

Three Ways to **Keep Customers Engaged & Build Loyalty**



From the SPRINGBOARD RETAIL CULTURAL COLLECTION

It's important to first note that every museum shop must cater to a number of different museum personas, and how you market to the tourists may be (and should be!) very different from how you sell and market to the members and frequent customers. But there are a few rules of thumb for increasing customer engagement that can be applied to all customers who walk through your doors:

1 In-Store Events

In theory, the whole act of visiting the museum is an event within itself. But museum shops that take it a step further with in-store product demos, book signings, guest speakers and other creative events will engage their customers on a whole new level, setting themselves apart from the competition. Even though museum shops are often strategically placed so patrons have to walk through before exiting, give them something that will make them stop in their tracks instead of beelining for the door! Loggerhead Marinelife Center keeps things interesting with free responsible gift wrapping during the holidays and frequent visits from the center's mascot, Fletch.



2 Freshness

No one wants to browse merchandise that's collected a coating of dust, but freshness is especially critical for keeping your museum members engaged. For the Detroit Institute of Arts, this group is a significant income source, mostly because of the frequency of their visits and the enthusiasm they have for the museum. Don't let them grow used to the shop just because they visit regularly; always stay on top of refreshing your merchandise and displays, even if you haven't had an exhibit changeover recently. "We're forced to stay fresh in product assortment to stay relevant for our high number of members and volunteers," says Eric Huck, Director of Retail Operations at the DIA.

3 Personalized Email Marketing

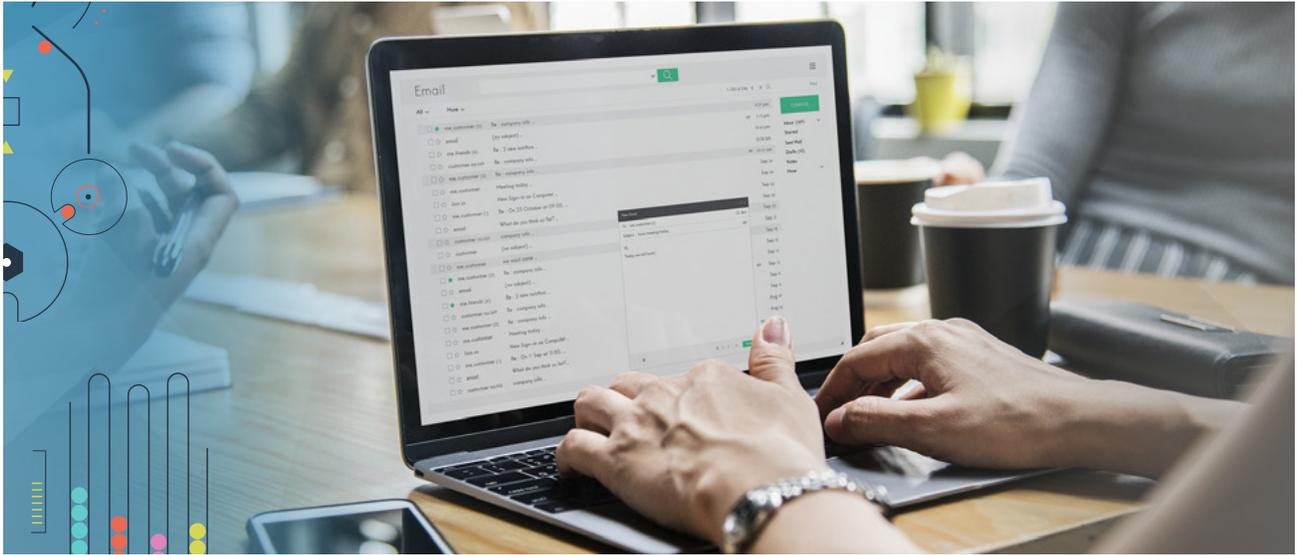
While you should work closely with your museum's marketing team to ensure gift shop messaging is included in general museum newsletters and digital communication (ask them to highlight new products and any special events or sales you're hosting!), use your own customer data to craft targeted messages to different segmented customer groups, or even one-off customers. Here are some effective email campaigns retailers can develop:

Happy birthday email: Offer a free gift or discount if they visit the store during their birthday month (This is such an easy data point to collect at the POS!).

Post-purchase offer & survey email: Customers who recently made a purchase are likely to buy again soon. Send them a survey asking about their experience, along with an offer. This is a great way to drive repeat business and get feedback.

Welcome email: Send an email to first-time customers thanking them for their purchase, and include links to all social media handles and your website. The tourist customers may not have immediate plans to revisit, but they could turn into some of your best online customers if you have an ecommerce integration.

Re-engagement email: Automatically send a follow-up offer to museum members who haven't made a purchase in a period of time (such as three months or six months). If they're members or local patrons, it's likely they're still visiting the building, they may just need a little extra incentive to come through the store.



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