

## CheckOuts

Merchandising,  
Promotion &  
Operations Ideas

SPECIAL EVENTS

### Ladies' Night Event Exceeds Expectations



The women who attended the Ladies' Night event at K&B True Value were treated to gift bags, light refreshments, raffle prizes and a series of seven presentations demonstrating various home improvement projects.

**K**&B True Value in Annapolis, Md., sure knows how to treat a lady—even 113 of them. The store hosted its first-ever Ladies' Night event in October, and it was a huge success. K&B's Vice President and Co-owner Jared Littmann said he was originally expecting 30 to 40 women to RSVP for the event, but he ended up cutting off registration at 140 people because of space. Of those 140, 113 showed up plus 20 others who were unregistered. Littmann attributes the high turnout to his use of an e-mail blast to promote the event. He sent out e-mail invitations to members of the store's True Value Rewards program. It was his first time using an e-mail blast, and it got a surprisingly good response, he says. "It was sent out at 6 a.m. the Monday before the event," he says. "By 8 a.m., I had about 20 responses. I was concerned that I would have to cut it off by Wednesday."

The women who attended the event were treated to gift bags, light refreshments, raffle prizes and a series of presentations demonstrating various home improvement projects.

Littmann got the idea for the event from another hardware store owner, and it took him three months to plan. The main attraction of the event was a sequence of seven different demonstrations of home improvement projects, all conducted by K&B employees. Topics of the



Some of the women who attended the recent Ladies' Night event at K&B True Value in Annapolis, Md., commended the employees for not "talking down" to them during the demonstrations.

presentations included using environmentally friendly cleaning products, changing door locks, preparing walls and ceilings for painting, replacing toilet flappers and flush levers, hanging pictures and mirrors, laying grass seed and fertilizer, and installing light switches.

The seven demonstrations were all presented simultaneously, but repeated six times throughout the night. That way, the women could watch the presentations that they were interested in, in the order that they wanted. Each presentation was 15 minutes long, with five minutes at the end for questions. Littmann says that, although the employees thought it was a "silly idea," having a dress rehearsal of the demos the night before the event was extremely helpful in ensuring that the presentations filled the allotted time without going over.

Besides gaining knowledge, every woman who attended Ladies' Night left with a gift bag containing a store coupon, a survey to fill out about the event and \$30 worth of merchandise donated by vendors. The gifts were placed in a reusable True Value bag that customers can bring back for a discount each time they shop.

Several little extra touches by the employees—like passing out printed event programs and store maps at the door, dressing nicer than usual and standing outside with flashlights after the event to make sure the women felt safe as they walked to their cars—contributed to the success of the event.

The event was measurably successful, based on the results of the surveys that were passed out and how many coupons from the event ended up coming back to the store. Littmann says many of the women also commented that after learning how to do the various projects, they would be back to the store later to purchase the necessary supplies.

The feedback on the surveys was good, he says. "Overall, they were just blown away by the experience. They thought the presentations went very well, and they were impressed with the gift bags." ─