



"I think being successful is being rewarded for the work that you do." Get down to business with development tips from Arlene Soto, Director of the Southwestern Oregon Small Business Development Center

Member Business Tip::Building a Seasonal Campaign
Bandon Mercantile owner Beth Wood brought her best holiday customers back through the New Year with a promotional campaign that rewarded shoppers with bounce-back coupons.



February 2014

Bandon
Oregon Chamber of Commerce

Down to Business

A look at small business questions from the SWOCC Small Business Development Center

Briefed from column by Arlene M. Soto CMA, CGBP, Southwestern SBDC Director

What Do Customers Want?

The best way to know what customers want is to ask them.

Customers buy because they have wants, needs, concerns or problems. Your business should satisfy the customer while still maintaining profitable operations.

Common customer requests include

- Better product selection
- Longer hours of operation
- Good customer service
- Multiple payment options



Are you willing to implement the ideas your best customers provide? Ask your customers for specifics, and do your research before implementing changes based on customer suggestions.

When customers ask for better selection, find out if they want more variety, higher quality or lower priced options. Add to your inventory only if there's profit potential and customers are eager to buy at a price that meets your needs.

Customers want to be able to shop when they have the time. Analyze when customers actually shop in your establishment, and adjust your hours of operation accordingly, or add e-commerce to your website.

Good customer service is the key to the word of mouth advertising. Consider hiring a secret shopper to provide feedback on ways to improve customer service, or invest in employee training.

Accept credit cards or checks, not just cash. Be sure to establish pricing that will cover any costs associated with credit card purchases. And teach your employees how to verify the check or credit card is good.

Customers often just want to know someone is listening to them. Ask your customers for feedback and use that feedback to improve your business.

Read Soto's "Down to Business" column in the World News and at bizcenter.org.

The SBDC is a partnership of the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Oregon Small Business Development Center Network, the Oregon Business Development Department and Southwestern Oregon Community College. Arlene M. Soto has been the Director of the Southwestern Small Business Development Center since July 2007. To ask a question call 541-756-6445, e-mail asoto@socc.edu, or write 2455 Maple Leaf, North Bend, OR 97459.



Emma Wampler, Bandon Cranberry Festival Queen, to represent Bandon at Miss Oregon Sponsors Needed

Bandon's 2013 Cranberry Queen, Emma Wampler, will join young women from around the state to compete for university and college scholarships in the Miss Oregon contest. Participants were offered more than \$420,000 in cash and in-kind education scholarships in 2013.

In her Miss Oregon experience, Emma will practice public presentation, share her time with peers, and learn from previous Miss Oregon winners.

2014 Miss Oregon scholarship competition events begin in May, with a workshop to prepare contestants for Miss Oregon contest week in June. Summer events include the Miss Oregon parade in Portland—where Emma will represent Bandon in her Cranberry Queen regalia.

Local sponsors assist with competition costs, including travel expenses and continued vocal training. Contact Julie Miller at the BCC to express your interest in sponsoring Emma for the 2014 Miss Oregon competition.

Building Better Businesses: A conversation with Arlene Soto

Arlene Soto is an entrepreneur who has helped countless small business owners improve their businesses.

Soto works to strengthen and support an entrepreneurial culture because she believes thriving businesses benefit their communities and promote a health economy. She is a Certified Management Accountant who has directed Oregon's Southwestern Small Business Development Center since 2007. She's networked with entrepreneurs in Oregon and Wyoming for 19 years.

"In that time, I've worked with about 3500 businesses. So I know a little about business. Not everything, but a little," said Soto.

Soto wants to see businesses succeed and owners to earn financial rewards for their work. Financial reviews are among the free, confidential consulting options through the SBDC. Using tax returns and financial statements, Soto and her SBDC team deliver comprehensive reports, compare business performance to industry averages, and offer feedback on development opportunities, including financing.

"People strengthen their business by becoming financially capable and understanding their business better," said Soto.

She helps owners anticipate trends and plan productive cash flow.

I think being successful is being rewarded for the work that you do.

—Arlene Soto, Southwestern SBDC Director, Entrepreneur



Trend-Spotting in Local Development

Soto's outlook on the local economy is optimistic. Progress is slow, but stable. Businesses and individuals have stronger balance sheets, reduced debt and improved cash flow in 2013, she says.

And there's room for growth. Southwestern Oregon is keeping pace with the rest of the country in brewing and distilling. Enterprising techies can find niches in software and mobile apps with companies interested in remote contracts. Alternative energy remains a promising field of exploration.

Soto has her eye on the LNG Pacific Connector Gas Pipeline. If approved, she anticipates a short term area boom associated with the project and says business owners who take advantage of the economic opportunities—before they taper off—will be rewarded for their efforts.

What's played out? The drive-through coffee kiosk, says Soto. They're too location sensitive, and all the good locations are spoken for.

Tools and Information

Business owners can access SBDC consulting and information online and at the North Bend office. Up to 90% of the initial queries Soto receives touch on one of four topics: How to access development funds; operate QuickBooks; entice more customers, and train employees to treat customers well.

Soto calls herself an early adopter of technology—she worked in the first Portland accounting firm to incorporate computers. She encourages business owners to check out search engine optimization consulting with SBDC.

Southwestern SBDC services are available for businesses in Coos, Curry and West Douglas counties. To request a consult, email Soto at asoto@socc.edu, call 541-756-6445, or register online at bizcenter.org.



Bandon Visitors Center
Open 10 AM to 4 PM
Monday through Sunday
300 Second Street
Bandon, Oregon
541-347-9616
bandon.com

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Shop Bandon Gains Momentum

Business sponsors doubled 2010 to 2013

Bandon's annual holiday shop local campaign drew a significant number of new sponsors in 2013.

"Shop Bandon was a big hit with shoppers from the beginning," said BCC Executive Director Julie Miller. "To see more chamber members get excited about it, not just with their sponsorships, but promoting the event in their businesses, really makes it worthwhile."

Program sponsorship saw modest growth 2010 to 2012. But in 2013, responses to BCC sponsor requests outpaced expectations, with 60 sponsoring businesses—twice the number from just three years ago.



Building a Seasonal Campaign

Beth Wood ties a bow around the 2013 holidays

The Bandon Mercantile has been a BCC Shop Bandon sponsor since the onset of the program. And the store ranked number one in 2013 receipt redemptions.

Mercantile owner Beth Wood brought her best holiday customers back to the Mercantile through the New Year with a promotional campaign that rewarded shoppers with bounce-back coupons.

The bounce-back was an idea she learned in a BCC Tuesday Tune-Up session, from Jon Schallert's Destination University series. She tried the incentive in 2012 and built on the strategy in 2013.

Wood reported higher sales totals than the previous holiday season and said the bounce-back was a hit.

"It brought a lot of people into the store prepared to spend more than \$50," said Wood. "It was very successful."

The Mercantile bounce-back coupon was offered to shoppers who spent \$50 or more in the store between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Customers were invited to return any time through the month of January to redeem their coupon for \$10 savings on the next purchase of \$50 or more.

Wood noted that she chose the \$50 sale point because it's slightly higher than her average sales ticket; individual business owners should decide coupon values based on average sales and cost of merchandise in their own stores.

She enticed holiday shoppers with sales and an initial coupon offer, advertised in the World News and Coffee Break, as well as her e-newsletter. She landed additional exposure with a photo op in the shopping section of the Bandon Western World newspaper.

The bounce-back is just one marketing strategy Wood gleaned from the 2013 Tuesday Tune-Up series. And she plans to sign up again this year.

"I feel it's given me a new outlook on business and how to promote ourselves. I don't think there was one (Tuesday Tune-Up) class I didn't return and try something that was recommended," she said.



Cover Image by Nick Martin: Martin is a freelance journalist and photographer. He produces content for the Bandon Dunes Golf Resort blog and records video documentation of the Oregon coast. Additional images: page 2 Angela Cardas, Cardas Photography; page 3 Arlene Soto, courtesy Anne Matthews; page 4 courtesy Beth Wood; page 5 Wood Sabold; Henry the Fish courtesy Washed Ashore; page 6 Bandon Showcase, courtesy Side Street Strutters. BCC Newsletter © 2014 Bandon Chamber of Commerce



Coming in March 2014

Tuesday Tune-Up

Business Development Series II

2nd & 3rd Tuesdays, Inn at Face Rock

New in 2014—

- **Small Business Finance:** Guest presenter Arlene Soto of Oregon Small Business Development Center
- **Google Analytics & Website Tune-Up:** Guest presenter Misty Lambrecht of Oregon Coast Community College Small Business Development Center
- **Customer Service Training** for employees
- **New Destination University webinars** from the Jon Schallert series

Learn, Share, Do Better Business

The BCC Tuesday Tune-Up series brings business owners together. Learn destination market strategies. Explore business building tactics with regional experts. Put ideas to work and share your experience with fellow chamber members.

TTU participants meet twice monthly, 2nd and 3rd Tuesdays, March through June. \$50 registration for chamber members or member employees. Contact Julie Miller at the BCC to sign up.

Hosted by Best Western Inn at Face Rock, 3225 Beach Loop Drive, Bandon.

Board Interest

Open in 2014:

Two four-year BCC Board Director Positions

Two board directors will be elected to four-year positions beginning in 2014. Bandon Chamber of Commerce members interested in board positions must be members in good standing for at least one year. Register interest in writing with a letter of petition signed by five other members in good standing.

Address petitions to Margaret Pounder, Bandon Chamber President. Petitions must be mailed or delivered to the Chamber of Commerce no later than 4 PM March 17, 2014; Post Office Box 1515, Bandon, 97411.

For more information, contact Executive Director Julie Miller at bandoncc@mycomspan.com or 541-347-9616.

After Hours

BCC Business After Hours

6 PM, Thursday, Feb. 13, 2014

Love The Ocean

Hosted by

Washed Ashore Art to Save the Sea

325 Second St SE, Bandon

Catered by

Old Town Pizza & Pasta

Truffles-Gift-Apparel-Home

\$10 admission at the door

RSVP by 4 PM, February 11

BCC/Visitors Center 541-347-9616



Chamber Member Forum Now on Facebook

You're Invited: Join the Bandon Chamber of Commerce Member Forum.

Members use the group page to explore ways we can improve our community. Share your questions, ideas and updates about Bandon business.

Facebook group pages are accessible to members only.

Visit facebook.com/groups/bandonchamber/



WHAT'S HAPPENING

More events at bandon.com

Side Street Strutters with Meloney Collins

Presented by Bandon Showcase

7:30 PM, Friday, Feb. 7, 2014

Sprague Community Theater, 1202 11th St., Bandon

Tickets \$25; Bandon Mercantile Co., or at the door

Will call 541-347-SHOW

bandonshowcase.org

BCC Business After Hours

6 PM, Thursday, Feb. 13, 2014

Washed Ashore Art to Save the Sea

325 Second St SE, Bandon

RSVP requested, details page 5

The Trip to Bountiful

Presented by the Bandon Playhouse

Weekends, Feb 21 through March 9

7:30 PM Friday, Saturday; 2 PM Sunday

Sprague Community Theater, 1202 11th ST SW, Bandon

Tickets \$12 adults, \$10 students and seniors, \$8 children

under 12; Will call 541-551-1498

thebandonplayhouse.org

Petition for BCC Board Election

Submission deadline, March 17, 2014; Details page 5



BANDON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
POST OFFICE BOX 1515
BANDON OR 97411