

How Retailers Can Survive in a Down Economy

10 Tips for Independent Owners

1. Offer selections not found in large retail stores and stock unique merchandise that will bring in new customers that they can only find in your store.
2. Include extras such as free gift wrapping or free shipping.
3. Provide freebies.
4. Reconsider strict return policies.
5. Give something away with a big purchase; a gift certificate, an accessory or something with the store's logo.
6. Stay true to your identity.
7. Make sure your sales tickets are clearly marked. Don't make customers search or guess what the prices are or may be.
8. Get as many potential customers in the door as possible. Send mailers, have a big sale, host private parties.
9. Owners should call customers and thank them for coming into the store and making purchases. While doing this DO NOT try to talk up a promotion or a future event during this call, unless asked.
10. Give sales associates the authority to give customers additional discounts or match other stores sale prices. Customers are more important than profits right now.

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What are you doing to survive in this down economy? If you have some suggestions you would like to share, please email us at sales@nationalnonwovens.com

Customer Spotlight

10 Questions for Prairie Point Junction Owner, Julie Geiger

1. **How long have you been in business?** *We opened in 1998 and began as mostly a quilt and fabric shop. WoolFelt® came along as quite a surprise. We started selling it because of all the great WoolFelt® patterns being sold at Quilt Market. Now WoolFelt® is a big part of our business.*
2. **Where are you located?** *Our shop is in a rural area in the middle of Nebraska. Our regular customers come from about a 60 mile radius. An Interstate is minutes away so we have some tourist traffic. We also sell products on our website.*
3. **How important is your online business?** *Our website is very important and accounts for about 90% of our WoolFelt® sales.*
4. **What style do most of your customers prefer?** *Although country sells very well in our shop, we sell a wide variety of different WoolFelt® colors online and demand for certain colors is often seasonal.*
5. **Do you offer classes?** *We don't offer classes in our store, but I do travel a lot for quilt guilds and trunk shows.*
6. **Has the sluggish economy negatively impacted your business?** *No. In fact, we find that more people are staying home to work on hobbies. Selling natural materials that are free of chemicals is very important, especially when customers are making their own toys and gifts.*
7. **How do you promote your store/site?** *We advertise our website through several online "Shop Hops" and send out direct mail, especially e-newsletters and print newsletters.*
8. **How many styles/colors of WoolFelt® do you carry?** *We stock 78 colors in both the WCF001 and TOY002 line. We bundle colors that we name ourselves, such as "Fright Night" and "Plenty of Purple."*
9. **How do you display WoolFelt®?** *WoolFelt® is usually featured in our seasonal displays.*
10. **What are your most popular WoolFelt® projects?** *Candle mat patterns and ornament patterns are our best sellers.*



Inside the Prairie Point Junction Shop



Julie Geiger regularly sends newsletters to her customers