

# POINT OF VIEW

Powerfully Simple Point of Sale



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## ≡ TURBO TIP

"100% of customers are people. 100% of employees are people. If you don't understand people, you don't understand business."

Simon Sinek

## Building Business with Webinars

### Share Knowledge; Gain Customers

By Brian Bullock

Ask almost any entrepreneur about the best way to grow their business and chances are they will say getting out on the sales floor and rubbing shoulders with their customers is at or near the top of their list. Webinars allow business owners to digitally interact with shoppers who aren't even in their store, establish themselves as experts in their field, and increase sales.

The less digitally inclined may ask: "What is a webinar and how can it help my business?" Business experts say they are an effective and inexpensive way to rapidly build a business. "A webinar is a LIVE, interactive seminar done online. It's a way for you to captivate and engage an audience. It's a venue for interaction where you can gain valuable insights from your audience or help them come to valuable insights of their own. Webinars are a great way to capture leads, increase sales and, my favorite, provide an additional revenue stream," Jill Schiefelbein, a professional speaker and business communication expert, tells *Entrepreneur.com*. Schiefelbein says her favorite



webinars fall into three categories.

**Lead-generation or sales webinars** collect information from registrants that can be used for sales team calls.

**For-profit webinars** generate revenue immediately by charging customers for participation. These webinars are usually informational and on a single topic so participants can glean knowledge on something that is vital to them.

**Multi-module webinar**, or a webinar series, can be used by product or system trainers to get face-to-face with their customers and users. These webinars can be used by a variety of retail industries to educate customers. They can also be used to demonstrate new products, as do-it-yourself project instruction. They are also incredibly

useful for doing business-to-business or solution sales.

Paladin Data Corporation uses webinars extensively to educate customers on the latest updates and integrations for its software and systems.

Webinars can be used to improve search engine optimization, and they can be integrated with your customer relations system. They can be used to host virtual events, get visibility for new product launches.

Webinars can also be used in a store to unveil new products or offer DIY tips or ideas which enhance customers' shopping experience. Or they can be posted on a store's website to attract interested shoppers. No matter how you use them, webinars can help grow your business and spread your message.



# Pay it Forward: Giving Back to Customers, Community

By Brian Bullock

Giving back to your community has been a feel-good tenet of business for thousands of years, as long as retail trade has been around. Merchants support those who support their businesses. Nowadays, that practice can become inherently complicated and costly. However, there are ways to give back to your community that don't include cracking open a checkbook, and digital age technology makes some of these practices much more feasible.

*Small Business Trends* says sharing your knowledge with customers or the community at large is an easy and painless way to give back. Creating an eBook for customers is a good way to share your expertise with them.

Merchants with interactive and mobile-friendly websites can also provide helpful resources that viewers can access. These resources can range from do-it-yourself tips and lists of home improvement contractors, to sales and marketing tips.

Another way to use your business technology to support local civic efforts is to dedicate a page or section of your website to community causes or noted charities.

An easy way to help local charities is to use digital point of sale solutions that have charity donation features. Paladin's Charity Round Up feature encourages customers to round up the cost of their purchase to the next dollar amount and donate the difference to a designated charity.

Less technical ways to give back to your community are more traditional:

- Support youth or community league sports teams.
- Donate goods or services. In-kind donations are often as valuable as cash.
- Lend your expertise to nonprofits.
- Partner with a charity you support or that fits your business.

There are many ways to help your community, and giving back is always a good investment.

## Executive Perspective: Doing Business in the 21st Century

I often get the opportunity to speak with retailers who worry about dwindling or stagnant business. They tell me their customers are being siphoned off from every direction including from online retailers. My message to them is simple: You need to learn to do business in the 21st Century. You need to embrace technology, improve customer service, and provide an overwhelming shopping experience to avoid losing "grumpy old customers like me."

Increasing the bottom line is simple logic and mathematics. Retailers can either find ways to increase their margins or boost the number of their customers. Margins can only be raised so much before customers start shopping elsewhere. So, increasing the numbers of strong, loyal customers makes much more sense and it isn't as hard as it seems.

That means stores need to embrace new ideas and all technology offers. Merchants need to create a strong digital image for their stores including customer loyalty programs, geofencing marketing efforts, automated customer satisfaction



**Dan Nesmith**  
President

surveys, mobile-friendly eCommerce customer portals, digital advertising, and strong, secure in-store Wi-Fi. Stores also need to drive their inventory investments harder than ever to guarantee they always have the right quantity of the right products at the right time. They also need to constantly seek new products to keep us interested in their stores.

Consumers expect more from merchants today. Due in part to the evolution of retail, which now offers more personalized choices from eCommerce companies, shoppers want similar features from their neighborhood stores. While many national and regional brands build and maintain their own customer loyalty programs, third-party offerings, such as RepeatRewards,

Rich Rewards and others, are available to independent businesses. These solutions give retailers high-powered programs to effectively compete with the chain stores and big box online experiences. They reward faithful customers and give retailers a great way to interact with their loyal shoppers.



# Retail Trends: Satisfying Shoppers

By Brian Bullock

Two recent consumer trends have many merchants raising their eyebrows and looking to capitalize: Checkout lines at big-box and chain department stores are getting longer due to a lack of clerks, and the number of online consumers looking to purchase locally is increasing. Neighborhood retailers can take advantage of these trends by making sure their checkout is quick and easy, and their online presence alerts Googlers to their retail stock availability.

A recent article in the *Wall Street Journal*, notes that many large retailers are shedding customer service staff more quickly than they are closing stores to cut costs and remain relevant in the evolving retail environment. And it's becoming evident from expert observation and customer comments, the staff-slashing strategy is backfiring badly.

"Retailers are shooting themselves in the foot trying to save pennies by lowering labor costs, and that's costing them dollars on the top line," Rogelio Oliva, a

business school professor at Texas A&M University, tells the Journal.

Another trend neighborhood merchants can capitalize on, is the increase in immediate-needs shopping. According to a recent post on a Google blog, even though shoppers may spend nearly two weeks researching a potential purchase, when they move to buy, 33% want the item immediately, often leading them to look to local retailers.

These results are emphasized by the drastic increase in the number of mobile Google searches related to find items "near me" or "where to shop." Over the past two years, searches related to those to phrases have increased 85%. The 2017 Retail Vision Study shows that while online and mobile commerce is transforming retail shopping, 91% of all sales still happen in bricks-and-mortar stores. That means independent merchants with solid customer service, a strong online presence, and integrated digital solutions can deliver on the heightened expectations of impatient shoppers.

## Buying Local Works for Everybody

By Brian Bullock

By now, everybody is familiar with Small Business Saturdays - the day following the annual Black Friday madness dedicated to raising awareness of shopping at small, local businesses. It has been proven many times over the years that shopping local supports communities in ways online retailers, big-box and chain stores can't.

A recent study from the National Hardware Retail Association showed that independent home improvement stores recirculate 250% more dollars locally than chain store competitors.

Comparing local purchases to online transactions shows even greater disparity. Sales through local hardware stores have a local impact seven times greater than those through online giants.

A *Consumer Reports* survey of pharmacies finds that independent shops earn top marks for customer satisfaction and are competitive on prices with their chain store competition.

That's why buying local is always a good idea.



There are many resources available to independent merchants interested in starting such campaigns.

[AMIBA](#) – American Independent Business Alliance offers a guide to campaigns and a roundup of seasonal campaigns.

[Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives](#) – offers information and resources on "buy local" initiatives.

[Independent We Stand](#) – features information about the importance of "buying local."

## Business of Excellence

**Company:** Farmers Feed Service

**Owner:** Clint & Wanda McCullers

**Location:** Wetumpka, AL

**Years in Business:** 50, 30 as owners

Farmers Feed Service, Inc. has been in the same location in once-tiny Wetumpka, Alabama for nearly 25 years. Owned by Clint and Wanda McCullers, it is the quintessential small-town, family-run feed and hardware store where, as Wanda likes to say, "Everybody knows your name." Located on the outskirts of Montgomery, Wetumpka's population grew from just over 6,500 in 2010 to about 8,200 in 2016. Farmers Feed Service faced some growing pains over the years, too.

While they were big on friendly customer service, the McCullers needed to get a handle on how their business was doing.

"Over the years when we've had opportunities to grow, we weren't organized which really hampered our ability to grow," she says, explaining that Paladin helped move their company from handwritten receipts to an automated business management system. "Another disadvantage to that manual inventory process is we had no idea where our business stood. Can I hire another employee? Can we buy this piece of equipment? I had no clue." Wanda says Paladin answered all those questions and provided the digital solutions and knowledge that gives them a firm handle on their business.

**Best business advice:** We aim to run our business with the highest standards of honesty and integrity. Clint says, "Always do what is right, even if it costs you."



**PALADIN**<sup>TM</sup>  
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# Paladin Tech Buzz

## Email Marketing Delivers

By Brian Bullock

Remember when the internet was new? America Online (AOL) was one of the pioneers and one of its signature alerts was "You've got mail!" Heck, Hollywood even made a romantic comedy about email. Remember Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan? Anyway, as with most good things, email has been overused, abused and made almost villainous. Admit it. How many hours have you spent cleaning out your inbox?

For independent businesses, however, an email marketing campaign is still an effective and inexpensive tool, and here are some expert suggestions on how to make one work for you.

One of the reasons email is still such an effective marketing tool today is because it's mobile. More and more people are accessing their email via smartphones.

According to the Pew

Research Center, mobile devices account for over half (52%) of the webpage views in the U.S.

Another study by Forrester Research shows that three out of every five retailers' email messages are opened by a mobile device.

Although this sounds like good news for eCommerce, it's a good deal for bricks-and-mortar retailers, too.

The National Retail Federation studied back-to-school shopping a few years ago and found that 54% of shoppers cited digital coupons as reasons they shopped at a particular store. And consumers are almost as likely to use a coupon printed from an email (64%) or a website (57%) as they are to use one gathered as a newspaper advertising insert (74%).

Many independent businesses are utilizing customer information such as email addresses gained through sales data and loyalty programs to distribute digital coupons or new product information.

All of this means that sending out email offers to loyal or repeat customers is a simple, effective and critical part of a good marketing effort.



## Upcoming Events

Paladin will be attending the following events. To arrange a visit, please email us at [sales@paladinpointofsale.com](mailto:sales@paladinpointofsale.com)

**Ace Pacific Northwest Retailer Summit**  
 July 18-19 | Moxee, WA

**United Fall & Winter Buying Market**  
**FREE USER MEETING**  
 July 27-29 | Minneapolis, MN

**Ace Fall 2018**  
 August 16-18 | Chicago, IL

**Orgill Fall Dealer Market**  
**FREE USER MEETING**  
 August 23-25 | Las Vegas, NV



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