



TOP 7 MARKETING TIPS TO PREPARE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

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As small business owners, it's sometimes difficult to meet the demands of the day, let alone plan for what's coming up down the road. However, when we prepare, we have an opportunity to not only meet customer needs but to surpass them with value-added experiences. And when we meet customer satisfaction, we can better grow our business, particularly during revenue-generating months when having that extra income is so vital. With that in mind, I've created several tips to help you harness your SVVB membership and to start planning ahead for the crazy few months ahead. Read below for some inspiration...

1. Check your business page listing on the SVVB website

When was the last time you checked your listing on our website? As you get ready for the holidays, there's no better time to make sure your photos and copy are up to date with current information. Besides your website, your listing is one of the primary ways our visitors get impressions of your business, so it's critical to update it regularly to stay current with your offerings. Pro tip: photos with people having fun are much more engaging than empty ones of the interior of your business. You can [make the changes on our member extranet here](#).

2. Plan ahead: Set dates for all upcoming events & share them

Thinking of being open for Christmas Day? New Year's Eve? Now's the time to commit and plan accordingly with pretty graphics and great photos to entice visitors. Have you uploaded them to the SVVB website? Your own website? Folks are coming to our website now to plan for their holidays. You can [click here to upload your event](#)—it only takes a few minutes. One of our pet peeves at the SVVB is when a business has waited until the last minute to promote their event and they look to us to make a miracle. Making sure your holiday events and offerings give you a sound ROI starts with good planning.

3. Plan your marketing campaigns and stick to the dates you set

Planning on a big bash for Halloween or offering new products that you want to showcase? Great! Now that you have the launch dates secured, it's time to start thinking about email campaigns, press releases where necessary, social media posts, and possible advertisements—all to be scheduled in advance. Plan backwards to make things easy, starting with the event, and then planning all the elements of your campaign that need to happen beforehand to get buy-in early. The sooner you plan, the better, and remember: "perfect" is the enemy of "good."

4. Share your marketing collateral with us

Do you have informative and engaging rack cards, brochures or postcards you want to share? Print in the travel and tourism world has a 70% conversion rate! If you haven't already, please print out a fresh batch of collateral and bring it to our new Visitors Center at the old Toscano Hotel on East Spain Street. At drop off, consider taking some time to speak with our Visitor Service Representatives to get the scoop on trends they're seeing and give them intel about important goods or services you are offering that they can help you promote.

5. Make hay while the sun is shining

When things get busy, it's easy to let the little things slide. No matter how busy things may get during the holiday season, be sure to collect all the email addresses you can (*even if you're not currently marketing by email*), take the extra time to share your extra goods and services that your customers may not know about, and continue networking with other local businesses about future events. Our revenue may be cyclical here in the valley, but rainy-day planning is nonstop. During the busy months, make sure to squirrel away some of your earnings into a savings account so you can navigate the quieter months with more ease.

6. Get loud & proud

Michelle Lacy is the SVVB's social media guru, and she's great at making businesses shine across social platforms. If you want her to give your post a push, please make sure to make her a collaborator, then tag her @experiencesonomaValley on Facebook or @sonoma_valley on Instagram. It's a great way to boost your post's audience and engagement. You can reach her at michellelacy@sonomavalley.com. If your business is making waves with awards and recognitions, new leadership/ownership, or any other big changes, be sure to send your press releases to our public relations expert, Jennifer Sweeney. You can reach her at jennifer@jsweeneycomms.com.

7. Ask for help

Not sure what to do to make your campaign or holiday offerings shine? Call us and ask our advice. We speak to local businesses all day, every day, and we know what's successful and what needs tweaking—and if we don't, we'll send you to someone who will. Marketing is the job of the well-rounded multitasker. However, to be successful means calling in reinforcements with

subject matter expert to help you with specific tasks you may not be good at. At the SVVB, we have a great address book of content creators, photographers, videographers, graphic designers, web developers/designers, branding experts, and printers who can give you help with whatever you need. Just ask.

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One of the best parts of working at the SVVB is that we get to work with hundreds of businesses, having a rare opportunity to see what works and what doesn't in our special little corner of wine country. It's the reason that, outside of my work in marketing and partnerships for the SVVB, I also do life and leadership coaching for the hospitality industry. Feel free to check out my website at <https://lorivarsames.com/> if you want to know more about how coaching can empower your leadership and improve your business.