribbon still clinging to the box; a row of pans hanging neatly, copper bottoms gleaming. Many customers can't envision merchandise "in application." When they see a pan in a box, for example, they see a pan in a box. But put that same pan on a faux stovetop, with a cheerful checkered potholder and a pair of wineglasses nearby with a stack of cookbooks, and suddenly that pan is something more: it's a potential romantic dinner for two, just waiting to be whipped up.

**5. Group Like with Like:** Organize your store logically: customers should be able to find all of one type of merchandise easily. Create "groupings" within categories, so all the merchandise that is one color, type, price or size is positioned together.

**6. Group by Lifestyle:** Display merchandise from several categories that all share the same theme. For example, in an office supply store, a display could reflect the workplace of a high-tech wizard, pairing together the right steel and glass desk with cutting-edge accessories centered around the computer, or a classic CEO suite, with old school green glass lamps on a heavy walnut desk, replete with blotter.

**7. Use the Spotlight:** Lighting attracts customers, much like moths to the flame! Dramatic lighting doesn't have to be expensive: well-placed spotlights can draw attention to key pieces of merchandise. Make sure to use spotlights within your store as well as in the windows!

**8. Change Your Displays Often!** A great display is a great display—the first time the customer sees it. But if the customer sees that same display next week, and the week after that? Suddenly the display is not so great. It's bor-

ing, the same-old, same-old ... and customers don't come back to boring stores! Plan on changing your displays at least weekly.

**9. Don't Be Afraid of Color:** Strong color can have strong results: plan your displays around a central color that pops and captures the customer's attention. Try to have a different color each week: if you've used yellow as your central color this week, go with purple or blue next week—not red or orange!

**10. Integrate Motion:** Merchandise that moves will catch the eye. If you have anything that moves—from clocks to toys to music boxes, take one out and set it up! Let customers see it working! If your merchandise is more static, bring motion into the store: simply tying some ribbons to a small oscillating fan can add motion and interest—not to mention a cool breeze!

**11. Remember the Rule of Three:** Whenever you create a display, work in sets of three. If you're arranging merchandise by height, have a tall, taller, tallest. If something is squat and round, have a fat, fatter, fastest. You can even group by price: the good, better, best display is well-established and works surprisingly well.

**In Conclusion:** Remember, visual merchandising is both an art and a science. Approach it with an open mind. If something doesn't work this time, CHANGE IT! Try something else. I recommend keeping a record of displays you've tried—with a digital camera this is quick and easy!—and noting how well merchandise sold with any given display. After a while, you might start to notice a pattern: particular types of display might work well with your customers. Obviously, use those types of displays more often. And if something doesn't work? Change it. Your merchandise is still good, your store is still great: the stores that thrive are the stores that adapt and change to changing customer behavior. Just keep track of results and try new things often!

For more information, visit [ricksegel.com](http://ricksegel.com)

## FREE ADVERTISING ON GOOGLE

It may surprise some, but many small businesses new to inbound marketing are unaware that you can get some free advertising on Google through Google Places. And because Google is always looking to increase the value of its local search results – as well as its Google Maps application – the search engine giant has a simple way for you to provide them with that valuable information about your business, which it infuses it into its search engine results.

The benefit? Basically, a way to advertise your business on Google for free. And honestly, who doesn't love some free advertising? This not only helps your business get found through searches; it can also help you get more traffic, leads, and customers.

### What You Need to Get Your Free Google Places Advertisement

In order to set up your Google Places listing, you'll need the following information at hand:

- A description of your business
- Your phone number, address, and any other contact info you want to advertise
- A logo or image that represents your business (for example, some people use a picture of their office, store, or restaurant)
- A coupon or special offer you want to advertise (Google also lets you add a coupon for FREE if you want)

Step 1: Set Up Your Account

Step 2: Fill in Your Information

Step 3: Specify Where Your Services Are Provided

Follow this [LINK](#) to get started!!



*Have a specific topic you would like to suggest for a future newsletter? Email [Rebecca](mailto:Rebecca) and she will research the topic.*

Thanks for helping us provide the most relevant material for our business community!

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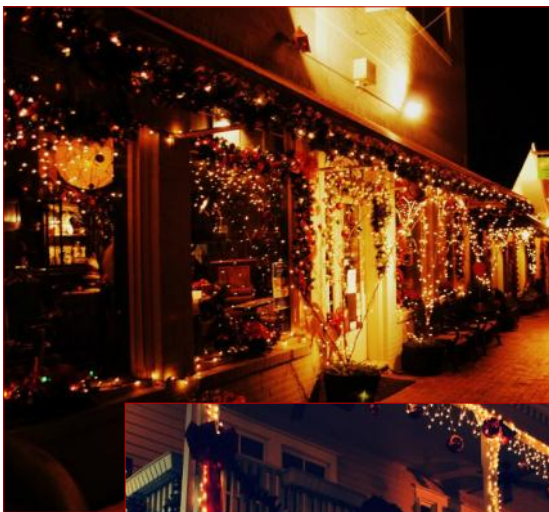
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## Old Fashioned Christmas in Dahlongega!



### Mark Your Calendars!

Merchant Coalition Meeting  
Wednesday, January 30, 8:30 AM  
Chamber of Commerce

Downtown Development Authority hosts Chamber of Commerce  
Business After Hours  
Tuesday, February 5, 5:30 PM  
The Holly Theater

Annual DDA Business Reception & Awards Program  
Tuesday, February 19, 5:30 PM  
The Smith House