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C Section



Barbara Emmett, right, owner of Godfrey's — Welcome to Dogdom, Brecknock Township, and Pamela N. Danziger, author of "Shopping: Why We Love It and How Retailers Can Create the Ultimate Customer Experience," check out a wall of satisfied canine customers.

Reading Eagle: Ryan McFadden

Shops that



Pamela N. Danziger

Title: President and founder of Unity Marketing, an East Cocalico Township, Lancaster County, market-research firm specializing in consumer insights.

Web site: www.whypeoplebuy.com

E-mail: pam@unitymarketingonline.com

Education: Bachelor's degree in English literature from Penn State University and master of library science from University of Maryland, College Park. Lincoln Park native and Wilson High School graduate

Experience: Librarian for a Washington, D.C., trade association, marketing and business planning for AT&T, director of competitive analysis for Franklin Mint.

Books: "Why People Buy Things They Don't Need" (Paramount Market Publishing, 2002); "Let Them Eat Cake" (Dearborn Publishing, 2004); "Shopping: Why We Love It and How Retailers Can Create the Ultimate Shopping Experience" (Kaplan Publishing, 2006).

Appearances: NBC's "Today Show," "CBS News Sunday Morning," Fox News, National Public Radio's "Marketplace"



Charles A. Lavigna, owner of The Shoppes of Green Valley, South Heidelberg Township, takes Danziger on a tour of his business, where a peacock feather-bedecked Christmas tree grabs her eye.

Pop quiz

In her new book, "Shopping: Why We Love It and How Retailers Can Create the Ultimate Customer Experience," Pamela N. Danziger lists seven attributes that make shops pop. Below, the attributes are followed by a few retailers Danziger said fit each description.

■ High levels of customer involvement and interaction: Shoppers don't just browse the aisles; encourages customers to touch, feel, taste, try on and participate in the store in a more involving way. **Barnes & Noble Booksellers, Home Depot Inc.**

■ Evocation of shopper curiosity: Excites consumer curiosity to explore and experience, from the shop windows and entrance through the different displays. Trendy retailer **Anthropologie, The Shoppes of Green Valley**

■ A contagious, electric quality: Exudes energy and excitement; so kinetic that even shoppers not all that into the category feel there is something in the store for them. **Godfreys — Welcome to Dogdom, The Apple Store, Apple Corp.'s retail store.**

■ Convergence between atmosphere, store design and merchandise: Presents a comprehensive vision that captures all the tangible and intangible elements. **VF Outlet Village Complex, Nordstrom Inc.**

■ An authentic concept: More than just a store selling stuff; conceptually driven and reflects a visionary's values. It transcends being just a store into a new realm of experience. **Cabela's Corp., Ten Thousand Villages.**

■ Right price/value proposition: Must offer superior value at a reasonable cost; aims to get the price/superior value proposition right, and prices goods neither too high nor too low for the value. **Target Corp., Costco Wholesale Corp.**

■ Accessibility, not exclusive and free from pretensions: Has all the preceding qualities, but also is immediately accessible to everyone, free from pretensions of exclusivity or snobbishness. **Saks Fifth Avenue.**

A retail expert goes on a spree to find stores that keep customers coming back

Editor's note: Retail analyst and former Berks County resident Pamela N. Danziger spent a recent morning here visiting area retailers that fit her "shops that pop" equation.

By Jon Fassnacht
Reading Eagle

FOR RETAILERS to make a splash these days, they need to focus more on what's around their shelves rather than what's on them.

Simply putting out competitively priced merchandise isn't enough, according to Pamela N. Danziger, president and founder of Unity Marketing, an East Cocalico Township, Lancaster County, company that focuses on consumer trends.

"Retailers big and small face the same basic challenges now: Shoppers are demanding more than just a selection of merchandise at a reasonable price from the stores that they frequent," Danziger wrote in her new book, "Shopping: Why We Love It and How Retailers Can Create the Ultimate Customer Experience" (Kaplan Publishing, 2006).

"They want their shopping experiences and the stores that they frequent to really pop with special features that involve the customer, build their cu-

riosity, give off a contagious energy..." she wrote.

Essentially, shopping needs to feel less like, well, shopping. And here's how to do it.

Godfrey's — Welcome to Dogdom

It's only two years old, but it's impossible to deny that Barbara Emmett's business has legs.

They usually come in fours, with a tail wagging furiously.

Emmett is the owner of Godfrey's — Welcome to Dogdom, a 4-acre tract in Brecknock Township that is a canine's paradise. The business features a grooming center, a learning center, a play park, an obstacle course, even a wading pool.

But the centerpiece is the lifestyle shop, a labyrinthlike converted barn with a slew of canine-related merchandise — jewelry, postcards, original paintings and photos, food, plates, upscale pet beds, even Donovan McNabb and Ben Roethlisberger doggie jerseys.

Shops continues on C2

SHOPS | Retail expert spots some winners

Continued from C1

"There's something in it for everyone," said Danziger, who has made a career out of studying buying habits. "I'm not a dog person, but all I'm thinking about is what I'm going to get for my dog-loving friends."

Jackson, a 7-year-old golden retriever is the "O.G." — official greeter — welcoming and sniffing visitors to make sure they're acceptable before returning to his perch beside the main counter.

"What I've always said is, dog people need a community in Berks County," Emmett said. "From going through raising a golden retriever, I really wanted to network with dog lovers like me. It was like being a new parent."

Explaining the store's main draw, Danziger said: "The mistake about retail is people think it is a product business — it's a people business. And this is a concept. It's more than just a store; it is a lifestyle. It's the difference between a dog as a pet and a dog as a family member."

Proof that Dogdom is more than a bunch of items came when Emmett tried to start a delivery service.

"When I asked people, 'Do you want deliveries?' they would say, 'No, this is my happy place. This is where I come to escape,'" Emmett said.

The Shoppes of Green Valley

Holding a bag of Barefoot Contessa dry baking mix with a look of surprise on her face, Danziger summarized a strength of The Shoppes of Green Valley: "Curiosity. It's a garden center — you don't expect to find cupcake mix."

Indeed, the South Heidelberg Township business, which does sell its share of nursery and garden-related items, is a veritable grab bag of products and smells. As you wind your way through its aisles, the permeating odors shift from the sharp spices of candles to the silky aroma of flowers, with quite a few in between.

"There's something magical around every corner," Danziger said. "You can't leave until you take it all in. The displays are very welcoming, very personal. It's like shopping at somebody's house, which we all want to do. We all look in everyone's medicine cabinet."

Charles A. Lavigna, who opened the business in 1974 in a two-car garage, said The Shoppes of Green Valley turns on impulse buying, making display extremely impor-



Reading Eagle: Ryan McFadden

Retail expert Pamela N. Danziger, at Barnes & Noble Booksellers, Spring Township, is doing what she says customers do at the diversified bookstore — they meet, socialize and work.

Check it out!

Editor's note: Retail expert Pamela N. Danziger offered some insights on other area stores that fit her "shops that pop" equation:

VF Outlet Village

The venerable Wyomissing institution was a favorite of Danziger's when she was attending Penn State Berks campus.

"It truly is the granddaddy of all factory outlets and it truly was miraculous when it came here. Today, you have factory-outlet shops and luxury factory-outlet malls, but they don't have that true factory-outlet feeling. And that's why we have bus after bus coming there. It's not really about saving money. It's the thrill of the hunt — finding something you would have to pay four times as much for in your mall."

Ten Thousand Villages

The Ephrata business, affiliated with the Mennonite Central Committee, scours the globe to select handiworks to sell.

tant.

"We have a real talented staff who can make great displays with our merchandise," Lavigna said. "I think customers appreciate that. We're small. We can stay on top of the market. When there's a trend, we are there right away."

Barnes & Noble Booksellers

At Barnes & Noble Booksellers in Broadcasting Square Shopping

"They really care about people. The store is sort of an outgrowth of that. They go around the world finding craftspeople and really giving them hope because they give fair wages for goods and bring them back to sell in their stores. It's really unusual, exotic items. It's like going to a market in Vietnam or Africa. And you know you're doing good. You're doing good and getting good."

Target Corp.

The quirky national discounter has carved a bull's-eye-shaped niche for itself, deftly balancing chic and competitive prices.

"When I did focus groups for the book, shoppers just love Target. It's clean, it is well-lighted, it's very organized. It's that little attention to detail and the environment that makes it so special. There is the racetrack design, which means that you follow around in a racetrack where everything is visible off to your sides. And the prices are very attractive, which makes the experience that much better."

Center, Spring Township, Danziger noticed what customers were doing.

"Meetings," she said, pointing to a couple poring over notebooks.

"Working," she said, gesturing to a man with a laptop.

"Socializing," she said, motioning to two females sharing a laugh over cups of coffee.

She didn't mention reading, even though the store is primarily

For more info

From our news staff

Godfrey's — Welcome to Dogdom

Address: 4267 New Holland Road, Brecknock Township
Phone: 610-777-5755 or toll-free 877-436-4366 (877-4-DOGDOM)

The Shoppes of Green Valley

Address: 4610 Penn Ave., South Heidelberg Township
Phone: 610-678-6711

Barnes & Noble Booksellers

Address: 2351 Paper Mill Road, Broadcasting Square Shopping Center, Spring Township
Phone: 610-236-0100

VF Outlet Village

Address: 801 Hill Ave., Wyomissing
Phone: 610-378-0408 or toll-free 800-772-8336

Ten Thousand Villages

Address: 240 N. Reading Road (Route 272), Ephrata
Phone: 717-721-8400

Target

Address: 2769 Paper Mill Road, Broadcasting Square Shopping Center, Spring Township
Phone: 610-374-9875

known as a bookseller. But that's the point.

"It's really the community," she said. "Every Barnes & Noble I have been to has a group of people that has become friends here. It's for adults, in particular. We really don't have that many opportunities to connect with people. It's hard for people who are out of college to make new friends."

And this destination appeal is the store's biggest asset.

"All the research says the longer someone stays at a store, the more they'll buy," Danziger said. "So anything you can do to help people stay longer will pay off."

She also noted that Barnes & Noble avoids the cookie-cutter approach, tailoring its business model to local communities.

The retailer was involved in Reading Reads: The Greater Reading Literary Festival, which celebrated Berks County's literary heritage. And the store pulls from its customer base when looking for seasonal help, according to Heidi Stauffer, an assistant manager.

■ Contact reporter **Jon Fassnacht** at 610-371-5017 or jfassnacht@readingeagle.com.