



Age Friendly Business Practices: Strategies for Marketing to Aging Consumers

The over 50+ age group is the fastest growing population segment in the country. A recent survey of Dupont Circle residents in this age group showed they want to live and shop locally. A survey of local Dupont Circle merchants showed that they understand the desirability of appealing to both a younger and older customer base. The recommendations below have been developed as a guide for merchants as we work to keep our community remain a vibrant and responsive place to live and shop for all residents.

ACCESS: Responding to the needs of customers with mobility limitations

- An easily accessible customer washroom
- Sturdy railings, non-slip surfaces, wider aisles, uncluttered pathways that can accommodate wheelchairs and easily opened or automatic doors.
- A place to sit while waiting, chairs that are sturdy and stable (not too low or soft) with arms if possible.
- Provide well-lit and well-marked entrances and emergency exits.

LIGHTING: Responding to Visual Impairments

- Employ sufficient, glare-free lighting at tables
- Have menus, prescriptions, printed materials with type and font enhancement
- Have the service desk in a clearly visible place so people can ask for help
- Signage has good contrast and wording is easy to follow
- Set asides some tables/product areas with enhanced lighting where customers can read and inspect items

NOISE: Responding to Hearing Impairments

- Limit noise levels to a moderate/low level at lunch or early evening.
- Train staff to speak clearly and slowly, if necessary and to assist customers by reading menus or labels.
- Early-bird —provide an area or time such as a weekly lunch or pre-happy hour designated as “quiet time.”

PERSONNEL: Training Staff to Respond to Needs of Aging Customers

- Sensitize staff to avoid condescending behaviors, such as visible impatience.
- Prevent stereotyping or drawing conclusions about customers that are age-related.
- Training in handling incidents like falls or temporary confusion.
- Learn how to recognize when a person may need help

MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES: Providing Incentives to Aging Customers

- Consider veterans' discounts and customer discounts or coupons.
- Market your business keeping in mind the type of media that older adults follow.
- Appeal to older market segments by education, cultural values, health status for marketing opportunities.

Resources: [http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/201292#ixzz2VR\)14zct](http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/201292#ixzz2VR)14zct)
<http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/201292#ixzz2VR15J8DY>
<http://smallbusiness.chron.com/start-business-caters-senior-citizens-4834.html>