

THE RETAILER'S PLANNING CALENDAR

MARCH



BARBIE TURNS 50
MARCH 9

Here's a scary thought: If Barbie had her own country, let's call it Barbistan, peopled exclusively by Barbie dolls, it would be the third most populous nation in the world. More than 800 million of the preposterously long-legged plastic beauties have been sold since Barbie made her first appearance on this day in 1959. Celebrate Barbie's 50th birthday with a display in your windows (A dozen Barbies modeling your best earrings?). Invite customers to join a Barbie-themed event in the store. Come on Barbie, let's go party!

1 March is **Employee Spirit Month**, and this month your staff might need a little extra encouragement. Keep talking and keep them in the loop if things are looking a bit slow. They may also have great ideas on how to drive customers into the store. You won't know unless you ask.

8 One of the few American ideas the old Soviet Union picked up and improved, or at least supersized, was **Women's Day**. Call a meeting of the store politburo and think of ways to honor and celebrate your hardworking sisters (highlight your favorite female designers, hold a no-buying, gals-only event ...)

14 "Gravitation cannot be held responsible for people falling in love." A profound thought from a profound man. On the **130th anniversary of Albert Einstein's birthday**, hold — what else — a brainstorming session with staff or mentors. Use some more of his words to guide you: "The secret to creativity is knowing how to hide your sources." In other words, read up well beforehand.

17 A man walks into a jewelry store and says to the barkeep, "Paddy, I've got a wee pot of gold to sell." Actually, he's unlikely to do that unless you've encouraged him. So this **St Patrick's Day**, hold that Pot of Gold promotion. Hire a real live leprechaun, or rent some green garb and a big head and stick your kid in it to hand out fliers encouraging shoppers to bring some old gold in. Go on. Try your luck.

19 THE INSTORE SHOW — "The Smart Jewelry Show" (April 19-21) is only one month away. There's still time to sign up. Getting an education will never be so much fun. Go to theinstoreshow.com for details and, should you decide you need to go (you do!), to register. Hope to see you there.

19 Da-da-da-da-da-DA-da-da-da. If you didn't recognize that, it's our tone-deaf rendition of the CBS jingle for the **NCAA basketball championships**, aka March Madness, which start today. Get your store pool ready. And while you're playing

sports-event organizer, run a parallel promotion assigning a gemstone to every team. Invite your best customers to take part. Prize could be tickets to next year's finals.



20 Today, the world stops tilting, day is as long as night and all eager young men of honest intention are urged to make that offer to the woman of their dreams. Yes, it's the vernal equinox, and you know what that means ... **Proposal Day!** Type "vernal," "romantic poets" and "spring" into Google and get to work on your marketing message.

23 Twenty years ago we nearly all died. **A mountain-sized asteroid passed within 500,000 miles of Earth** — a very, very close call according to NASA. Luckily, we survived and Near Miss Day was born. In thanks, dig up one of your or your sales associate's recent "near misses" and conduct an autopsy. In your morning meeting today, debate what may have saved the sale. A lower price? More romance? Bruce Willis?

30 Jeopardy, the thinking person's game show, celebrates the **45th anniversary of its first appearance on TV screens**. Honor the day with your own spin-off: Geomardy, the thinking jewelry collector's newsletter. Offer design and gemological tidbits and a quiz, of course. If you can't do better, feel free to dip into our archive of **INSTORE** Guess the Gem quizzes.

THE HOT LIST

BIRTHSTONE
AQUAMARINE



With its shades of Mediterranean blue, "aqua+marine" (water+ocean) was destined to be forever associated with the sea. The ancient Romans believed Neptune, the king of the sea, gave aquamarine to the mermaids, and sailors in the Middle Ages purportedly slept with it to ensure a safe passage. Today, this almost-hard-as-diamond beryl is still associated with long passages. It's given to celebrate the 19th wedding anniversary.

MORE EVENTS + HOLIDAYS



- **Sleep Awareness Month** (They say being sleepy is as debilitating as being drunk. Catch the zzzz's you need.)
- **Optimism Month** (For the next 31 days, refuse to hang around negative people.)

- March 1-7 **Write a Letter of Appreciation Week**. (Practice on us!)
- March 8 **Income Tax First Day** (Refunds start hitting the streets. Get a strategy in place.)
- March 8 **Check Your Batteries Day** (If you don't normally do it for free, make the offer today.)
- March 29 **Mom and Pop Business Owners Day**. (Give yourself a pat on the back.)

BIRTHDAYS

- **Catherine Bach**, March 1, 1954 ("Roscoe, will you stop staring? She's 55.")
- **Patrick Duffy**, March 17, 1949. (Young Bobby is a senior.)
- **Matthew Modine**, March 22, 1959. (He's probably done his last coming-of-age movie.)
- **Roger Bannister**, March 23, 1929 (Breaks the 80-year barrier.)

QUOTE



"Men who have a pierced ear are better prepared for marriage. They've experienced pain and bought jewelry."

RITA RUDNER

MANAGER'S TO-DO LIST

FEBRUARY 2009

WEEK 1 (FEB. 2-7)

OPERATIONS Only 12 days to go until Valentine's. It's time to turn that wish-list data into sales receipts. Send e-mails to spouses and partners. Then get on the phone to follow up.

RESEARCH Ask everyone — repair customers, browsers, friends — what his or her plans are for the Day of Love. Maybe there's something happening you can be a part of.

STORE Decorate store for Valentine's Day.

MARKETING Share the love. Send V-Day cards to your customers with a simple message: Enjoy the day!

TRAINING What else? Valentine's Day selling.

WEEK 2 (FEB. 9-14)

OPERATIONS Final count-down to a fab Feb. 14, which falls on a Saturday this year. Your "last-minute panic-buying" strategy should be in place. Prepare a shortlist of popular items at different price points for male customers.

STAFF Buy chocolates for

your employees this Valentine's Day. Inscribe the card, "Love your work!"

TRAINING Focus: diamonds, product knowledge

WEEK 3 (FEB. 16-21)

MARKETING Valentine's is done and dusted. Adjust content to showcase a wider range of products. Begin your preparations for Mother's Day and graduation season. And don't forget self-purchasers — they buy throughout the year.

OPERATIONS If engagement-ring sales are picking up, as they typically do in February, can wedding-band sales be far behind? Unfortunately the answer too often is "no." Create an incentive to get spring-wedding couples back in the store. And don't forget those attendant gifts.

SEASONS Winter drags on ... but you can get a jump on spring with fresh flowers in your store.

SIGNS Examine your in-store signs. Are they friendly? Memorable? If not both, start the process of changing them.

FINANCES If your fiscal



year ends in December, you should have your financial statements finalized by Feb. 28. Prepare a list of uncovered losses; these may be tax deductible.

DATA SECURITY Back up all customer and store data and other important files. (Most small business networks can be backed up to a single external hard drive.)

TRAINING Focus: turnovers.

WEEK 4 (FEB. 23-28)

MARKETING From here on out, things start to slow. Identify your top 1,000 customers and make year-long plans targeting them. If you don't have birthday and anniversary data, start thinking of ways to get it.

EDUCATION This is also a good time to broaden your business and gemological skills. Check out what courses GIA and JA are offering. Can you send your jeweler somewhere to sharpen his skills?

OPERATIONS Go out and shop some of your chain-based competitors. See what specials they are offering. In particular, check if they are offering credit

NETWORKING Want to reach the high-end customers in your community? Golf season is coming up fast. Sign up at the local country club and start hitting the links for a year that's way more than par for the course.

TRACKING Set up a hit counter on individual items. This will help you gauge interest and trends.

TRAINING March's birthstone, aquamarine.

BETTER BUSINESS

IMPROVE YOUR STORE EACH MONTH

Homme Improvement

This month, make sure every man in America would feel comfortable crossing your threshold. Guys aren't what they used to be, especially the ones under 35, who shop more like their sisters than their grandfathers. Still there are differences, and for the most part men prefer an efficient shopping encounter over an experiential one.



doing handbag-holding duty.

☺ Small touches can be important. While women are generally more comfortable drinking coffee from a cup and saucer, men usually prefer drinking it from a mug.

☺ In the run-up to calendar events like Valentine's Day, consider grouping popular gift items by price. And edit tightly — too many choices overwhelm men.

☺ Highlight your parking on your website and ads. It's a big deal for men.

☺ Play up his love of toys and technology. Compliment him on his Internet research. Invite him to look through a scope, or at least a loupe.

☺ Stick to language that's simple and easy to understand. Men want to know the specs and price.

☺ Go easy on the pressure. Men need their space and the feeling no one is putting one over on them.

☺ Make them comfortable. The football game on TV is a cliché but it works. At least have a comfy chair with a few men's magazines within reach to calm those restless husbands

USE IT! ➔ PHOTOCOPY AND PLACE ON YOUR BULLETIN BOARD. THEN CHECK OFF ITEMS WHEN COMPLETED.

The Singer Collection™

Buying and Selling Estate Jewelry • In Store Events

We have an insatiable thirst for fine old and antique jewelry, watches, silver and coins.

Whatever your needs are in estate jewelry please contact us at:

212-599-1555

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