

Presentation and Packaging



Skinny enough to fit into a handy corner – Caraselle's rotating display of moth products



Just the place to keep those dressing up clothes, from The Empty Box Company



The Issoria Jade design from the new wildlife collection at The Empty Box Company



Zero in on customers as well as those dreaded moths with products from Lynx Dry Cleaning Supplies



Nikwax, available from Lynx Dry Cleaning Supplies to keep the boots looking new. Photo: flickr.com/photos/89119745@N00



A display unit to tackle moths from Lynx Dry Cleaning Supplies



If floor space is limited, how about a wall display to capture attention? This one comes from Caraselle

VARIETY IS THE KEY

Tempting extras and add-on services can boost the bottom line of your business and bring in new customers. Janice Raycroft shares her tips and ideas



Here's a true story of a panic attack pre-Christmas season. For the third time in as many weeks I found myself having to go to a 'dress up' do. It happened to be The LADAs, but please don't think I spend my life gliding around such prestigious events. Most of the time I'm in jeans and jumpers, but suddenly the social diary was packed. You know what they say about buses, you wait for ages then three come along.

The problem was that having chosen which sparkly long dress to wear for the latest event I couldn't for the life of me find the zipped cover which would stop the gown being dragged in the dark through wind, rain and puddles to the hotel.

After wrecking the house in my search I ran down the road to the nearest drycleaners, where a very busy but friendly man operating a Pony press paused long enough to explain he didn't have anything like that.

But seeing my woe he yanked off a length of polythene and handed it over for free. Here's the thing – if he had ducked under a counter to offer me a half decent cover and said "That's £20, please" I'd have not only paid it, but considered him my saviour and new best friend.

That's important because whenever us shoppers find something we need, or those items we didn't know we needed but now treasure, we feel good about ourselves and the supplier. We show off our new stuff to others... perfect walking, talking adverts.

Talk about missing a trick. But then I've been talking since

then to suppliers of all the bits and bobs – from window display eye-catchers to 'must-have' counter displays – which can sell themselves, boost bottom line profits and bring in passing custom.

For instance, chatting with Dennis Jack, who some 25 years ago set up **Textile Care Supplies Ltd** in Glenrothes, Fife, we came to the conclusion that most drycleaners could do with a clone for a couple of days to handle all the incoming work, while they concentrated only on the marketing potential of their business and then adjusted their displays to match a guaranteed money-growing plan.

"That's inside and out," says Jack. "They should watch people's reaction to their window display – whether the passersby actually spot it or simply walk on by because it's so familiar they no longer 'see' it.

"And are the impulse buys properly displayed, whether that's in the window or on the counter? Sometimes you hear from a cleaner who says 'Oh well, that hasn't been selling', while another a few miles away is repeat ordering more of exactly the same thing because the items are going fast. Often it's simply a case of how they are displaying things, a retail stand in the right corner can just sit there selling itself.

"Many cleaners are so busy processing work – and doing an expert job it must be said, that they simply don't realise that there's more revenue to be gained and it's often a lot easier than getting precision creases in trousers."

It's a view shared by Graham

Warren of suppliers **Caraselle** in north London: "It's a known fact that upselling works – you're paying for your fuel at the garage and you pick up a chocolate bar or nibbles just because it's right in front of you, strategically placed to catch your attention.

Ah... how cute! The potential window display 'feel good factor' here is obvious with toy boxes from The Empty Box Company



"Or you're in a shoe shop buying a pair of shoes and the sales assistant offers you polishes, spare laces, insoles to go with those? And you say 'yes' – it works because you are already in the 'buying mode' for the original thing you intended to purchase, so adding some extras feels natural."

And he understands exactly how my local cleaner missed a chance: "The easiest sale to make is always the one that solves your customers' problem

– they are giving you a golden opportunity to help them. With the moth problem in particular, you can, by selling our Caraselle Moth Killers, also create regular repeat business as the items have a shelf life and will require replacing several times each year

– we all thrive on repeat business."

And it's often the simplest products that do the best. Jack says sticky rollers for gathering up pet hair remain a big seller over the years, simply because they work, just like the 'bricks' that remove bobbles from woollen garments.

It has to be said that the very nice man who gave me that free polythene had nothing like this on display in his admittedly small unit. But he does have a

window... with a poster about duvets. It never changes, or if it does I haven't noticed... which says it all.

Let's stick with windows for a bit – and perhaps stick to them – because here we have the ultimate display space for catching the eye of impulse buyers who may never have been in your shop until now.

Regularly switched posters, pretties and 'wow factors' can stop people in their tracks. Know your market and both inside and outside the premises can sell your image. And when it comes to 'image' there are some interesting choices.

At first glance the re-usable colour signs designed for use by drycleaners on show on the G+R website clearly fall into two sets. It's easy to see why the clean cut lines and smart, modern graphics of the circular ones offering services such as shirts, same-day, 'eco-friendly' or wedding dress cleaning could do the trick as the message is very clear: We are The Experts.

But then there is an eclectic range that catches the eye in a different way. There's a man in a suit looking very 'American Mad Men', a couple who might have walked out of a New Romantics Club in early 1980s London, a suede and leather service version that makes you think Faye Dunaway in Bonnie & Clyde, and lots more besides. What's going on here?

Sales manager Stefano Valentino of **G+R Spares Ltd** in Kent soon puts me straight: "Retro images like these have actually become edgy. Think of the hipster market which has spread from London. If that's your audience this is a way to

reach out to them in the street scene. My advice would be to have two or three such signs and change them regularly. You just need a little bit of soapy water to stick them on and they come off again easily."

Talking of reaching out, how about grabbing the attention of people who have – dare we say it – stopped using drycleaners for much of the year, perhaps turning up now and again for the duvet cleaning service or to have a special and tricky dress cleaned?

That's where we come to the 'pretties', gorgeous boxes and the like which lure in the customers. You'll make money selling them that storage box in the window, there's every chance it will be admired by their friends, and the repeat custom might well include drycleaning items.

Consider this one: how many times have you gone to the supermarket for milk and come out with a branded bag that cost 10p and £20 worth of shopping?

It doesn't have to be directly connected to your main services. Think outside the box when it comes to boxes, it's not all about storing wedding gowns. For instance, my granddaughter appears to have every costume from Frozen, in fact the whole range of prancing princess gowns from Disney and now, not that I approve, a 'Vampiress' get-up for Halloween.

So I was naturally entranced by the dressing up boxes now sold by **The Empty Box Company**, where owner Giselle Hulme says these, toy boxes and storage sets are becoming big sellers in a range of pretty designs.



Think outside the box, such as these 'pretties'; for mementoes and keepsakes from The Empty Box Company



Freya and Judy from the Handbag Spa



Handbags can be cleaned, repaired and refurbished



If ladies like this glide pass your shop... perhaps you should be luring them as an agent of The Handbag Spa. Photo: Chic Incumbent, flickr.com



Drycleaners receive commission for acting as a drop-off point for the handbag cleaning and repair service

"They are ever so useful and also make great gifts. When children have their friends round they can dive into the boxes, which have toy drawers for all the bits and pieces that go with them," she says.

There are boxes for use anywhere in the home, allowing buyers to match their 'furnishing statements' to storage spots. And it appears brides are becoming more adventurous, often choosing designs which go beyond the normal silky white look.

In the autumn The Empty Box Company launched a new range with a nature theme. As you'd expect there's a lovely woodland design, one featuring English garden birds and trees and another depicting beautiful butterflies.

These might appeal to anyone, but the range includes a perfect Wedding Travel Box for brides marrying abroad with its colourful tropical birds design.

Now none of these automatically says 'drycleaning done here' but all are capable of stopping potential customers in their tracks. It's the same thought process with delightful keepsake and memento boxes – people want a nice place to keep their treasures, even if the monetary value of the item isn't that great.

But sometimes there is a 'financial value' alongside the emotional attachment. There can be no better advertisement than a supplier using one of the products they sell, and this is certainly the case with Indy Thind, general manager at **Super Hanger**, based in Windsor.

"I went to India to get my wedding dress designed and

made – it was very expensive," she says. "And now it's in the attic, stored very safely in one of our best sellers, a Champagne bridal box, which comes with acid free tissue paper, outer box and acid free bust former."

Thind insists this has a happy ending, even though she has since divorced: "I didn't keep the marriage, but we have remained friends. Importantly, I did keep the dress and memories of a special day. I won't wear it again but I do know it will always be in perfect condition. If I want to look at it, that's fine, because the boxes have a viewing window."

So it's a clean start for Thind, and one of the things she's already decided is that when she moves back out of the parents' home to one of her own, it will have some carpeting instead of bare wood floors everywhere.

"I think I'm going for a bungalow as well!" she laughs. "It has surprised some of my friends, but once you are reminded of how nice it is to pad about on carpets you are sold on the idea, and there's definitely a trend back towards good carpets."

So she recommends drycleaners who do not offer a carpet-cleaning hire take a look at Super Hanger's deals on Hagerty products, which include foam and dry shampoos, spot remover, carpet protector and anti-mite shampoo as well as wood floor cleaner. With a Hagerty Blue H machine comes a pack including 12 cases of shampoo and all the promo stickers and instructions you need to promote a hire service. Thind calculates that the outlay requires 32 hires – after that all the profit is yours.

And what about this one – after years of getting jeans to fade, many people are now looking to 'refurbish' classic styles by dyeing them back to original colours, so the likes of easy all-in-one formulas from Dylon which give you a choice



Now that could be bad news... a clothes moth settling down on a garment. Photo: Patrick Clement, flickr.com

of Jeans Blue. Black or Chocolate Brown can be found on the 'Retail ££ Makers' section of **Clean Supply Ltd**, alongside curtain whiteners, lingerie renovators... and that dress cover I was seeking.

We're continuing to go with the trends courtesy of **Lynx Dry Cleaning Supplies** in Ilford where sales director Maz Iqbal is keen to introduce us to another one, Nikwax, cleaning and conditioning products for all those who enjoy outdoor pursuits. "It's a growing market and alongside other products which lengthen the lifespan of a garment is part of that group which appeals to people who see this as environmentally-sound," he explains.

But when it comes down to it we discover that one of the big sellers at Lynx are their Sticky Roll Clean line for battling fluff

on clothing, furniture and car interiors. Iqbal says: "Well it's the old favourite, and we use them in my house because, although my wife objects, me and the kids are always allowing the cat in to places it's not 'allowed' to go, and of course it



Now that could be bad news... a clothes moth settling down on a garment. Photo: Patrick Clement, flickr.com

ends up on the sofa!" For those with moth infestations, cat fur would seem insignificant, and Iqbal says their Zero range, available as product packs or with a stand to display them, has been hugely successful.

And then there's key-cutting, with start-up packages from **SKS** in Berkhamsted covering a range from entry level which can produce the likes of Yale and Chubb style keys plus those most often found in offices or used in padlocks, through to those covering a more comprehensive range of keys.

Knowing your market is essential, and for those in spots where designer handbag clutching potential customers often glide by, **The Handbag Spa** really should have also caught your eye by now.

It's a remarkable story. The

business was set up in Harrogate by Freya Bass and her mother Judy, an expert leather technician, after Freya left university having studied fashion design and production. Handbags which cost hundreds, sometimes thousands, of pounds can be dropped off at drycleaners across England – and in Glasgow and Edinburgh – from where they are delivered by an insured courier to the spa for cleaning, repair, refurbishment or even colour or trim changes.

People are prepared to pay a tidy sum for such services and drycleaners who act as drop-off points receive commission – it's that simple. What's more, you appear on The Handbag Spa's website, so there's some free advertising thrown in.

We reckon the Dragon's Den team missed an opportunity here when they reluctantly decided not to pitch in on an opportunity to expand The Handbag Spa

worldwide through franchising.

However, Freya's message to drycleaners is: "The more the merrier", so have a think about whether your shop is in the Chanel or Louis Vuitton market.

Whether it is or not, you may have read this while thinking: "But I don't have space for stuff like that."

Perhaps that should be left to the experts as well. For as Caraselle's Graham Warren says: "We offer a unique service to drycleaner stockists, with various ways of displaying their range – custom designed compact counter display units to make a really strong feature of their best sellers right in front of customers' eyes. There are slatted wall panels for bold, colourful and interesting displays or free-standing rotating floor stands. We are very adept at finding display space where you thought you may have had none!"

CHRISTMAS IS COMING
DO YOU NEED DETERGENTS,
EQUIPMENT OR WATER
HEATERS?
IF SO YOU NEED AGS!
SEE PAGE 30

