

FREQUENT SHOPPERS TO BE REWARDED

Maybe you have seen the colorful point of purchase display near the hostess stand of your favorite downtown restaurant or beside the cash register in most downtown retail stores inviting existing patrons to become a “preferred customer” of Downtown Pensacola. If you haven’t, you probably aren’t a very frequent user of downtown. Thirty-one retail/restaurants located throughout downtown are participating in this cooperative marketing effort to the existing customers of downtown. As a part of the recent revelations exposed by the research of the Downtown Retail Strategy, it was noted that many of the restaurants and retailers in the downtown district are exceptionally successful in attracting and retaining a loyal following and customer base. However, the strategy also noted that the vast majority of such existing downtown patrons do not visit other nearby or adjoining businesses immediately before or after visiting the store or restaurant that served as the primary reason for coming downtown.

Such findings are both a concern and an opportunity. It was noted from the data collected that many of the unique locally owned businesses of downtown are destination attractions in and of themselves. As such, many of the customers patronizing such establishments come into the downtown specifically to visit them and then leave – without even walking through or into another downtown retailer or restaurant. In fact, the strategy noted that downtown has an extraordinary number of high-quality destination retailers and restaurateurs. Nonetheless, it noted that few of the customers coming downtown to visit such destination businesses find their way into other stores – even though the customers are already familiar with and comfortable in visiting downtown. Recognizing an opportunity to start letting other downtown retailers also benefit from the customers visiting their neighboring businesses and vice versa, the Downtown Retail Council has launched the Downtown Pensacola Preferred Customer Program.

Similar to frequent shopper programs that exist in scores of other larger downtowns and managed upscale lifestyle centers, the Downtown Pensacola Preferred Customer Program consist of a monthly electronic communication inviting existing downtown retail patrons to take advantage of special unadvertised offerings, the introduction of new lines of merchandise, new menu items, a special initiation to trunk showings, an advance opportunity to shop early prior to the public promotion of an annual sales event, an announcement of a change in hours, or a special discount for a limited period just for members of the program. At the beginning of each month and starting with August 1, 2008, “preferred customers” of downtown Pensacola will receive an attractive email newsletter explaining the new offerings and special promotions that are not being advertised to the general public. The advance notice of upcoming promotions and expansions is at the same time a kind of thank-you to loyal and valued

customers of downtown retail businesses. Special offerings or invitations from four participating businesses will be highlighted each month in the electronic newsletter.

To participate, patrons of downtown retailers and restaurants, simply have to fill-in their email address on the little post card size forms available at each downtown retailer. The collected email addresses will not be shared or used for any other purpose than to send communications about the preferred customer program and the participating retailers. Participation is totally voluntary and members can opt out at any time. No other information about the patron is required or requested. It's simple and membership is free. And what is even better is that all members of the preferred customer program will get an advance notice of great unadvertised specials and special invitations to some of the coolest and highest quality establishments in all of Pensacola – all of which just happen to be downtown. Be sure and sign-up today in any of downtown's quality retailers or restaurants.

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