

This is Anthony Mantova for Community Comment. If you're a regular listener to KINS radio, then you've probably heard my "shop local" PSA. In my mind there was always a part II to that message. Shopping local is a great way to ensure that local merchants continue to exist. But it's a two way street, as merchants need to make sure they are doing everything they can to earn that business.

Every business needs different solutions. What worked great for us was carefully hand building our own displays. In the music industry there is nothing good available for displaying guitars amplifiers accessories

Our solution was to break the mold and design more welcoming ways to showcase our goods. The displays help create an awe effect with our customers.

Another solution for increasing business is our laser like focus on good communication. Whether you are a regular or return customer you simply cant enter-and-ext our store w/o being talked @ multiple times. Our greetings are designed to ensure customers dont put up barriers and say things like "im just looking."

I forget which sales guru said it, but its not about customer satisfaction, its about getting new customers! and for Humboldt merchants that is doubly true!

We are grateful for our large number of local customers, but we are always looking outside of Humboldt for more business. We get a lot of bands passing through from Portland and San Francisco. We drum up business by advertisiing in the online classifieds of other counties, north south and inland.

Other Humboldt Merchants need to look outward, outside of our county. Some of our restaurants make products that can be exported to other states and countries. All merchants need to think bigger. It's no secret that Humboldt County is going through a fundamental economic shift. If you're a merchant, you beter make sure you are not 100% dependent on how that goes!

One complaint shoppers might have is that local prices are higher than online and elsewhere. It's not a problem for my business, because my manufacturers typically set the prices that I charge. We have something called the MAP -Minimum Advertising Price that dicttates what I should sell my goods for.

I know other industries are not so lucky. You should never compete by lowering your price, but as a store you need to find ways to keep customers comfortable with your pricing. Our solution was to never, ever have a sale. That way our customers know that the prices are always stable. Our customers have better things to do than wait for artificial sales and coupons. Our customers are more interested in buying from a store that has what they want, at a stable price that is close enough to whats online or anywhere else. So lets continue to encourage everyone to shop local, but lets also encourage merchants to improve thier stores and customer experience.

This has been Anthony Mantova for Community Comment