



On Main Street

A Newsletter From Main Street Middlesex, Canada's First Program for Countywide Downtown Revitalization

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www.mainstreetmiddlesex.ca

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Learn More About Main Street Middlesex:

Contacts:

Program Coordinator
Lisa Plancke / (519) 641-7190
mainstreet@cfcdmiddlesex.on.ca

CFDC of Middlesex County:
Cara Finn, General Manager
(519) 641-6100

In Your Downtown:

- Ailsa Craig**
Blake Bexon / (519) 293-3231
- Delaware**
Michael Barnier / (519) 666-0190
- Dorchester**
Bev Schulman / (519) 268-3106
- Glencoe**
Bill Sasse / (519) 693-9951
- Ilderton**
Karen Kennedy / (519) 666-2032
- Lucan**
Greg Graham / (519) 227-0080
- Mount Brydges**
Velta Baumanis / (519) 264-9271
- Newbury**
Monte McNaughton / (519) 693-4484
- Parkhill**
Doreen McLinchey / (519) 294-6396
- Strathroy**
Ralph Coe / (519) 245-3955

On the Web:

www.mainstreetmiddlesex.ca

On-Line Certification Course:
Details on our website (above)

Small Town "Relationship" Selling

A unique perspective from Tom Egelhoff, a specialist in "Small Town" Marketing

One of the differences I have with the so called "marketing experts" is that they think their marketing theories will work anywhere. Although there are a few principles that transcend big cities and small towns, for the most part they are entirely different. Today's topic is a perfect example. Selling and forming relationships in small towns is nothing like in larger cities. It all comes down to the numbers.

In large cities the sheer numbers of potential customers often makes the idea of developing relationships seem unnecessary for many business owners. In small towns, however, it is critical to develop and keep long term customers. Why? Because the smaller the town, the more important it is to develop and keep good customers. The competitive environment is much tougher in a small town. And, the smaller the town, the tougher it gets.

What we want to talk about today is a way to make this process more comfortable for you and hopefully improve your selling skills. Relationship selling is a great way to send everyone home happy. You make the sale and the customer has a great product or service for their money.

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**Thank You, Main Street Volunteers
We Appreciate You !**

Main Street Grants Around Middlesex



(from left to right) Storefront Signage at KYIS Embroidery in Strathroy, Victorian Waste Receptacle in Lucan, Storefront Signage at Nielsen's Flowers and Country Goose in Strathroy.

The selling process

Before we examine relationship selling let's first look at the sales process. Here are the points to take into consideration before ever contacting that first customer:

Product Knowledge - This may seem like a no-brainer. Of course you must know your product. But what you really need to know before you sell a product or service is how does your product or service benefit your customer. You must define the customer before you can define the important benefits.

Get to know your customer - Yes, you want to talk about the product, but talk to the customer about other things while you're doing it. Learn something about them each time you speak to them.

Establish a fit between product and customer - One of the reasons to get to know people is to discover if your product fits the customers needs. If they don't have a need, then you still have a friend but not necessarily a customer.

Closing the sale - This is the point where the customer makes the decision to purchase your product or service. This is where the relationship really begins. They are confident they can trust you with their hard-earned money.

Follow-Up - This is the most critical part of the relationship sales process. Letting the customer know that you are concerned that everything you spoke about is true. The product or service is performing as advertised.

The relationship process

In order to really get to know the customer above and beyond the sales process, you have to know how to ask questions. In order to fill your prospect's needs, you must have some information to work with. To discover information there are two kinds of questions we can ask:

Closed-Ended Questions - Closed-ended questions can only be answered yes or no. There is no other information provided. These types of questions don't provide much information.

Open-Ended Questions - Open-ended questions are a much better way to get the information you need to make the sale. These questions can not be answered with a simple yes or no. You need to go back to the old time newspaper reporters who used, "who, what, when, where, why and how" questions to get the story.

(continued)

A variety of businesses

Welcome!

Re-Collections

Rick Simon
178 Main St.
Lucan, ON N0M 2J0
(519) 619-7534

"Knick Knacks, Bric-a-brac,
Antiques and Collectables."



Lavendar Home Decor

Mikki Morency
4123 Catherine St.
Dorchester, ON N0L 1G0
(519) 268-6619
mikki_6@sympatico.ca

"A unique mix of gifts for your home
and garden."

What is Main Street Middlesex?

Community Futures Development Corporation of Middlesex County is pleased to bring you Main Street Middlesex – Canada's first countywide program for downtown revitalization. Through this exciting new initiative, historic commercial downtown areas throughout Middlesex County will have access to resources and supports geared towards:

- Creating vibrant, active commercial districts
- Promoting Middlesex County as a great place to shop and live
- Enhancing the appearance and image of our historic downtowns
- Encouraging development, redevelopment, restoration and preservation
- Building community capacity and pride
- Capitalizing on Middlesex County's inherent strengths — historic architecture, character, culture and charm

Learn more by visiting us at: www.mainstreetmiddlesex.ca

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have been cropping up in Middlesex County. Here are just a few...

The Currant

Angie Richter
216 Main St.
Parkhill, ON N0M 2K0
(519) 294-1025

“A store full of environmentally friendly products; everything from clothing to tea.”



Better Than Flowers

Julie Khan
240 Main St.
Glencoe, ON N0L 1M0
(519) 287-5111
www.betterthanflowers.ca

“Our warm country atmosphere offers a large selection of gift baskets and craft items, as well as creations by local artists.”

The trust process

We are much more likely to do business with those we know and trust. How do you build trust with customers? One way we've already mentioned is the follow-up contact. This assures the customer that the sale doesn't just end with the delivery of the product.

Another way that I really like is the testimonial. Third parties that have used your product or service and were so satisfied that they took the time to write a brief note to let the business know.

But the most powerful way to build trust with customers is keeping your word. If you say you are going to do something for a particular customer, then make sure that you follow through.

The last word on relationship selling

In small towns there are a limited amount of customers. In some cases you may need 50% of the town's population to buy from you in order to stay in business. In a large city, one quarter of one percent might do it. The point is every relationship you can establish will mean more and more sales on the long run.

Good customers become good customers because they like you, they trust you and they like your product or service. They don't have to like you to do business with you but they almost always have to trust you and like the product.

There are a certain number of customers you need each day, week, month or year to keep the doors open. The more solid relationships you can establish, the stronger your business will be.

Sass Jordan & Main Street Middlesex: Two Canadian “Originals”

Canadian rock singer/songwriter and TV Host Sass Jordan agreed to participate in a Main Street Middlesex-sponsored retail promotion during this year's Strathroy's Hometown Turkey Festival. Sass is shown here with a Main Street Middlesex T-shirt and Program Coordinator Lisa Plancke



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<http://www.smalltownmarketing.com> - (406) 585-0219
email: tommail@smalltownmarketing.com

Small Business Month in Middlesex



Roy Prevost

"Small Business Crusader"

Roy Prevost Seminar "Uplifting"

As part of Small Business Month in Middlesex County, a large group of merchants gathered recently to learn from Roy Prevost, a Canadian authority on Walmart and Big Box Retail. In his "**Prospering in the Big Box Retail World**" workshop, Mr. Prevost shared several techniques attendees could use to create customer loyalty and market their businesses within their own downtowns.

Mr. Prevost told the group that twenty percent of their customers will represent eighty percent of their business each year. He said that customers are not buying products—they are really buying relationships. He encouraged smaller retailers to raise their customer service standards and focus on the positive elements of their business, rather than discounting their goods and services.

Sponsored in part by Main Street Middlesex' Economic Restructuring Committee, the workshop gave attendees a great attitude "tune-up" just in time for the busy holiday season.

Small Business Marketing Tips

A second great Small Business Month workshop on "**Practical and Profitable Small Business Marketing**" was recently sponsored by Main Street Middlesex. With enthusiasm, wit and charm, London, Ontario native Michael Lewis shared twenty-five easy and common sense tips with small business owners to help them make the most of their marketing endeavours. Attendees said the workshop helped them confirm the things they are already doing right while giving them a variety of cost-effective, new ideas as well.

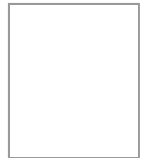
Mr. Lewis challenged the group to take three weeks of their business year to ensure that every customer is asked: "How did you learn about our business?" He also stressed the value of business cards and shared several ideas for using business cards as an effective and cost-effective marketing tool. Attendees from both workshops were surprised to see how many of us have business cards printed, but forget to bring them with us and use them. Do **you** have business cards with you right now? Are you remembering to use them?



Michael Lewis— Training,
Motivation and Development

MAIN STREET MIDDLESEX

22423 Jefferies Road, Unit 6
R.R. 5 Komoka, ON N0L 1R0
(519) 641-7190



Visit us on the Web: www.mainstreetmiddlesex.ca

