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25 TIPS FOR CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT



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I'M GOING TO SHOW YOU...

1. For the next 10 Days...go to www.accelerationbydesign.com/bowiebusinessboost (case studies, checklists, marketing strategies, social media campaigns, shopping calendars, sample cooperative advertising, downtown revitalization strategies, special event ideas, etc.)
2. If you would like a FREE copy of my book Stand Up Rural America, text 806-683-2553 with your name and address
3. For the next 12 months...I will feature one local Bowie Business on my social media account, based on your customer engagement and activity



BUILD ONGOING RELATIONSHIPS

1. Create a loyalty program (points, discounts, perks for repeat visits)
 2. Send personalized follow-ups after purchases
 3. Celebrate customer milestones (birthdays, anniversaries, first purchase, milestones etc.)
 4. Start a VIP or insiders club for top customers
 5. Handwritten thank-you notes for key purchases
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BOOST DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

6. Run interactive polls or Q&As on Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn or TikTok (meet your customers where they are)

7. Go live weekly to showcase products or answer questions

8. Create short-form videos (tips, behind-the-scenes, tutorials)

9. Use SMS/text marketing for quick updates and exclusive offers



10. Launch a referral program with incentives





CREATE EXPERIENCES

11. Host in-store or virtual events (workshops, demos, tastings)
12. Offer “customer appreciation” days with special perks
13. Partner with other local businesses for joint events
14. Pop-up experiences in unexpected locations
15. Behind-the-scenes tours of your business





ENCOURAGE INTERACTION

16. Ask for feedback—and show how you use it

17. Feature customer stories/testimonials regularly

18. Run contests or giveaways

19. Create a branded hashtag and encourage user-generated content



20. Respond quickly and authentically to reviews and messages





GET INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY

21. Sponsor or attend local events

22. Support a local cause or nonprofit

23. Host community meetups or networking events (place of business, common space or partner business)

24. Offer discounts (new residents, senior citizens, veterans, first responders, students, teachers, nurses, etc.)



25. Volunteer/community service as a team and share the story





IN RURAL COMMUNITIES...

- Old-school loyalty cards (punch cards still outperform apps in many rural areas)
 - Know customers by name—and use it
 - Handwritten thank-you notes for repeat or large purchases
 - “Neighbor of the Month” spotlight in-store or online
 - Offer local discounts (teachers, farmers, first responders)
 - Stay active on Facebook groups (often the main communication hub)
 - Text message updates for events, specials, weather-related changes
 - Simple email newsletters (monthly is enough)
 - Post flyers at high-traffic spots (feed stores, diners, libraries, churches, etc.)
 - Local radio shoutouts or sponsorships
 - Host small events (coffee mornings, workshops, workouts, demos)
 - Customer appreciation cookouts or potlucks
 - Live music or local talent nights
 - Partner with nearby businesses for joint events
 - Seasonal celebrations (harvest, holidays, back-to-school)
 - Sponsor youth sports teams or school events
 - Show up at fairs, parades, and festivals
 - Support local fundraisers or causes
 - Create products/services tied to local identity (town name, landmarks)
 - Volunteer visibly as a business team
 - Wear Your Brand!
 - People LOVE samples
 - Get kids and seniors involved
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SERVICE BUSINESSES...

- Visibility + reliability = trust
- Word-of-mouth beats ads (but you can fuel word-of-mouth intentionally)
- Proximity marketing works (yard signs, “we’re already in your area”)
- Education builds authority (people hire who they understand)
- Being “Top of Mind” is essential to sustainability
- Use Before and After Photos
- Ask for Referrals
- Use Yard Signs and Fridge Magnets
- Wear and Drive your Brand
- Sponsor School, Athletic or Community Announcements
- Customer Testimonials are GOLDEN
- Follow-up 30 days later
- Share maintenance tips in print, digital and video
- Partner with other Service Providers



REPUTATION IS EVERYTHING.

MANUFACTURING/COMMERCIAL BUSINESSES...

- Visibility builds trust (people support what they understand)
- Workforce development = community development
- Employees are your best ambassadors
- Consistency matters more than one-time events
- Participate in parades, fairs, and festivals
- Partner with economic development organizations
- Provide facility space for community meetings
- Support local infrastructure or beautification projects
- Host Plant Tours & Open Houses
- Feature employee stories (tenure, growth, family ties)
- Celebrate work anniversaries publicly
- Share “Made in Bowie” messaging
- Highlight multi-generational employees
- Use social media (especially Facebook) to show real people, not just products
- Partner with schools and colleges clubs
- Internships, apprenticeships, and job shadow programs
- Sponsor career days and technical education events
- Offer plant-based training days for students
- Scholarships for skilled trades or manufacturing careers

PRIMARY JOBS ARE THE BACKBONE OF THE ECONOMY.

RETAIL BUSINESSES...

- Make Your Store a Destination (Not Just a Stop)
- Create a warm, welcoming layout (people stay longer = spend more)
- Offer a “new arrivals” section customers expect each visit
- Rotate displays frequently to give regulars a reason to browse
- Feature local products prominently (huge draw in rural areas)
- Add a small seating or coffee corner to encourage lingering
- Loyalty programs (punch cards or “buy 10, get 1”)
- Customer appreciation days (snacks, small discounts, drawings)
- “Deal of the week” or “Friday finds” to create habit visits
- Personal shopping help (know preferences of top customers)
- Call or text loyal customers when items arrive
- Host themed shopping nights (ladies night, holiday open house)
- Offer mini workshops (DIY, styling, product demos)
- Seasonal events
- Bundle products into “ready-to-buy” gift sets
- Partner with another local business for events
- Ask for reviews and respond to each of them
- Incentivize customers to share online

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS...

- Build Relationships First - Funding Follows
- Diversify Revenue Streams (events, partnerships, endowments, donations, grants, memberships, etc.)
- Be visible at community events
- Support other community efforts, not just your own
- Collaborate with other Civic Groups
- Provide Annual Reports (Giving and Impact Summaries)
- Corporate Sponsorship Packages
- Provide Workshops Tied to Your Mission
- Participate in Community Events
- Serve on local boards
- Show local impact whenever possible

VISIBILITY + RELATIONSHIPS = IMPACT

MOM & POP VS. BIG BOX/CHAIN

- They Go where the market dictates
- Bring in Shoppers from region & off the highway
- Advantage: brand recognition, reputation, volume, price & choice
- Major Employer
- Tax Payer
- Comfort & Convenience
- Community Contributor

TRUTH: There's enough to go around

MOM & POP VS. BIG BOX/CHAIN

- Your Feelings are Valid
- Diversify, if possible
- Don't ignore it
- Everyone Has Competition
- Everyone Has Favorites & Personal Preferences
- Everyone has different needs

WITH ADJUSTMENTS, THERE'S ENOUGH BUSINESS TO GO AROUND

MOM & POP VS. BIG BOX/CHAIN

This is what they can't do...

- Nimble & Specialized Marketing & Sales
- Personalized Follow-Up
- Individualized Customer Service
- Personalized/Specialized Gifts & Merchandise
- Enhanced Customer Experience
- Personal Storytelling



YOUR PLACE OF BUSINESS...






- Signs in GOOD condition (THIS IS A MUST!)
 - ADA Accessible
 - Clean Windows
 - Dedicated Hours
 - Name Tags
 - Sitting Space & Refreshments
 - Share Employee Photos
 - Share Customer Photos
 - Seasonal Window Art
 - Customer Testimonials
 - Go Mobile, Home Delivery, Car Delivery (if applicable)
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REMEMBER...



- Familiarity = loyalty (people shop where they feel known and appreciated)
 - Consistency beats complexity (simple, repeatable ideas win)
 - Events create traffic spikes
 - Local pride sells products—especially when you highlight community ties
 - Measure your ROI on outreach strategies
 - Promote Each Other!
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REAL LIFE EXAMPLES...

- Kohl's Cash
- Bath & Body Works
- Shop Local vs. Online
- Riley Girls
- The Snow Cone Zone
- The Lemonade Project
- ACCELERATION by design & Stand Up Rural America
- Social Media Photo Contests
- And more...





CLOSING ADVICE...



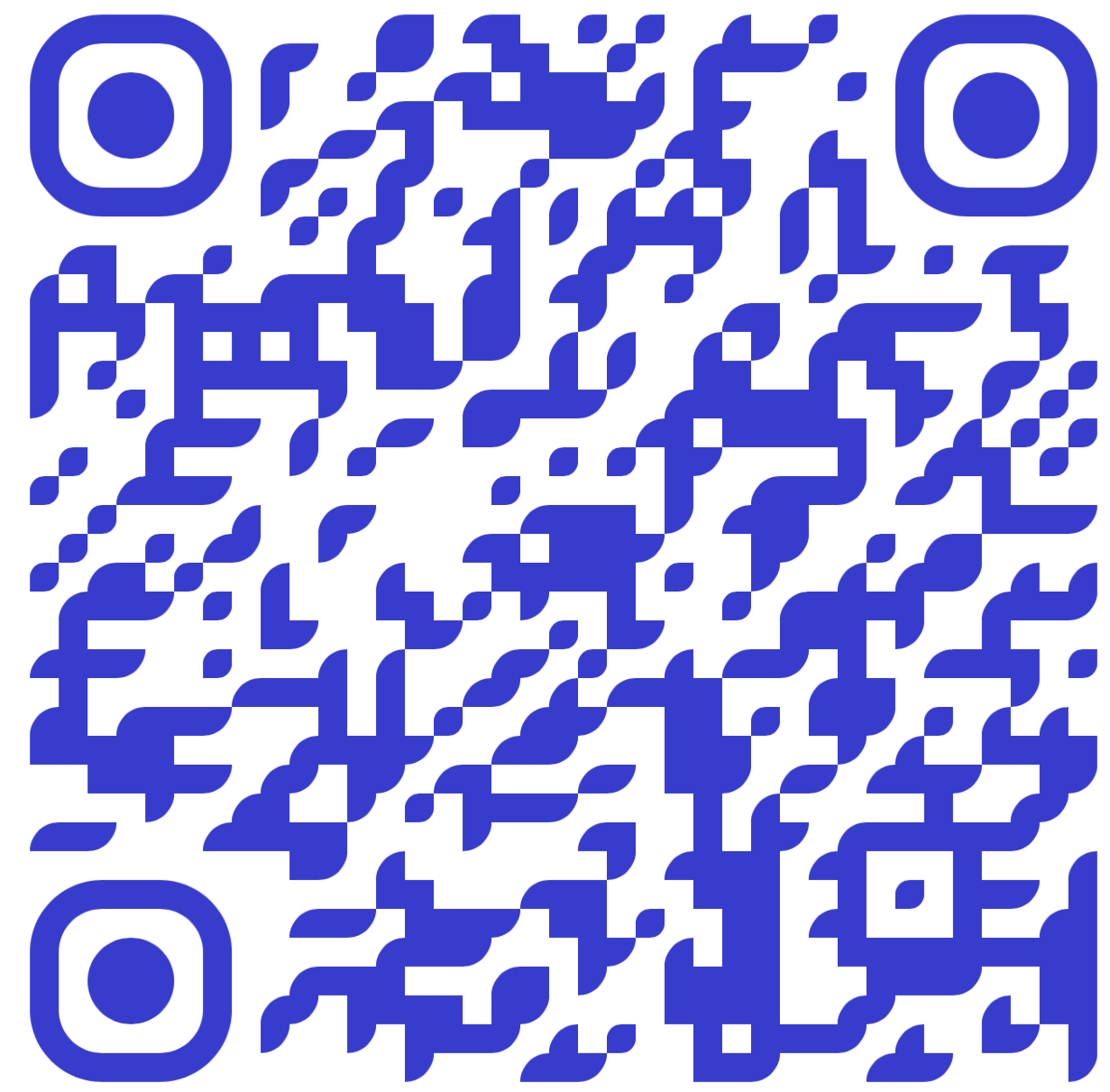
- Fill the Gaps
 - Nurture your Entrepreneurs
 - Appreciate EVERY BUSINESS
 - Gracious/Not Entitled - No one owes you their business
 - Staff/Hospitality Training
 - Team Retreats
 - Use Social Media (video & photos) IT'S FREE!
 - Don't Let Anyone Hijack the Message on Your Social Media Accounts
 - Make Your Employees Feel Valued
 - Top of Mind is Critical
 - People Can't Read Your Mind - YO HAVE TO TELL THEM
 - Don't let a bag or envelope or post go out your door without your brand on it
 - Use animals, music, food & kids (when safe & applicable)
 - Share as many photos as possible
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**ALWAYS ACT LIKE COMPANY
IS ABOUT TO COME OVER...**





THANK YOU



SO MUCH!



DOOR PRIZES

