

## **Prepare Your Business for the Holidays**

### **Business Cash Advance and Loyalty Programs**

By Jeannette Perez

Last month, we touched briefly upon some of the ways that you can prepare your business for the upcoming holiday season. Some of the methods we shared include using social networks such as Twitter and Facebook to attract customers, offering gift certificates/gift cards, and adjusting your budget according to your business' needs. If you stay ahead of the crowd and organize now, you will greatly increase the potential for profits. Two more ways in which you can prepare for the holidays now is through a business cash advance to help with holiday budgeting needs as well as offering loyalty programs to keep your customers coming back to your business.

#### **Increase Working Capital With a Business Cash Advance**

With the economy in a state of change, and the holidays quickly approaching, you may need emergency funding for your business but might not qualify for a traditional bank loan. What you may not be aware of is the variety of other financing options available to you which are generally easier to qualify for such as a business cash advance. This type of funding can be used to purchase new inventory, repair equipment, remodel, expand, etc. You don't need to have excellent credit to qualify for a business cash advance and there are no liens or personal guarantees required. In addition, all fees paid are tax-deductible since they can be written off as a business expense. A business cash advance can increase cash flow and increase profits if the funding is used effectively. For example, if you get a \$10,000 advance and use the funds to purchase inventory for the holiday rush, you now have the potential to bring in additional profits that you may have missed out on without the funds.

#### **Keep Customers Coming Back With a Customer Loyalty Card Program**

The competition for small businesses is fierce, and as a small business owner you need to find creative ways of keeping your customers from straying. A powerful incentive to keep customers returning is to offer a loyalty card program similar to those used by many large companies (i.e. Southwest Airlines, Staples, Borders). According to a loyalty monitor study done by Custom Marketing Corp and Total Research Corp, consumer spending is 6% higher for companies that offer loyalty card programs and visits are increased by at least 25%. You can fully customize your rewards program to fit your business' needs and the system will automatically redeem points at any level you choose. The loyalty card company you choose automatically tracks customers each time they use their card which allows you to research spending patterns at your business. There are a variety of ways you can offer rewards with a loyalty card. For example, if you own a café, you can offer a free cup of coffee after the customer has purchased ten cups. Get creative with your incentives and you will keep your customers coming back for more. Customers are more likely to remain loyal to a business that offers them free services and/or products.

The holidays are a great time to test new strategies and widen your customer base. We will be exploring business cash advance and loyalty programs in future issues, but now is a good time to ask your merchant services provider about these beneficial programs.

For more information on business cash advance and loyalty programs visit our website at [www.vipccs.com/resources](http://www.vipccs.com/resources)