

# ***FREE Employees--5 Ways to Put Your Customers to Work***

**by Stephanie Bond**

If you'd like to increase foot-traffic in your store, but you have a tight promotional budget, here are a few ideas to help put your customers to work for you!

- 1) Give your customers an index card and ask them to write a review on the spot for a book they would highly recommend. Alternately, insert the card in their bag and ask them to submit a review on their next visit. Post the review as a shelf-talker. Customers will love the attention, and shelf-talkers really work!
- 2) Boldly ask your customers to tell their reader friends about your store. If you explain that you need the business, your humble request will not be denied. Word of mouth is a powerful advertising tool, and remember—your customers have a vested interest in your success!
- 3) Post a 'customer recommended reading list' in each area of the store (romance, science fiction, children's, business, etc.) and ask customers to add their favorites to the lists.
- 4) Ask your customers to contribute to a memory book about the novel that most influenced their life, or their love for reading. Display the book prominently in your store. Similarly, if you have a video camera, tape interviews with customers about how important reading is to them. Put the tape on continuous play in your store, or near your store entrance (if you have a mall location) as a powerful tool to draw in new customers.
- 5) Distribute freebies displaying your store name to loyal customers: T-shirts, bookmarks, pens, key chains, hats, canvas bags, et cetera. The object of most advertising is simply to raise awareness of a store's name and location. Let your current customers help build name recognition for your store to gain new customers! ~**S**Bond