

letters from our readers

Drop us a line and tell us what you think about *Retail News*. Fax (905) 690-7934 or e-mail retailnews@cgta.org.



Done to Perfection

The last issue was really good. Well done!

DELL TEXMO
LIVING ROOMS

Devotee

I'm an independent retailer and avid reader of *Retail News*. My mom and I started our business four years ago and we've read every issue since then.

LEAH MORANTZ

High Class

Retail News is such a high-quality publication. The photography is just beautiful.

LAURA MCDONALD
TWO BLONDS & A BRUNETTE GIFT CO.

Info Portal

Retail News is definitely a wealth of information. Keep up the good work!

ARTI JOSHI
SUNJO

OOPS...JULY/AUGUST 2006

We hate it when people spell our names wrong, so we want to extend a big 'sorry' to **Rick Segel** for misspelling his name in the *6 Steps to Better Signage* article (page 91). We should have known better. Please accept our apologies Rick. Secondly, we failed to mention in the *New State of Mind* feature on the New York Tabletop Market (page 77) that **Belfor & Co.** is the major Canadian distributor of **Bohemia Crystal**. We sincerely apologize for our oversight.

ask a pro Attracting Traffic

Traffic at the hospital gift shop I manage is for obvious reasons slow. We've cleaned out the store, rearranged the space and dressed the window in bright colours, but traffic is still meagre. Can you help?

My first question to you is, "Are the products you sell relevant to your customers, i.e. the patients, their family, friends and the hospital staff?" If not, the first thing you should do is stock the store with items people want. If you don't know what these are, do a survey. I have seen first-hand what a buyer who knows her customer base can do for a hospital gift shop.

If product isn't your problem, here are some traffic-building ideas to consider:

- Tell customers what you have to offer via signage
- Hold special discount days
- Make sure you have a nice selection of food, beverages and magazines
- Create a mood with music
- Offer free services such as gift-wrapping and delivery
- Advertise in designated areas of the hospital and deliver flyers to patient rooms
- Give hospital staff a discount to encourage loyalty and frequent buying

It's also important to focus on staff training. Because hospital gift shops are often staffed by volunteers, training is sometimes overlooked, but if you want to contribute funds to the hospital then your employees need to actively sell.

Barbara Crowhurst is a retail specialist, business coach and trainer with an extensive background in retail business management, store design and merchandising. She currently works as a retail coach and speaker throughout Canada, the United States and Mexico. Telephone: (905) 686-8898. E-mail: retailmakeover@sympatico.ca.



See Barbara Live!

Barbara Crowhurst will be presenting a session on creating the ultimate shopping experience at the Hospital Auxiliary Association of Ontario's Annual Convention in Toronto on November 7. The conference runs November 4 to 8 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. For details visit www.haao.com. ■

Have a question for Barbara Crowhurst or another business or retail expert? E-mail your questions to retailnews@cgta.org or fax (905) 690-7934 and we'll do our best to have them answered.