

# DRIVING RETAIL SUCCESS

## FALL IS THE TIME TO GET READY FOR THE HOLIDAYS

**PEARL izumi**

This editorial feature is sponsored by Pearl Izumi with Mercedes Ross.

**RMSA**  
Retail Solutions

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### START THINKING NOW ABOUT NEXT SEASON

Interbike often signals the end of one season and the start of another. As the state of retail faces what could be another roller coaster year, what should you be thinking about now to help smooth the ups and downs of the new season. One question to ask is "What should I do to make certain customers walk in the door, visit my website, or stay in touch via social media?" It all starts with prudent planning. Here are a few suggestions to consider:

- Review sales and expense budgets and perform a physical inventory now. Reexamine your cash flow.
- Anticipate changes in rent or other operational expenses like new staff, a remodel or a change in key vendors.
- What trends are developing in your market? Are you offering products that will surprise your customers?
- Evaluate the quality of your customer service. What would you do to exceed your customer's expectations?
- Review vendor performance and eliminate unprofitable or weak performers. Spend more on strong sellers.
- Review your budget, merchandise mix, competitors in your market as well as price points on key items.
- Evaluate your website and consider freshening it. Focus on creating some original content.
- Consider developing a social media strategy to reach new and younger consumers.
- Review the costs and benefits of offering smart phone transactions to your customers.

These points should help you start planning for a strong start on next year's sales.

If you have questions, you can email me, Dave Downard, at [dmdownard@rmsa.com](mailto:dmdownard@rmsa.com) or Ken Bankson at [kbankson@rmsa.com](mailto:kbankson@rmsa.com).  
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### PLAN NOW TO AVOID THE HOLIDAY DAZE

It's hard to believe but the holiday season is around the corner and now is the time to plan. Yes, it's been a rocky year and consumers are focused on the basics—including holiday gifts. They may buy fewer items this season, but they will put more thought into meaningful gifts for family and friends. So make it easy for them.

Buying gifts is an emotional experience and your store should "feel" the holiday season. Simply put, your store's holiday spirit boosts sales. Take time to put that holiday spirit into both inside and outside the store. Thanksgiving is all about late Fall colors. Christmas calls for lights and brightly wrapped gifts and the smell of pine trees and pinecones.



Holiday display example using trees, bikes, and lights.

Create stories for categories that generate add-on purchases. Remember, some customers may not be cyclists but are buying gifts for friends and relatives. Create gift packages of related items to make it easy for them.

### WARM UP COLD WEATHER GEAR

Winter apparel means fewer items to display yet the products are more expensive, especially high-tech jackets. So give winter apparel the prominence it deserves. A waterfall of cold-weather jackets should be front and center. Highlight tights—put them next to the jackets. Add more color on the wall with long-sleeve jerseys and base layer wear.

Base layers and warmers are often difficult to display but well worth the effort. Base layers frequently come packaged, so create a section for them and make space on a wall to display samples; put written information alongside them to explain their technical benefits.

Arm and leg warmers, facemasks, booties and beanies can create a big black pile of stuff if improperly merchandised. These items fly out the store if properly displayed. To avoid dumping them in a sales bin next Spring, use walls and floor fixtures to focus attention on them. Buy several head forms for masks and beanies. Grab a pair of shoes and slip some booties on them. Use a spare arm and a leg from an old mannequin for arm and leg warmers. Let your customers know you are the cold weather expert.

### FALL IS THE TIME TO PREPARE

- Plan a schedule for holiday decorating. Check your calendar and set aside time for you and your staff to decorate the store.
- Put one person in charge of items like Thanksgiving decorations, Christmas lights and other holiday fare.
- Create focal points that generate add on sales. For example, group kid's bikes, helmets, trailers and bells together. For men, create tech and price point stories around socks, gloves, shoes and helmets. For women think color—matching socks, gloves, helmets and shoes.



Merchandising example of booties, hats, and warmers.

And, finally, now is the best time to check out fixtures, including size rings and hangers. If you need more, or replacements are called for, budget for them now. How

about stock held in the back? Do you need bins or hang rails to have a better system in place for next season?

### Do It Now!

- Time to get all that Fall apparel out and up on your anchor wall
- Display your tech stories using floor fixtures, it's time to get creative
- Your Spring orders should be placed

### Get Ready

- Plan out your holiday displays and pick up what you need for them
- Get out the holiday gift certificates
- Create a holiday season staff training schedule and get your reps involved

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