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THRIVE

MAGAZINE

**Get up, out
and away!
Ideas for
last-days-of-
summer vacays**

Set up shop! Open your business the right way
Top 10 creative ways to market your retail store
Let's all scream for ice cream!

IN THE MOMENT: Memorable trips for college-bound kids
BRAINPOWER: Whet your APP-etite with the best grilling apps

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SET UP SHOP! OPEN YOUR BUSINESS THE RIGHT WAY

Despite the allure of digital and the omnipresence of eCommerce giants, physical retail shops still have a strong appeal. People love to walk up and down aisles, hold products in their hands and just get out and be social—all the delights that brick-and-mortar shops offer. But that doesn't mean it'll be easy. Setting up shop requires careful planning and execution. And to help you with that, here's a list of tips to help you open your business the right way.

Lay the groundwork

There's a lot of upfront planning involved in launching a new venture. Consider each item as you lay the groundwork for your new empire.

Develop a robust business plan

Craft a detailed plan that encompasses all aspects of your venture. Your plan should include market research, financial projections and budgeting strategies. Don't know where to begin? Remember, we're here to help!

Select a strategic location

If you want to run a successful coffee house, you don't set up shop behind a Starbucks. Location, location, location is still the main rule when selecting where your shop will live. Apart from prime positioning, you'll also want to consider cost. What is your monthly payment, and does it fit within your budget?

Pinpoint the right entity structure

Choose an appropriate legal structure for your business, considering both tax implications and legal protections. Will you set up as a sole proprietorship, LLC corporation? Consult with professionals to ensure you're making the best choice for your specific situation.

Obtain necessary identification

Apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN), which is essential for tax purposes and required if you plan to hire employees.

Be brand aware

A brand encompasses everything about your business—name, tagline, logo, website, client experience and any other feature that distinguishes your company from others. Brands have the power to conjure a certain feeling or image in the minds of consumers—positive or negative. So you get it: Brand is kind of a big deal. Make sure you give it the attention it deserves right from the start.

Craft a memorable identity

Select a business name that clearly communicates your offerings and resonates with your target market. If your family name carries local significance, consider incorporating it into your brand. Don't forget to conduct thorough trademark searches to avoid future legal complications.

Create a logo

Your logo should support not only what you sell but who you are as a business. This means carefully selecting the logo image, font and colors. While there are many affordable (some even free) logo platforms, to ensure your logo is spot on, you may want to hire a freelance graphic designer. They are trained in color theory and typography—and also possess mad design skills.

Be consistent across channels and collateral

Once you have your brand kit in hand—including your logo, brand colors, fonts and rules of logo use—do not stray from it. Be sure to apply brand elements consistently across anything and everything tied to your store. This includes your website, printed materials, social channels, online ads, swag, email signatures and more.



Operational excellence

When operations run smoothly, a business will hum along. But a smooth operation requires intentional planning. Consider these key elements...

Assemble a stellar team

Recruit employees who align with your company culture and can deliver exceptional customer service. The right team is crucial to create a positive shopping experience that drives repeat visits.

Curate your product selection

Conduct market research to determine the optimal mix of products for your store. Offering the right merchandise at competitive prices is key to attracting and retaining customers.

Make your mark online

While people love to visit physical stores, they also love the convenience of online shopping. Be sure to add an online shopping option on your website. This will bolster return visits and help increase brand awareness and loyalty.

Create a memorable shopping experience

Elevate the client experience: Despite the rise of online shopping, a significant portion of consumers, including 63% of Millennials (Forbes), still prefer in-store experiences. Focus on creating a high-touch, engaging environment that justifies the trip to your physical location. Offering free samples, focused customer service or rewards points can all help create a rich experience for shoppers.

Pay attention to design

Be sure to design your shop for easy flow. Make aisles wide enough for multiple customers to walk through. Keep items in reach. And ensure your brand is represented consistently.

Develop a marketing strategy

Start marketing efforts before your store opens. Brainstorm promotional ideas, establish your brand presence, and begin advertising to build anticipation and name recognition. Do this over your business social media channels—Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok. Dealer's choice. Also make sure to claim and build out your Google Business Profile—the most powerful marketing platform there is. And it's free! Being easy to find is part of a rich customer experience.

Test the waters with a soft opening

Before hosting a grand opening, conduct a soft launch to identify and address any operational issues that might diminish the customer experience. This period allows you and your staff to fine-tune processes and ensure a smooth customer experience.

By following these steps and maintaining a customer-centric approach, you'll be well-positioned to launch a successful retail business that encourages repeat visits, positive word of mouth and long-term growth. Power to the small business owner!





GET UP, OUT AND AWAY! IDEAS FOR LAST-DAYS-OF-SUMMER ACTIVITIES

It's time to savor the season...because it's almost over. Bummer, we know. But just because summer is coming to a close doesn't mean the fun can't continue. Before Labor Day hits, make sure to get up, out and away!

Whether you're looking for outdoor excursions, creative projects or simple moments of connection, there are countless ways to make the most of these last golden days. Here are few activities to wrap up the summer with fun and togetherness.

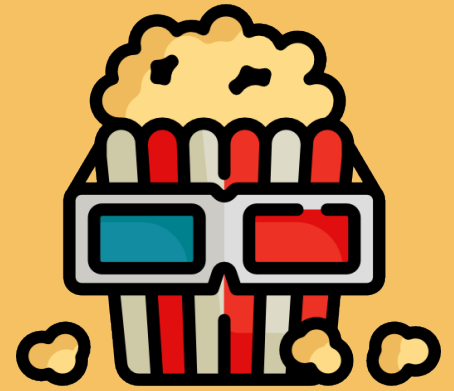


1. Plan a backyard campout

Camping doesn't have to mean a long road trip—with all its bathroom stops and asking "Are we there yet?" Set up a tent in your backyard, roll out the sleeping bags and enjoy a night under the stars. Tell stories, roast marshmallows and create a mini-adventure just steps from your home. It's an easy, budget-friendly way to experience the magic of camping while staying close to home. Let the new memories begin!

2. Host a DIY outdoor movie night

Transform your backyard into a cozy open-air theater with a projector, a white sheet and a few comfortable folding or lawn chairs. Pick a movie everyone can get into, make some popcorn and enjoy a cinematic experience under the summer sky. Depending on where you are, this can be a special way to enjoy one last warm evening together before the cooler nights set in.



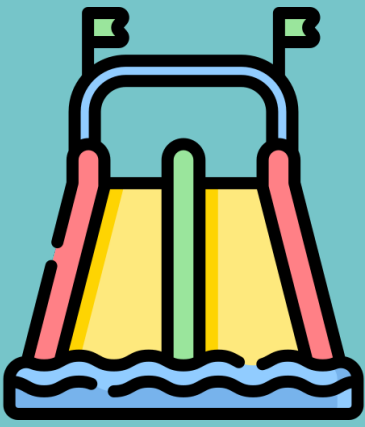
3. Take a sunset picnic to the park

There's something truly special about a sunset picnic. Pack a basket with your family's favorite foods, grab a blanket and head to a scenic park or beach. As the sun sets, soak in the beauty of nature while enjoying great food and company.

4. Go on a nature scavenger hunt

Make your last summer hikes or park visits extra exciting by organizing a nature scavenger hunt. Create a list of items to find—like unique trees and leaves, animal tracks or specific birds. You can even hide your own surprises, like a basket of treats or a small gift. This is a fun way to engage kids in outdoor exploration and teach them more about their surroundings.





5. Have a water play day

Host a water-themed day. Whether it's a slip-and-slide in the backyard, a trip to the water park or jumping through sprinklers, water play is a great way to cool off and create joyful summer memories. You can also make a DIY slip-and-slide. Just a little thick plastic tarping, some Dawn dish soap and water, and the kids (and you) can slide for days.

6. Plan a day trip to a nearby attraction

If there's a local attraction you've been meaning to visit, now is the perfect time. Whether it's a zoo, a farm, an amusement park or a historical site, a family day trip can be a wonderful way to celebrate the end of summer while exploring something new together. And sometimes, just the drive can be fun.

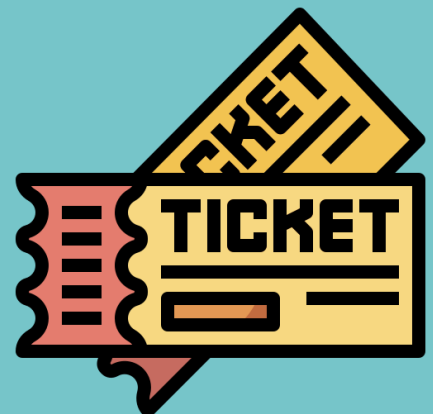


7. Go fruit picking

Late summer is often the perfect time for picking fruits like peaches, apples and berries. If you live in a region with local orchards or farms, take the family and let everyone participate in harvesting fresh produce. Afterward, extend the fun by making homemade jams, pies or fruit salads with your pickings.

8. Create a summer memory scrapbook

Gather photos, ticket stubs, drawings and notes from your summer adventures and compile them into a scrapbook. This creative project allows the whole family to reflect on the memories made throughout the season and preserve them in a meaningful way.



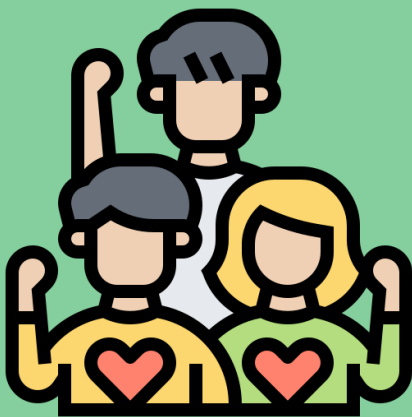
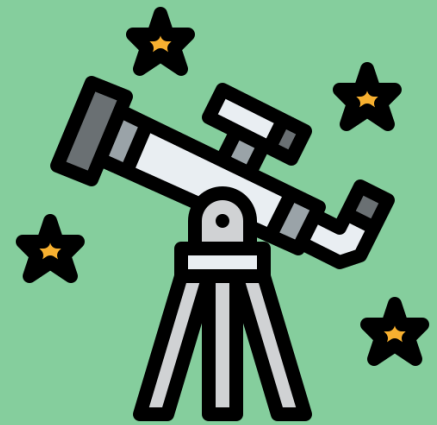


9. Have a DIY ice cream party

Celebrate summer's end with a homemade ice cream party. Set up a toppings bar with sprinkles, syrups, fruit and whipped cream. Let each family member customize their own sundae or even try making homemade ice cream together for an extra fun and delicious experience.

10. Watch the stars and say bye to summer

Take advantage of clear nights by stargazing as a family. Bring out blankets, use a stargazing app to identify constellations and talk about the wonders of the universe. This peaceful activity is a beautiful way to mark the transition from summer to fall.



11. Volunteer as a family

Giving back to the community can be a meaningful way to wrap up the summer. Look for local volunteer opportunities, such as park clean-ups, food bank donations or helping at an animal shelter. Quick note: Many shelters have a family volunteer program. Teaching kids about the joy of helping others creates lasting values and cherished memories.

12. Set end-of-summer goals and traditions

Encourage family members to set small goals for the next season, such as reading a certain number of books, learning a new skill or starting a fun hobby. This can also be a time to establish a special end-of-summer tradition, like writing letters to your future selves to be opened next summer.



A large, dark silhouette of a person's head and shoulders is shown in profile, looking out from a cave opening. The cave opening frames a view of a starry night sky with a prominent band of light, likely the Milky Way galaxy, stretching across the frame. The stars are numerous and vary in brightness, creating a dense field of light against the dark background of space. The overall mood is contemplative and awe-inspiring.

Keep the fun going!

The end of summer doesn't have to feel like a goodbye—it's an opportunity to celebrate the memories made and welcome the exciting adventures to come.

Whether you choose an outdoor excursion, creative project, heartfelt family moments or a combination of all, these activities will ensure that you and your loved ones finish the season on a high note. So grab your sunscreen, gather your family and make the most of the final days of summer.



TOP 10 CREATIVE WAYS TO MARKET YOUR RETAIL STORE

It's competitive out there. And that means running your retail shop requires more than just great products and excellent customer service. To stand out, attract customers and present a powerful brand, you need creative and strategic marketing.

If you're not naturally inclined toward marketing, don't worry—these tips will help you tap into your inner creativity and promote your retail business in fresh and exciting ways.

1. Create an immersive in-store experience

Your store should be more than just a place to shop—it should be an experience. Customers are more likely to visit and return to a store that offers an engaging atmosphere. Consider a few tips:

- Host themed shopping events with music, refreshments and special promotions.
- Create interactive displays where customers can test products.
- Offer personalized shopping consultations or styling sessions.
- Install a photo-friendly corner with eye-catching decor that encourages customers to take and share pictures on social media. Be sure to offer a hashtag!

2. Leverage social media creatively

Social media is a powerful tool for engaging with customers and increasing brand awareness. Go beyond simple product posts and create interactive, engaging content like:

- Live streaming: Host live Q&A sessions, product demos or behind-the-scenes looks at your business.
- User-generated content: Encourage customers to share their purchases by using a branded hashtag and featuring their posts on your page.
- Contests and giveaways: Run fun social media contests where customers can win store credit or exclusive products.
- TikTok and reels challenges: Create entertaining short videos that showcase your brand's personality.

3. Collaborate with local influencers and businesses

Influencer marketing isn't just for big brands. Partnering with local influencers who align with your store's values and aesthetics can increase your reach. You can also:

- Team up with nearby businesses for cross-promotions, such as offering discount coupons for each other's customers.
- Host pop-up shops featuring local artisans or complementary businesses.
- Organize a joint event, such as a "sip and shop" evening where customers can enjoy refreshments while browsing.



4. Implement a loyalty and referral program

Encouraging repeat business is easier when you reward customers for their loyalty. Consider:

- A point-based rewards system where customers earn points for every purchase.
- Exclusive VIP perks for frequent shoppers, such as early access to sales or free gifts.
- A referral program that offers discounts or store credit to customers who bring in new shoppers.

5. Use guerilla marketing tactics

Don't worry—this isn't as aggressive as it sounds. Sometimes, the most effective marketing strategies are the boldest. Guerilla marketing tactics can help grab attention without requiring a massive budget.

You can try:

- Eye-catching sidewalk chalk art or creative window displays that make people stop and take notice.
- Flash sales or surprise discounts announced on social media for a limited time.
- Engaging in random acts of kindness, like handing out small freebies or offering free gift-wrapping services.

6. Optimize your website and leverage eCommerce

Even if your store operates primarily offline, a strong online presence is essential. Make sure your website:

- Showcases your products with high-quality images and detailed descriptions.
- Is mobile-friendly and easy to navigate.
- Features an online store or a way for customers to order items remotely.
- Includes a blog with useful content related to your niche, such as fashion tips, home decor ideas or product guides.



7. Host workshops and events

People love learning new skills, and hosting workshops can position your store as a community hub. Depending on your business, you could offer:

- DIY crafting sessions using products you sell.
- Makeup or styling workshops.
- Home decor or gardening tutorials.
- Special guest speakers who offer expertise relevant to your customers.

8. Use email marketing strategically

Email marketing is still one of the most effective ways to reach your audience. Make your emails stand out by:

- Offering exclusive discounts and early access to sales for subscribers.
- Personalizing recommendations based on previous purchases.
- Sending engaging newsletters with useful content, store updates and upcoming events.
- Automating abandoned cart emails to remind customers about items they left in their online shopping carts.

9. Participate in community events

Getting involved in local events is a great way to build brand awareness and attract foot traffic. Consider:

- Setting up a booth at farmers' markets or craft fairs.
- Sponsoring a charity event or local sports team.
- Participating in seasonal festivals with unique promotions and interactive activities.
- Offering exclusive discounts to event attendees to encourage them to visit your store.

10. Personalize the customer experience

Customers love feeling valued, and personal touches can go a long way in making your brand memorable.

Try:

- Sending handwritten thank-you notes with purchases.
- Offering free customization on select products.
- Remembering regular customers' preferences and making personalized recommendations.
- Providing a seamless omnichannel experience, where customers can easily transition between online and in-store shopping.

The wrap...

Marketing your retail store creatively doesn't have to be overwhelming. By experimenting with different strategies, engaging with your community and making the shopping experience more enjoyable, you can attract and retain customers in a way that feels natural and fun. Whether you're hosting events, leveraging social media or creating immersive in-store experiences, the key is to stay authentic and align your marketing efforts with your brand's unique personality.

Get creative, have fun and watch your retail store thrive!



LET'S ALL SCREAM FOR ICE CREAM!

Nothing beats the rich and creamy taste of homemade ice cream—and the best part is, you don't need an ice cream maker. With just a few simple ingredients and a little patience, you can create delicious homemade ice cream right in your kitchen or backyard.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 cup sweetened condensed milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Optional mix-ins: chocolate chips, fruit, nuts, cookie pieces or caramel

Instructions:

1. Whip the cream: In a large mixing bowl, use a hand or stand mixer to whip the heavy cream until stiff peaks form. This will create a light and airy texture for the ice cream.
2. Combine ingredients: Gently fold in the sweetened condensed milk and vanilla extract. Be careful not to deflate the whipped cream.
3. Add mix-ins: If you want to add extra flavors, now is the time. Stir in your favorite mix-ins, such as chocolate chips, fruit or cookie pieces. Mmmmm, cookies!
4. Freeze: Transfer the mixture to a freezer-safe container, smooth the top and cover with a lid or plastic wrap.
5. Chill: Place the container in the freezer for at least 4-6 hours or until firm.
6. Enjoy: Scoop and serve your homemade ice cream in a cone or bowl and enjoy!

Tips for best results:

- For a richer flavor, try substituting half-and-half for part of the heavy cream.
- To make chocolate ice cream, mix in one-quarter cup of cocoa powder with the condensed milk before folding it into the whipped cream.
- Swirl in sauces like caramel or fruit puree before freezing for a fun twist.

With this simple no-churn method, making ice cream at home has never been easier. In no time the whole family will be screaming for ice cream!





MEMORABLE TRIPS FOR YOUR SOON-TO-BE-AWAY COLLEGE KID

Kids only leave for college the first time once. They're nervous, you're nervous, so why not calm emotions with a fun, family trip before they're college bound? Not only will it make more lasting memories, but it can also strengthen bonds. To get you started, we've compiled a list of cool destinations that offer something for everyone:

URBAN EXPLOSION

Dive into city life and soak yourself in the urban experience. Here are a few destinations to consider:

Montreal, Canada

Immerse yourselves in Montreal's unique blend of European charm and North American vibrancy. With its museums, boutique shops and vibrant nightlife, this city is perfect for both teens and parents. Summer is an ideal time to experience Montreal's diverse attractions.

San Diego, California

San Diego offers a cool mix of outdoor activities and cultural experiences. From stunning beaches and hiking trails to world-class museums and the renowned San Diego Zoo, this city caters to various interests. Your soon-to-be-away college student will appreciate the city's dining scene and youthful energy.



CULTURAL IMMERSION

Few cities scream cultural diversity and nostalgic charm more than New Orleans and Dublin.

New Orleans, Louisiana

The French Quarter's lively atmosphere, jazz-filled nights and like-no-other-place-in-the-world cuisine are just the beginning. New Orleans also provides opportunities for "voluntourism," allowing your family to give back while exploring. Consider working with organizations like Hands on New Orleans, Habitat for Humanity or Parkway Partners. And don't miss the beignets at Cafe Du Monte!

Dublin, Ireland

For those with a flexible budget and schedule, Dublin offers a unique international experience. This vibrant city combines outdoor adventures with a thriving nightlife, featuring live music, diverse restaurants and clubs. Dublin's historic attractions, hiking trails and golf courses offer more choices—so there's something for everyone in the family.



IN THE MOMENT



NATURAL WONDERS

If you come from a family of outdoor enthusiasts, consider these locations.

Moab, Utah

Moab is an outdoor enthusiast's paradise, surrounded by breathtaking red rock landscapes and two of the most famous national parks in the US—Arches and Canyonlands. It's a must-visit for hikers, mountain bikers and rock climbers. White water rafting through the red rock backdrops is also a big draw.

Bend, Oregon

Bend is an outdoor lover's dream, offering year-round adventure with high desert landscapes, mountains and rivers galore. Rock climb at the world-renowned Smith Rock State Park or enjoy white water rafting on the Deschutes River. Bend is also known for its booming craft beer scene. Yum!

PLANNING YOUR TRIP

While choosing the right destination is important, the most challenging aspect may be finding the time to go. Invest a little extra time to make it happen—the memories made with your newly minted college student will make it all worth it.



WHET YOUR APP-ETITE WITH THE BEST GRILLING APPS

Are you an avid griller? Maybe even a grill master?! Let's see how well you know your grilling apps. And if you find one you like...it's time to get to grillin'.

Weber® Grills

This app offers over 400 original recipes, complete with step-by-step instructions, photos and videos. Features include grill guides, timers and techniques to master various dishes. Users can also register their Weber grills to access manuals and warranty information.

GrillTime

A grilling timer and guide that helps users select meat cuts, thickness and desired doneness. It provides ideal temperature and time settings, along with flip reminders. The app also features a companion app for smartwatches.

Hey Grill Hey BBQ Recipes

With over 500 recipes and new additions weekly, this app allows users to search by category, recipe name or ingredients. It includes a built-in shopping list to ensure all necessary ingredients are accounted for.

Green Egg Nation

Designed for ceramic grill users, this app provides information on temperatures, serving sizes, prep times, and recipes specifically tailored for ceramic grilling. A Pro Membership offers additional features like adding personal recipes and creating lists.

SteakMate

Ideal for steak enthusiasts, this app guides users to cook the perfect steak by inputting the cut, thickness, desired doneness and cooking method. It provides cooking instructions, flip timings and resting periods.

BBQ TankMeter

Never run out of propane mid-cookout again. This app estimates the amount of propane left in a standard 20-pound tank by simply tapping your phone near the tank, providing a visual display of the remaining fuel.

The Pit Pal BBQ

A digital grill journal that allows users to track grilling sessions by inputting details like wood used, sauce/rub combinations and weather conditions. This helps in refining techniques and achieving consistent results.

Grill-It!

A rotating recipe book offering new grilling ideas based on meat types or cuts. The app provides step-by-step instructions and updates with new recipes monthly, ensuring users always have fresh ideas for the grill.

