
The Story of Sweetest Day

Over 60 years ago, a Cleveland man, believing that the city's orphans and shut-ins too often felt forgotten and neglected, conceived the idea of showing them that they were remembered by the distribution of small gifts. With the help of his friends and neighbors, he distributed these small remembrances on a Saturday in October. During the years that followed, other Clevelanders began to participate in the celebration ceremony, which came to be called "Sweetest Day." In time the Sweetest Day idea of spreading cheer to the underprivileged was broadened to include everyone and became an occasion for remembering others with a kind act or a small remembrance. And soon the idea spread to other cities all over the country.

Sweetest Day is celebrated on the third Saturday in October as a day to make someone happy. It is an occasion which offers all of us an opportunity to remember not only the sick, aged and orphaned, but also friends, relatives and associates whose helpfulness and kindness we have enjoyed.

It is a reminder that a thoughtful word or deed enriches life and gives it meaning. Because for many people, remembering takes the form of gift-giving, Sweetest Day offers an unusual opportunity for selling all kinds of gift items. Falling midway between Fathers Day in June and Christmas in December, Sweetest Day provides an occasion for the opening of Fall merchandising programs and the promotion of various products, not the least of which is candy and boxed chocolate.



Sweetest Day Marketing Ideas:

1. Remind customers when talking with them of the upcoming Sweetest Day, and if they don't know why Sweetest Day is celebrated– share the story with them. Many people think it was created by the greeting card companies.
2. Hanging Around: Your clothing shop is probably filled with hangers and racks to display your wearable wears, but for Sweetest Day, trying a little hanging out. Design one-day only hang tags to clip onto the regular store tags, an effort that won't take up too much of your or your workers' time. Give customers a little something extra with their wear by cutting out hearts from card stock or thick paper in colors that match the store's theme or traditional red and pink. Add text such as "We Heart Our Customers" or "Our Clients are the Sweetest!" Clip the hearts onto the clothes' existing tags

with a paper clip or small twist tie. As an extra sweet perk for the day, offer a reward for anyone who “redeems” a tag.

3. Be prepared to explain Sweetest Day and to make suggestions regarding appropriate gifts, keeping in mind that the possibilities are limitless.
4. Organize a dessert contest that is “competing” for the Sweetest Dessert and invite customer to cast their votes, give coupons in advance for a free dessert (with an entrée) on Sweetest Day, offer a Sweetest Plate with a mix of your most popular dishes (and consider making this sampler plate a permanent part of your menu).



5. Half-Priced Dinner: Offer half-priced dinners on the days before and after Sweetest Day. Everyone will be out en masse on the 20th for dinner and a good time. If you have a restaurant or some sort of eating establishment, offer huge discounts the day before and after to pack the place for 3 days straight.
6. Offer an incentive with a future deal. Give a coupon towards 20% off future purchases with any purchase made for Sweetest Day. Designate amounts if you want. Or make it for a specific product or service.
7. Let your local newspaper know about Sweetest Day and what preparations your business had made to help customers celebrate it.
8. Extend your great offers through “Sweetest’s Week.” Offer deals for the dudes in the doghouse (“Forgot Sweetest Day? We can help!”) or the gals who didn’t get what they wanted (“Not loving your Sweetest Day gift? Come pick out your own!”).
9. Offer a custom shopping service. If you have some talented sales staff, offer to assist shoppers; uncertain or time-crunched spouses can call in with a price point, a few details about their significant other’s tastes, and then have you pick out, wrap (and deliver?) and charge them for a great, custom-selected gift.
10. Offer delivery. Of course, not every business is set up for this, but if you are, then capitalize on it. Restaurants could offer pre-made romantic dinners to be delivered the day of (or a day ahead) with

instructions on cooking or reheating as needed. Retail shops (beyond florists!) could offer beautiful wrapping and timely delivery of any Sweetest Day's gift purchased. It doesn't have to be free, either.

11. Be sure that merchandise advertised for Sweetest Day is prominently displayed
12. Put together a last-minute shopper's package. Or several. There will be many who delay shopping until the last minute, and if you can present options that are thoughtful, creative, beautifully packaged, and good for several price points, you can get their business.
13. Makeovers and pampering are perfect for your "Sweetest"! Promote Sweetest Day makeovers or pampering packages as gifts men should purchase for the special women in their lives.
14. Sweetest Day is a great Holiday to offer your most loved – your best – customers something a little out of the ordinary, something special just for them. "You are receiving this offer because you are one of our most valued customers...." You can send them a mailer with a gift card included, or hand out a Sweetest Day card with a coupon to those who make a purchase that exceeds a certain amount – make sure you have sign in your store announcing "Receive a free \$10 gift card with any purchase over \$50."
15. Creative Cooperatives. This is where you partner with a complimentary neighboring business and help to cross promote each other. Buy a dinner for two at a local cafe and offer 1/2 off movie tickets at the local cinema ... or buy two tickets to the local cinema and get a 40% discount at the local cafe ... both businesses promote the special and reap the benefits. You don't have to limit this to two businesses either ... help your customers make an entire eventful evening out of it. Spa treatments, then dinner, then a movie, and finally desserts ... that was a great Sweetest Day! Start brainstorming on marketing ideas you can coordinate with the your local candy shop, florist and jewelers.

