

Small Business Holiday Survival Guide

What are you doing to survive this holiday season? Whether it's your busiest time of year or the slowest, this season can be stressful for every business. With the help of Community [Super Seller Pessso](#), we put together this guide with tips and advice from Seller Community members so you can make the most of this magical time of year! Go to www.SellerCommunity.com to join the conversation - let us know what you do to survive the holidays!

Slow Season


If the holidays are your slow season, how do you occupy your time? Your slow season is the perfect time to make a plan for next year. Take a few days to write out your goals and figure out how you're going to get there.




Plan for Next Year

Dig into your Data

Analyze your sales and marketing data and make a plan for next year.

 "Take the time to re-evaluate what's the most cost effective, and what's selling. See if you have any room to simplify and improve your offerings. Whether it's cutting down on some menu items, simplifying sizes, tweaking prices, or maybe starting a new product line you've been dreaming of!" -Pesso, Pessso's Ices & Ice Cream

 **Square Tip:** Look at sales reports by employee, location, time, item, category, or new vs. returning customers. All this is available on Square Dashboard.


Think about Taxes

Get organized for tax time. Make sure you have your paperwork ready for your accountant to make tax time a breeze.



Build a Budget

Look at your expenses and figure out how much you need to set aside throughout the year to make it through your slow season.

 "Budgeting is by far the biggest thing for us, we're kind of like a startup where we need to know how much runway we have for the off season. Getting companies that deliver supplies to give payment terms till May is huge and fairly standard."


-Bob, Van Kalker Farms Garden Center



Maintenance & Clean Up

Make Snow Days Productive

Use your downtime to fix all the little things that you didn't have time for during your busy season.


 "When it snows we do maintenance on our wash. Then when the snow melts we wash a ton of cars to get the dirt and salt off. We focus our efforts on our online store for wash punch cards and gift cards." -Rusty, Kermit's Super Wash



Build Your Community & Recharge

Participate in your Community

Look into local chambers of commerce, charities, and local events that you could join in your area.

 "During my slow season, I also try to attend as many local events as possible. I donate leftover stock that I won't be able to sell to local charities or homeless shelters, this gives you good press and people are more likely to purchase from a caring small business than a greedy one." -Rebeka, B Stitches Gallery



Take a Break

You work hard. If you can swing it, take some time off this holiday season and enjoy that cup of hot cocoa!

Small Business Holiday Survival Guide

Busy Season

If you'll be nonstop for the next few months balancing employees, sales, inventory management, and your own holiday shopping, here are some ideas to not only get through it, but make it a fun and impactful time of year for your business.



Hire & Retain Employees

Hire Early

You need a good team of employees by your side. Interview and hire early enough, or even before your busy season, so that you have time to train them efficiently.



"Hire more than you need. If you need 5 [people], hire 8-10. Some will not stay or show up, and some will not work out. Be very clear on the job, requirements, time frame, and policies."

-Rusty, Kermit's Super Wash

Keep Employees Happy

This is a busy time for your team too, so find creative ways to show them you appreciate their hard work.



Manage Social Media

Post Often

Using a content scheduling tool can put all your posts in one place and schedule them to go out frequently to keep your business top of mind.

Communicate about Sales

Let your customers know about upcoming sales and events via social media and by emailing them directly.



Square Tip: You can also try Square Marketing and Loyalty programs for free for 30 days.



Audit your Inventory

Look Up Sales Data

Knowing what you have on your floor and how much of each product you expect to sell based on last year's sales can make all the difference.



Create In-Store Displays

Get Crafty with your Window Display

Make a holiday-themed window display to get more foot traffic. You can do it yourself, or hire a company or a local artist.

Be Strategic about Item Displays

Position your popular items so they're easy for customers to find, with similar or complementary items nearby.



"Make sure key items are front and center and clearly marked. Put your back stock in an area that is quick and easy to access. Walk your floor daily with your employees so they know where everything is." -Rusty, Kermit's Super Wash



Customers Come First

Surprise & Delight

Find small ways to make each sale feel special for each customer.

Ask for Customers' Opinions

Let your customers know you value their opinion and want to use their feedback to improve your business.

Train Employees on Customer Service

Come up with clever ways to help your employees remember that customers come first.



"We always use the G.U.E.S.T. approach. Greet every customer. Understand their needs and fulfill them. Eye Contact, be sure to use direct eye contact with them. Suggestive Sell something that goes along with the items they are interested in. Thank each and every customer who enters your Store." -Ron, J.R.'s Fresh Cut Fries