Building Store Patronage by Strengthening Community Relationships

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Building Store Patronage by Strengthening Community Relationships

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Rural Grocery Initiative

Rural Grocery Summit
Manhattan, KS
June 25-26, 2018
Community Identity & Sense of Place

Grocery stores are ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS in the community
Social Capital, defined:

“The web of social relationships that influences individual behavior and thereby affects economic growth.” (Pennar, 1997)
Two Main Questions:

How is the local grocery store integrated into the community?

What difference does it make if the local grocery store is connected to the life of the community?
Study Overview & Methodology

Participating Kansas Grocery Stores:

2 - South Central stores
2 - Southeast stores

Data Collection Methods:

1. Interviews with store leadership (manager and/or owner)
2. Store intercept surveys
3. Mailer surveys
Research Process
Analysis

**Patronage indicators:** shopping frequency, majority of grocery dollars spent

**Social Capital indicators**

- **Primary factors:** trust, social network support, personal relationships, civic engagement
- **Secondary factors:** group affiliation (i.e., faith-based, children living in household, tenure in community)

**Demographic indicators:** age, income, education
Key Findings

01
Community members
- with higher levels of trust,
- that feel a part of the community, OR
- that have a sense of community pride

Shop more frequently at the local grocery store.

02
Community members
- that feel the town is welcoming to newcomers, OR
- that believe local leadership has a vision for the community

Shop more frequently at the local grocery store.

03
Community members
- with lower levels of income, OR
- with lower levels of education

Spend the majority of their grocery dollars at the local grocery store.
Grocery Store Social Capital Best Practices

1. Capitalize on community assets and leverage social networks
2. Move higher on the Social Capital Engagement Continuum
3. Develop a comprehensive communications plan
4. Establish a brand identity
5. Expand specialized and personalized services
6. Create a shopping “experience”
Capitalize on Community Assets and Leverage Social Networks

GROCERY STORE SOCIAL CAPITAL BEST PRACTICES

More than 19,332 Pounds
- Caldwell 820 lbs
- Conway Springs 4,332 lbs & 51,964
- Finney County 1,180 lbs
- Great Bend 5700 lbs
- Harper 2,480 lbs
- Leoti 760 lbs

- Scott City 2,180 lbs
- Syracuse 960 lbs
- Tribune 900 lbs

CRAM THE VAN
Move Higher on the Social Capital Engagement Continuum

Grocery Store Social Capital Best Practices
Develop a comprehensive communications plan

GROCERY STORE SOCIAL CAPITAL
BEST PRACTICES
Establish a brand identity

GROCERY STORE SOCIAL CAPITAL
BEST PRACTICES

Like father, like son. And the tradition of butchering continues into the next generation! We just finished making all our specialty patties for your grilling needs. The weather is beautiful! Come see us!
Expand specialized and personalized services

GROCERY STORE SOCIAL CAPITAL
BEST PRACTICES
Create a shopping “experience.”

GROCERY STORE SOCIAL CAPITAL
BEST PRACTICES
Other Influences

- Community perceptions of store owner
- Negative community social capital
- Store operational practices
Grocery Store Assessment

Categories

Product Supply
Pricing
Promotion & Advertising
Merchandising
Food Safety & Sanitation
Inventory Management
Variety of Product

Customer Service
Equipment/Technology
Long-term/Succession Planning
Business Management
Accounting
Community Connection

Rural Grocery Initiative: Business Management
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