



This article first appeared in the December/January issue of *My Business* – for more *My Business* articles please click here

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## RETAILING

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# Dashing through the stock

**AH CHRISTMAS!** The most exciting time of year for we retailers! The store is full of customers and the cash registers are singing the tunes of continuous transactions. This fun and excitement is added with wall-to-wall stock in the store piled high in anticipation of the large volume of sales that lie ahead.

And this is where a lot of retailers get caught up in all of the hype of Christmas. They buy so much stock that it takes them forever to clear the stock after the rush has ended. So the question is — how do you maximise sales and profit at Christmas, and not make a massive negative impact on your cash flow with taking on large volumes of stock? Below I have compiled a list of activities that you can do to overcome this issue.

### Don't be afraid to increase your regular selling lines

The lines of stock that you sell week-in, week-out are the lines that will definitely increase in sales volume during the Christmas period. Whether it is soft drinks, plain colour polo shirts, or a backpack, these lines will sell because the regular demand is increased as people require more of the basic lines to top up their 'existing reserves'. Also a lot of people are not creative when it comes to buying presents, so the conservative options are always the safest option. Your father may not like the six-pack of undies he gets each year, but that is not to say that he doesn't need them.

### You'll know by the first week of December

Christmas trade seems to be coming later and later each year, but a lot of people (especially mothers) like to get their

shopping out of the way before the peak Christmas rush. So a hot seller in November is going to be a gun line in December! The same goes for dud lines. If no one is interested in getting them in November, start to place these lines on special. There are bargain hunters at Christmas time, and if you take a smaller cut in December and clear the stock, it is better than trying to clear the stock below cost later on.

### Stock products that are promoted by the supplier

In the toy industry, they love to buy large amounts of stock of products that are heavily supported by television and print advertising. Why? Because the bombardment of advertising moves thousands of units! So piggyback off the free advertising that your supplier is conducting to get customers in the door, by supporting their product.

### Promote the lines that you have lots of stocks of

It amazes me that so many retailers place full-page advertisements or have Christmas catalogues and promote lines that they have very little quantity of in store. Only promote lines that you have sufficient stock in, because not only do you want to sell this stock, but you also do not want to upset customers who come into your store asking for a product that has been sold out.

### Draw stock from the supplier's warehouse

Suppliers do not want stock sitting in their warehouse. So why not take advantage of this, and offer to take the stock from your supplier and to pay on extended

payment terms. Also if the stock is a dud, you can always go back to them, expressing your concern, and you might also get them swap the stock over with lines that do sell in your store, or you can get a credit on the product so that you can place it on special.

### Plan the post Christmas sales early

Smart retailers only heavily discount on slow moving lines or poor performing categories in post Christmas sales. Smart retailers also plan for their post Christmas sales in advance. This is because more and more people are waiting for the specials in the post Christmas sales. No longer are people just buying gift vouchers for loved ones because they are lazy, it is because they want them to get more bang for their buck. Also many people who don't celebrate Christmas still love a bargain, so they also take advantage of the sales that come along with the festivities.

### Last note on Christmas

This is not related to selling more Christmas stock. Have fun over Christmas and enjoy the experience and fast pace of it. The more fun you are having... hey this does relate to selling more stock, because your customers will have fun and buy more from you.

Merry Christmas! ●

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