

TAKING YOUR **RETAIL BUSINESS** TO THE *NEXT LEVEL*



Improvements You Can Make Today to
Your Storefront and Online Store

In many cases,

your storefront or online store is the first impression someone will have of your business. First impressions make an enormous impact on how someone feels and how they may interact with your brand. You need to carefully consider and plan the look and feel of your storefront and ecommerce store. Does it align with the brand image you'd like to project? Does it speak to the needs and desires of your customers? Is it appealing and inviting to the type of customer you'd like to attract?

All of these factors work in the mind of the consumer to help them determine whether or not they will visit your store and buy. In this guide, we provide tactics you can start implementing in your business right away to increase traffic and ultimately sell more inventory.

IMPROVING YOUR STOREFRONT

How your physical storefront looks, and is perceived, by potential customers can have an enormous impact on your business. Even in the age of ubiquitous ecommerce, the majority of all retail sales still takes place offline. One major trend we saw in 2015 was ecommerce retailers beginning to set up brick and mortar locations because they've realize how important an actual storefront is to their business.

With that in mind, here are six tips for improving your retail storefront that will help attract the right customers and more of them!



REMOVE CLUTTER

People will use your storefront to answer two questions: Is it safe to enter and will it be worth my time? The window of your storefront has the power to either attract, repel, or bore a passerby. Do an audit and remove any of the following from your storefront: credit card signs, community notices, hand written signs, out-of-date signage, or “dust bunnies.”



LOOK OPEN

People don't have much time to decide whether or not to stop and peek inside your storefront, so looking like you're open will reassure and welcome shoppers into your business. Have good lighting and make sure it properly illuminates the windows. Point lights towards the storefront to indicate you're ready to serve the customer along with an “open” sign that clearly invites people in.



MATCH THE QUALITY OF SIGNAGE TO WHAT YOU'RE SELLING

Your window signage should be a clear indication of what you're selling, and reflect the quality of goods. Your logo, design, and color scheme should reflect the character and condition of your products and services.



CONSIDER THE HEIGHTS AND ANGLES

Think about pedestrians and drivers when placing your signage. Your storefront should be visible to both, and above car roof level if people park in front of your store.



MAKE WINDOW DISPLAYS ATTRACTIVE AND CHANGE THEM FREQUENTLY

You'll attract more customers by showing them that there is consistently something new and different. Try and showcase a strong color story, movement (real or perceived), and a powerful focal area.



KEEP IT CLEAN

No matter what quality your goods are, remember to keep your storefront clean and hygienic. New customers will judge the quality of your store and brand by the cleanliness of your storefront. This is a powerful incentive to keep your store presentable.

REAL LIFE STOREFRONT EXAMPLES

Here are a few real-life Portland storefront examples from SBDC clients that illustrate the points we've covered.



GARNISH

Notice how the colors on the signage contrast nicely. There is a full outfit on display, in front, and clothing behind the glass being highlighted by spotlights. Both the storefront and window are also spotless, putting the focus on the merchandise and creating an inviting feel.



TILDE

This is a great example of using color to tell a story and creating an environment that looks open. The storefront is well lit and showcasing a wide variety of merchandise. The flowers out front are tasteful and inviting, and the powerful simplicity of this storefront is something business owners should take note of. A variety of merchandise is being displayed, yet the business looks very clean and organized.



QUEEN BEE

Changing your store's appearance to reflect different holidays and seasons is a great strategy, and this storefront is the perfect example. The display has clear focal points, highlighted by the lighting, and showcases a number of different items, yet leaves enough space for people passing by to see past the display and inside the store itself.

IMPROVING YOUR ONLINE STORE

Your website and online store are also crucial to how potential customers will view your brand. More than just a place to purchase goods, think of your online store as a kind of “digital business card” that should reflect your brand in a clear, concise, and compelling manner. It’s a first impression for many potential customers, including tourists, who will make a decision on whether or not to pay you a visit before ever seeing your brick and mortar location.

Now, let’s take a look at eight tips that you can use to improve your online store.



MAKE IT MOBILE FRIENDLY AND “RESPONSIVE”

As smartphone and tablet usage increase, this has become an area that can't be overlooked. Google now rewards websites that are mobile friendly or responsive with a higher search ranking. A recent change many business owners have failed to notice. Fortunately, Google offers a tool storeowners can use to determine if your website passes the test.



MATCH THE LOOK AND FEEL OF YOUR PHYSICAL STOREFRONT

The branding of your business should be consistent across all channels, whether it be physical or digital. If your storefront speaks to a younger, female audience then so should your online store by incorporating the same look and feel that drives them to your physical location.



MAKE IT CLEAR CUSTOMERS CAN BUY FROM YOUR WEBSITE

Don't hide your ecommerce store, make sure website visitors know they can buy from you online. Keep a shopping cart icon or link in the header of your website, highlight products on your homepage, and make sure navigation to shop and see more products is prominent.



MAKE ONLINE SHOPPING EASY

Your site should be easy for people to browse. It should be optimized for mobile devices, have clear prices and product descriptions, utilize a shopping cart, and provide customers with necessary information like shipping charges and estimated arrival times of their items. Make sure the checkout process is straightforward and intuitive.



QUALITY PHOTOS

The photos used on your website should be professionally taken and specific to your business. Try to avoid stock imagery at all costs. Professional photos of your product or service in action or on display further personalize the experience for someone viewing your website and helps you stand out.



BUILD YOUR EMAIL LIST

Email marketing is an incredibly powerful tool. The opportunity to send new product arrivals or sales announcements to potentially thousands of new and existing customers is tremendous. Grow your email list on your website through pop-up banners or in your website's footer. You can offer a discount, free shipping, or some other incentive for new email subscribers.



KEEP YOUR INFORMATION UP-TO-DATE

This is a must for all retail store owners. Pay attention to the little things, such as holiday hours and a change of address or phone number. Keep in mind that your business information is listed on review and social media sites that will need to be updated. Provide your customers with multiple ways of contacting you as well, including email and social media.

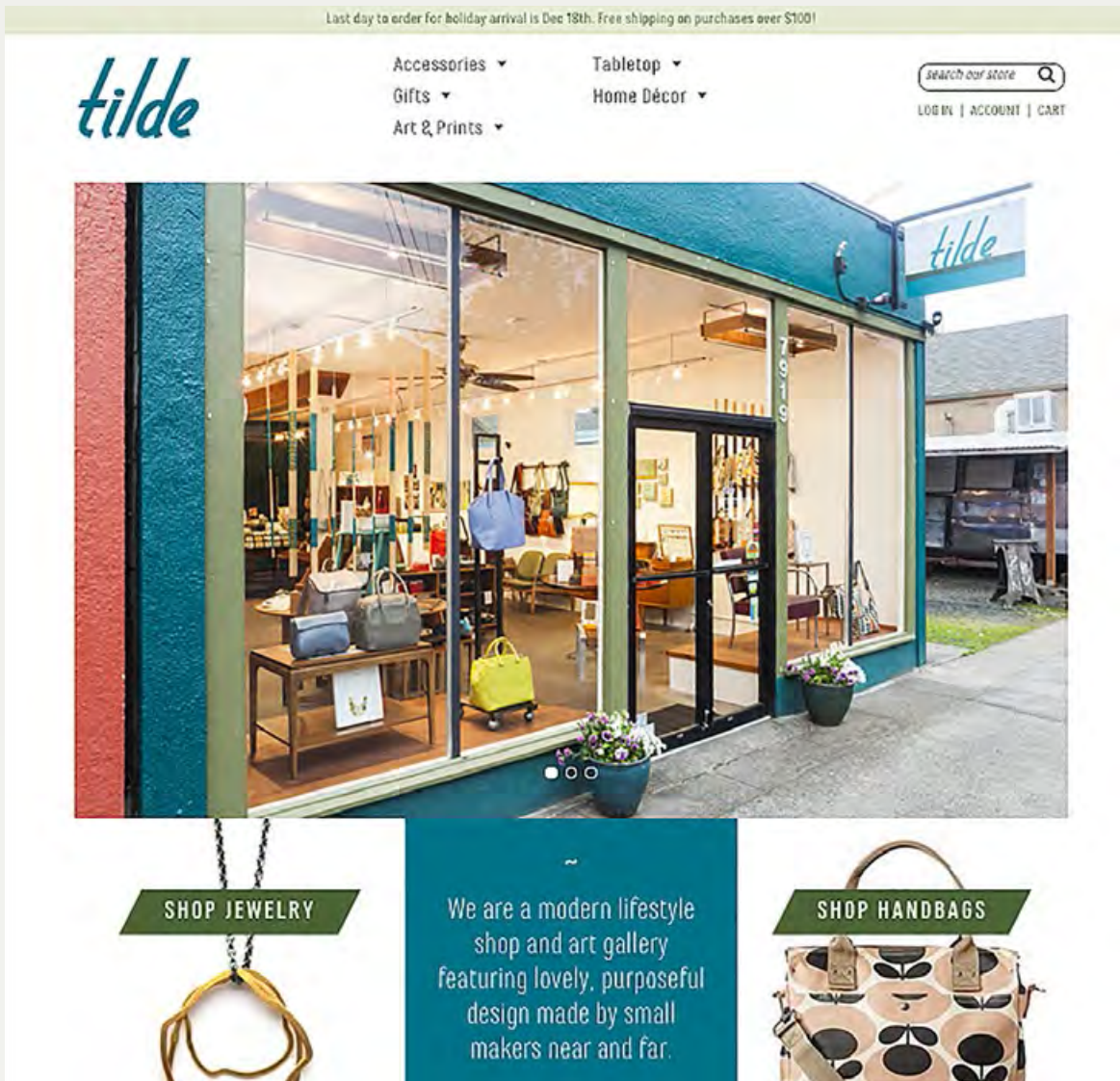


WHAT MAKES YOU DIFFERENT

No matter your product or service, there is something that makes your business unique. Make sure you tell your brand's story in a way that makes you stand out from the crowd, in-store and online!

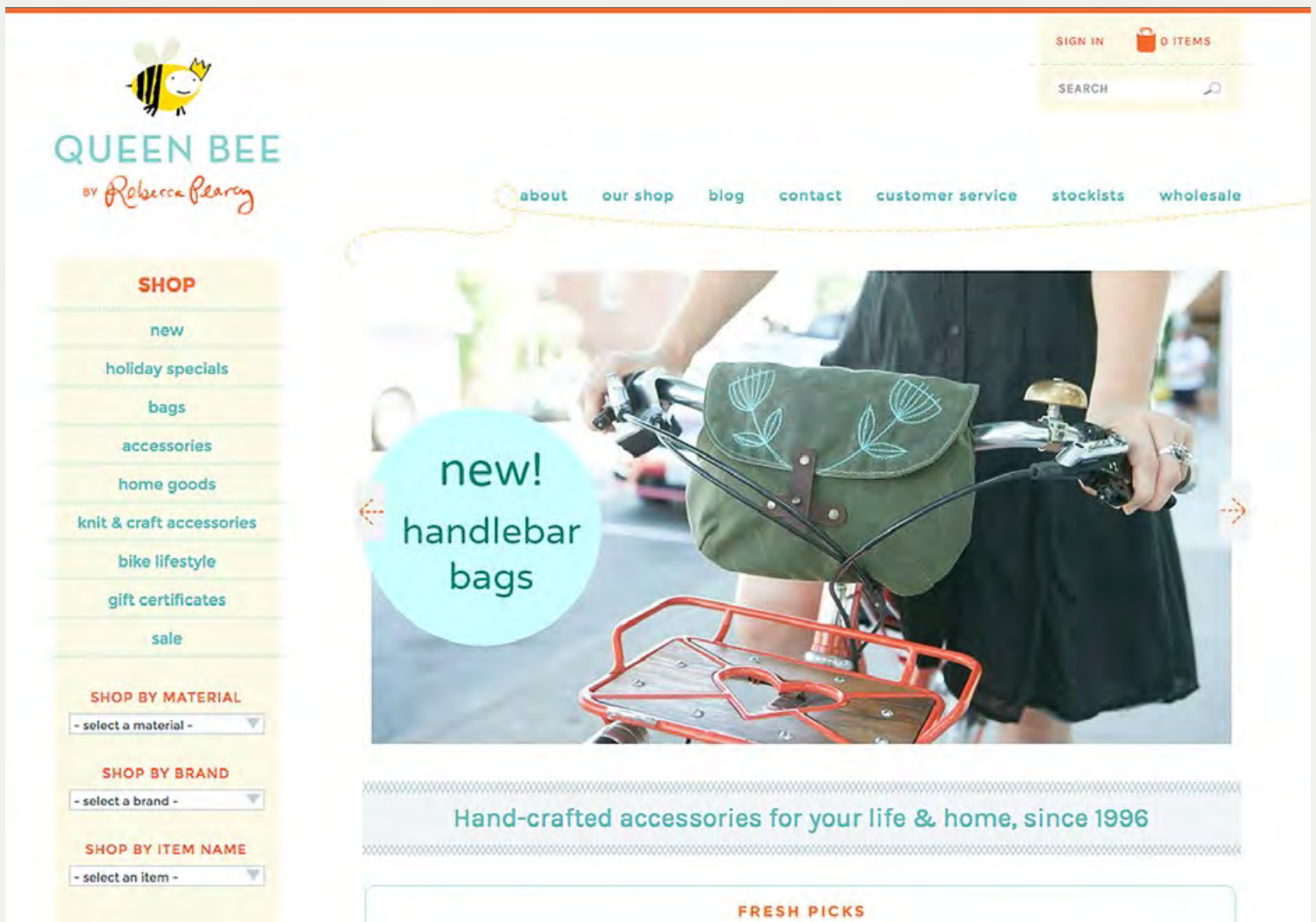
REAL LIFE ONLINE STORE EXAMPLES

You can seek inspiration in some of these compelling online store examples from SBDC clients.



TILDE

Notice how the latest promotion and links to merchandise are front and center on this web page. The storefront is shown on the homepage, and the same modern, colorful look matches both the online and brick and mortar presence.



QUEEN BEE

This website's homepage does a great job of including everything a shopper would need on one page. You can begin shopping immediately by using the "Shop" sidebar, store hours and contact information are clearly visible, and below that visitors can easily sign-up for the newsletter.



RADISH UNDERGROUND

The importance of high quality photos can't be understated when viewing this web store. The colorful, large, detailed and customized images on the page jump right out at the viewer, while at the same time, telling a unique brand story.

BOYS FORT

The Fort

SHOP

Our Story

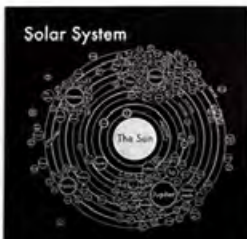
Projects

Press

Contact



POPULAR ITEMS



BOYS FORT

Having a shopping cart clear and visible on the home page is great for allowing shoppers to get started right away. While the visual design of the site tells a unique brand story, quirky and whimsical in this case, they go even a step further by including an "Our Story" tab where people can read about the business owners, along with their unique vision and journey.

Want to Learn More?

The PCC Small Business Development Center (SBDC) has helped hundreds of retail businesses start, grow, and strengthen through educational programs and one-on-one business advising. The businesses highlighted in this guide are all SBDC clients. Since 2012, we've developed and refined the following courses tailored to fit the needs of new and existing retail businesses:

[Retail Business Builders](#) - This 10-week course teaches small business owners how to plan and launch their storefront, both physically and online. Learn about topics like buying inventory, pricing, visual marketing, and building customer loyalty.

[Retail Small Business Management](#) - This course is designed to help small business owners increase profitability while working smarter, not harder. Learn how to build your brand and team, that's optimized for growth, customer loyalty, and financial efficiency.

Click on the links above or [contact us](#) today to learn how we can help you launch or grow your retail business!