

In the Biz Tuesdays: Small Business Promotional Event Series Bringing Awareness to Small Businesses in Margate

Margate Community Redevelopment Agency

Category – Out of the Box

Images – See Attached

100 Word Description of the Entry

'In the Biz Tuesdays': an innovative event series to help stabilize and expand the economic base of the Redevelopment Area. Struggling local merchants are targeted for assistance with a unique promotional program tailored to their specific business. Events are held at the businesses' locations, highlighting their products and services in a casual, fun atmosphere that allows people to meet the owners and enhance their awareness of Margate's merchants. Repeat business is encouraged with special VIP discount cards and distinctive cross-promotional campaigns.

Innovation

- Small businesses contribute to the local economy by bringing growth and innovation to the community and tend to attract talent who invent new products or implement new solutions for existing ideas.
- The Margate CRA boundaries houses over 1,300 businesses, many of which fall under the small business category. In this sense, small businesses are the backbone of Margate, and the main economy of the City as a whole. With no cohesive downtown and most shops located on expansive corridors, business retention strategies are challenging, although imperative.
- Since small businesses are scattered throughout the Margate CRA boundaries and not connected in a walkable downtown, the Margate CRA had to become creative in bringing awareness and visitors to those businesses. Rather than having a monthly event in the same location and having businesses come represent themselves (if they weren't already engrossed in day-to-day business activities), the Margate CRA brought the events to their doors. Deciding to host rotating events at 6 different business locations, this offered unique opportunities for residents to meet the owners and discover the businesses on a more personal and less-detached level.
- In an attempt to meet the unarticulated needs of the small business community and to revive the love for Margate's small businesses, the Margate CRA continues the promotional event series, 'In the Biz Tuesdays'. This innovative business retention concept originated as a catalyst for the growth and success of Margate's businesses and is designed to expand the economic base of the Redevelopment Area by retaining existing jobs. This strategy encourages patronage of local business, helping to thwart economic leakage into surrounding areas.

- The first event series in 2016 was a huge success with approximately 750 collective attendees. Due to the succession of last year's event series, the MCRA wanted to continue to the program into 2017.
- Events take place on the 4th Tuesday of the month from April – September from 6:00 – 8:00 pm and features refreshments, entertainment and activities specifically tailored to each individual business. For example, the first participating business of the series was a women's boutique, which included mini facials, giveaways, complimentary beer and wine, and hors d'oeuvres. The next participating business was Frenchie's Bicycles, a longstanding full-service bicycle shop that offers a bicycle showroom, repairs, layaway programs, and rentals. The event highlights included live music, DIY leather bicycle bracelets, special discounts, as well as complimentary food and soft drinks. From June through September the 'In the Biz Tuesdays' events will take place at the following locations Zuccarelli Pizza, The Keg King, Bay Bay's Chicken and Waffles, and Stage Door Theatre. The Margate CRA is able to be creative with each event, keeping them characteristic to each unique business's clientele and theme.
- A wide-range marketing campaign was executed by the Margate CRA to "make noise" about the new and unique event series to the community. This included the distribution of 1,000 rack cards, every other month Direct Mail to over 2,000 households targeting areas in the surrounding community in close proximity to each In the Biz business, distinctive advertisements in the local newspaper, digital ads, road signs, social media posts reaching over 75,000 and the creation of individual event pages for each business, as well as promotion in the weekly CRA e-newsletter.
- To encourage repeat visits to these businesses, a special 'In the Biz Tuesdays' VIP discount card was created and given to all attendees for use on any Tuesday through December 2017. Businesses decide on whatever special or discount they want to offer and agree to honor the cards every Tuesday through the end of December. Online surveys were created to track the effectiveness of the VIP discount cards and provided two months after each event for the businesses to provide input. This measures the effectiveness of the program and whether the merchants are receiving repeat business as direct result of the event. In the 2016 event series, approximately 100 VIP cards were brought back to participating businesses and used with business-designated discounts.

Community Impact

- Feedback for the program is continuously outstanding. Margate residents became more engaged with the small business community, remarking "I had no idea this boutique was around, I am 100% coming back to check out more of the wonderful merchandise!" Other businesses throughout Margate became interested in participating in the event series, and have requested applications to apply for next year. This program successfully reinvigorated patronage of local businesses, raising awareness of local offerings and helping to improve retention of existing businesses.

Funding

- Funding for the 'In the Biz Tuesdays' event series is provided through the Margate CRA and is part of an overall business retention efforts of the Margate CRA. Each

event is budgeted at approximately \$1000-\$1500, depending on required rentals and custom activity expenses.

Problem Solving

- Stage Door Theatre, a historic business in the Margate CRA district, came into the CRA seeking assistance. The business of 25 years was suffering; hampered by her location hidden behind a commercial center with no signage on the main road. The Margate CRA quickly invested a helping hand with a façade and sponsorship grant as well as adding her to the In the Biz Tuesday's event series this year, and promoting the business across our social media outlets. The Margate CRA made it their mission to assist Stage Door Theatre and other small businesses with similar obstacles by bringing them back into the limelight of the community.
- The Margate CRA utilized proactive intervention and creative solutions in their implementation of this innovative program: 'In the Biz Tuesdays'. By bringing the event to the business' doorsteps, the community is reintroduced to the businesses that make Margate great through first-hand interaction with the employees at their very own place of business.

Applicability to Other Communities

The creation of this promotional event series is cost effective, easily duplicated and ensures the development of an innovative business retention strategy. The following list summarizes the event's guidelines to be followed for participating businesses. Other municipalities can easily mirror this format and add or take away whichever guidelines are not applicable.

In the Biz Tuesdays Event Guidelines:

- Applications must include a valid City of Margate Business Tax Receipt, must be in a commercial location in the CRA district, and must be filled out by the business owner.
- Events take place on the fourth Tuesday of selected months (April – September 2017) from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM at the location of the business. Businesses must have enough room to host approximately 25 to 50 people.
- Approximately one month prior to the event, the business owner and/or manager will be interviewed by the MCRA Marketing Coordinator to be featured in our 'In the Biz' Facebook event page, e-newsletters, Instagram, and other promotional outlets. In the weeks leading up to the event the MCRA will continue to promote it through these outlets.
- The MCRA will provides the following supplies for the event in limited quantities as mutually agreed upon with the business owner: beer and wine samples, light snacks (restaurants will utilize their own food), tables and chairs (if needed) and some form of participatory activity to engage attendees.

- The MCRA encourages businesses to distribute 'In the Biz' rack cards (to be provided by the MCRA) leading up to the event to their customers, as well as promote the event on business media outlets (i.e. social media, website, etc.)
- Businesses are requested to provide a giveaway the night of the event and are encouraged to contribute additional activities and/or entertainment to enhance the event. To ensure repeat business after the event an In the Biz VIP reward card is passed out to all attendees, and can be used on any Tuesday (beginning on the night of the event) for a special discount provided by the participating business with an expiration date of December 31, 2017.

Other Things to Tell the Judges

'In the Biz Tuesdays' is helping to build relationships between the Margate CRA and business owners in the community. For example, after speaking to Vivian Turner of Exclusiva Tu Boutique, she stated she had record sales of \$500 during her event. She also discovered the other opportunities the Margate CRA had available and immediately participated in the monthly cooperative advertising campaign in the local newspaper. The events also provide cross-promotional opportunities for all involved and for other local Margate CRA businesses. To offer cross-promotional opportunities we generally order from businesses within the same locations as the In the Biz Tuesdays hosting business. For one event, we decided to order from Latin Café, a small local family-run restaurant, providing a cross-promotional opportunity for their business as well. Additionally, for each event the Margate CRA has created Exclusive Business Insiders which features and highlights information about the business, business owners, and the benefits of shopping local; adding even more value to the 'In the Biz Tuesdays' event program. At each event, attendees are requested to fill out a brief survey asking questions such as how often they shop in Margate, how much they typically spend, and how their experience was at the event. This provides feedback on consumer spending habits as well as on the event itself, and offers a way to collect emails and provides opportunity to build the Margate CRA's database for weekly e-blasts about businesses, events, and happenings in Margate. After the first 'In the Biz Tuesdays' event at Exclusiva Tu Boutique, the surveys showed that 90% rated the event as Excellent.

PowerPoint

Electronic copy included.

Documents

Sample printed collateral attached.

Required Information

- SUBMITTING MEMBER ORGANIZATION: Margate Community Redevelopment Agency
- CONTACT NAME & TITLE: Danielle Sabat, Margate CRA Marketing Coordinator

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