



# Around The Table

## Steps Leading To A Sale

Getting people through your door is the first step in making a sale, engaging the customer is the second and the next step is to sell the customer on your products or service.

Learning to engage customers will help your business have more customers rather than browsers.

Engaging the customer seems to be the most difficult for many businesses. A

store can look absolutely stunning, have great prices and be filled with quality product, but if the customer does not feel comfortable or important to the workers behind the counter, the possibility of them making a purchase or coming back into the store is slim.

Though it might take some practice getting out of your comfort zone, engaging cus-

tomers isn't really all that hard. You just need to be consistent and pleasant about it. Start by greeting the customers that come through your door. Offer to show them around, highlighting some things that may be of interest to them.

Another way to engage them is by asking for feedback. Find out what they like and dislike about your products or services. *Continued on Page 3*

## Irish Themed Golf Outing Underway

The SCED Annual Golf Outing is scheduled for Friday, June 12, at the Sullivan Country Club. The day will be split into two sessions: a morning round of nine holes and an afternoon round of 18

holes.

For those of you who like to golf for fun, we suggest golfing in the morning session that starts at 8 a.m.

For the more serious golfer, we suggest playing the 18 holes

that starts at noon.

Breakfast, lunch, afternoon snacks and evening appetizers will be served along with unlimited free beer, soda and water.

The morning session costs \$55 for Chamber

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### Special points of interest:

- *Engaging the customer*
- *Golf Outing*
- *GIS Market Analysis software*
- *IRS Tax Tips*
- *SCORE Testimony*
- *Calendar of Events*

# GIS For Marketing Analysis

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The SCED recently co-hosted a workshop with ECIDC (East Central Illinois Development Council) on GIS Market Analysis software. Hydro-Gear graciously allowed us to use their upstairs conference room and attendees from Sullivan and the region attended. Mike Rudibaugh the Geography/GIS Instructor of Lakeland College and Trisha Mason, Director of ECIDC were the presenters.

When I hear “GIS”, I instantly think of mapping. I know that our Moultrie County Assessor, Cindy Kidwell uses GIS software as does Monty Johnson for the City of Sullivan. It’s absolutely amazing to see the technology that is now available to public entities for tracking parcel ownership for tax assessment and mapping of infrastructure for utility providers. In some ways it is obvious how GIS can be useful to government for such purposes as being able to see and update all of the electric, gas, water and sewer lines throughout the city without having to build multiple maps of overlays.

Mike Rudibaugh explained to us that GIS is a form of Geospacial Technology which also includes Global Positioning Systems (GPS), Remote Sensing, Google Earth, Mapquest and Location Based Services like 911. GIS Technology “combines relational database structures with

computer generated maps.” Mike also shared that the benefits of GIS are becoming realized in other industries such as agriculture, healthcare, workforce development, marketing and economic development.

So, how can GIS help our local businesses or help me in Economic Development? Let me back up here for a minute. Have you ever had a store ask for your zip code or phone number as you were checking out? I have and I was always hesitant to give that information thinking they just wanted to sign me up for a frequent shopper card. I now understand that those collected zip codes are entered into GIS software to create a map so the store can see where its customers are coming from. With that information in hand, the store can then purchase addresses for the areas where they aren’t reaching customers or they can send special targeted mailings to those areas where the frequent shoppers live. Rather than planning a marketing campaign to the general public, the store can be more specific and therefore save itself a lot of time and money on marketing.

In economic development, GIS can also be a very useful tool. Let’s say for example we would like to bring a hotel to the Sullivan area. With GIS, we can search for communities with

similar demographics to ours and find out what brands of hotels are locating in those cities. This can save time and money as we can target those specific businesses knowing that we already should meet their locating criteria.

Brian Moody of Tuscola Economic Development Corp let Mike share a report that had been done for Tuscola through the Tanger Outlet Mall. Tanger had been collecting zip codes from shoppers to then share with Brian and the GIS team. Brian and Tanger can use that data to market to or survey those shoppers to see what other types of stores they might frequent. Brian can then invite those businesses to Tuscola in the hopes that they will also be successful.

Trisha Mason of ECIDC has agreed to help me research the types of data we need to be collecting from our shoppers so that we can use GIS technology. Watch for future articles and emails about how we will be moving forward with this idea. In the meantime, if you are already collecting data from customers and using it in your business, please let me know as I would like to learn more about this myself. Call at 217-728-2684 or email me at SullivanEconDev@hotmail.com

Submitted by Stepheny McMahon

## Do You Barter?

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Bartering is the trading of one product or service for another. Usually there is no exchange of cash. Barter may take place on an informal one-on-one basis between individuals and businesses, or it can take place on a third party basis through a modern barter exchange company.

Bartering is the most ancient form of commerce. While our ancestors may have exchanged eggs for corn, today you can barter computer services for auto repair.

Another example of a one-on-one, non-barter exchange transaction is a plumber doing repair work for a dentist in exchange for dental services. The fair market value of the goods and services exchanged must be reported as income by both parties.

Here are a few things you should know about bartering:

- **Barter Exchange** A barter exchange functions primarily as the organizer of a marketplace where members buy and sell products and services among themselves. Whether this activity operates out of a physical office or is internet based, a barter exchange is generally required to issue Form 1099-B, Proceeds from Broker and Barter Exchange Transactions, annually to their clients or members and to the IRS.

- **Barter Income** Barter dollars or trade dollars are identical to real dollars for tax reporting. If you conduct any direct barter - barter for another's products or services - you will have to report the fair market value of the products or services you received on your tax return.

- **Taxes** Income from bartering is taxable in the year it is per-

formed. You may be subject to liabilities for income tax, self-employment tax, employment tax, or excise tax. Your barter activities may result in ordinary business income, capital gains or capital losses, or you may have a nondeductible personal loss.

**Reporting** The rules for reporting barter transactions may vary depending on which form of bartering takes place. Generally, you report this type of business income on Form 1040, Schedule C Profit or Loss from Business, or other business returns such as Form 1065 for Partnerships, Form 1120 for Corporations, or Form 1120-S for Small Business Corporations.

For more information type "Barter" in the search box on the IRS.gov homepage.

Source: *IRS Tax Tips*

## Steps cont...

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Ask them if there is something your store should be carrying. Remember, feedback is a way to better your business. Constructive criticism can help a business improve far more than praise.

Be sure to explain to the customer why your products or services are worthy of their purchase. Let the customer know how important they are to you

### *Three Step Selling Process*

*1.) Customer inside the store*

*2.) Engage the customer*

*3.) Make the sale*

by taking the time to talk with them about your business. And whether the customer buys something or not, always thank them for coming in. Thanking the customer sends them out of your store on a good note. You want them to leave with a positive experience so that they will come back and getting their foot in your door again cycles back to

the first step.

No one business is entitled to have customers. No one business can afford not to engage their customers. And no one business can expect to sell their products or services without giving explanations as to why they are of quality.

Making the customer feel welcomed and appreciated is worth the investment for your business' sake.

Submitted by Holly Thomas

## SCORE Testimony from Brian Titus of Lorenz Wholesale

Lorenz Wholesale was established in 1946 and is in their 61<sup>st</sup> year. Mr. Titus has been with the company for three years and is now a partner in the business.

Mr. Titus felt fortunate in working with his three counselors. Because he is an EIU business graduate, he knew the caliber of the counselors, all EIU professors. It was an extremely good experience and most of the things discussed during the five to six meetings have been implemented. Lorenz completely restructured the sales team, sales territories, and delivery schedule to serve customers better and increase efficiency. The result

also impacted the name change to Lorenz Supply Company.

*“The changes made a very large impact. There was double digit profit increase as a result.”*

*“SCORE was a huge aid in business development for us both internally and externally. We are actually continuing to make changes that we talked about since we met (with counselors) over a year ago. Most of all, business development and second of all, increased profitability -- the decisions we made have done nothing but help our bottom line. They met our expectations. I was thrilled.”*

Mr. Titus had no improvements – he was satisfied. He thought the discussions with his counselors were informative, entertaining, and productive.

Mr. Titus has recommended people to SCORE and continues to do so. He was very pleased with his experience.



## A Caution To Business Owners From The IRS

To encourage prompt payment of withheld income and employment taxes, including social security taxes, railroad retirement taxes, or collected excise taxes, Congress passed a law that provides for the Employment Taxes and Trust Fund Recovery Penalty (TFRP). These taxes are called trust fund taxes because you actually hold the employee's money in trust until you make a federal tax deposit in that amount.

### Who Can Be Responsible for the TFRP

The TFRP may be assessed against any person who:

is **responsible** for collecting or paying withheld income and employment taxes, or for paying collected excise taxes, and **willfully fails** to collect or pay them.

A **responsible** person is a person or group of people who has the duty to perform and the power to direct the collecting, accounting, and paying of trust fund taxes. This person may be:

- an officer or an employee of a corporation,
- a member or employee of a partnership,
- a corporate director or shareholder,
- a member of a board of trustees of a nonprofit organization,
- another person with authority and control over funds to direct their disbursement, or another corporation.

For **willfulness** to exist, the responsible person:

- must have been, or should have been, aware of the outstanding taxes and either inten-

tionally disregarded the law or was plainly indifferent to its requirements (no evil intent or bad motive is required).

Using available funds to pay other creditors when the business is unable to pay the employment taxes is an indication of willfulness.

### Caution:

Once we assert the penalty, we can take collection action against your personal assets. For instance, we can file a federal tax lien or take levy or seizure action.

**SCORE**  
Counselors to America's Small Business

# May 2009 Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 SHS Prom 1-4 p.m. Plant Exchange @ Kim's Country Mall
3	4	5 May Days on the Square	6	7	8	9 10am—Abundance of Life cooking Class
10	11 Retailers Meeting 2 p.m. at Little Theatre 7pm—City Council	12	13	14 7pm Moultrie County Board	15	16 SHS Musical "Guys & Dolls"
17	18	19	20	21 Chamber Committee Meeting 7 a.m.	22 SHS Graduation	23 Sullivan Street Machine Car Show in Wyman Park
24/31	25 SCED Office closed for Memorial Day	26	27	28	29	30

## Downtown Parking Needs Extra Consideration from You!

Just a reminder that the highlighted days on the calendar indicate heavy parking demands. Please park accordingly. *Thank you!*

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## May Days On The Square

**Tuesday, May 5**

**Shop Sullivan for Mother's Day, Memorial Day and Cinco de Mayo. See Ad in News Progress April 29 issue for participating businesses and what they will be featuring.**

**Call SCED if interested in participating!**



**SULLIVAN CHAMBER & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

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***Organized to promote the business, economic and civic well being of the City of Sullivan so that the community may grow and prosper.***

**New Chamber Business Members**

**New Prairie Gallery  
Willaredt Limited Partnership  
Zollmann Trailer Sales, Inc.**

## Golf Outing cont...

members and \$65 for non-Chamber members. When non-Chamber members sign up for the morning session they will receive a free Individual Membership for the rest of the year (a \$31.25 value). The afternoon session costs \$75 for Chamber members and \$175 for non-Chamber members.

SCED is going with an Irish theme this year and will incorporate it into the participation gift bags, prizes and even to the green beer. It will be a

great time for everyone! There is also a 50/50 raffle with the winner announced at the end of the evening, just enough time for the pot to fill up.

Brochures with entry applications will soon be sent out to all Chambers members, but anyone can sign up for the outing at any time.

Just call the SCED office at 217-728-4223 or email [info@sullivanchamber.com](mailto:info@sullivanchamber.com).

We are looking for teams of four in the morning and in the afternoon.

Submitted by Holly Thomas

