



Voice of Experience Says Target Sales, Not Traffic for Open-Air Centers

By: Martin Nash, CMD, Marty Nash and Aides Inc.

As a veteran shopping center marketing expert, I advocate that there is a vast difference between traffic and sales results.

Over many years and hundreds of events that have run the gauntlet of everything from turtle races to rain dancers and all the novelties in between, auto, boat, kids events, art shows, concerts---all sorts of traffic builders for small centers that are our clients, we have found no substitute for sales and the very bottom line - *advertising*.

Build huge events--spend lots of money--bring in celebrities--have enormous crowds and when it's all over the food vendors really show an increase in sales. The people leave, and some will remember the center in future shopping excursions.

Develop an advertising format and use it with continuity, and you are able to promote crowds and increase sales. Nothing works like a recognizable product at an attractive price. Newspapers, direct mail, cable TV are the most effective means of generating a buying population and coupons, Two For One, Half Off, etc. - These are the prime vehicles. How to measure results: That's easy. Take a register reading, compare the sales event with the prior years gross. Count the number of coupons. Then see the smiles on the merchants' faces.

This can work magic for small budgets and get super results for big ones.

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