

Check these items off your list

At times we can find it hard to get things started; either we are too busy or not sure where to start. If you find yourself in that position, then here are some suggestions to get you started. Some are simple, and others are a bit more involved, but all will motivate you to do more.

- Confirm that the exterior of your store screams, “We are alive and doing well.”
- Confirm the pricing zone of your over-the-counter products are competitive and adjust where needed.
- Remodel to make room for customers, not fixtures.
- Fine-tune your department sizes to meet your customers’ needs, not to simply fill fixtures.
- Maintain no less than four of each of the top 10 items in your OTC department, and never less than two of the remaining items.
- Promote your OTC private label brand as your “preferred brand.”
- Use your end-caps to promote both merchandise and **services**.
- Introduce new lines to encourage impulse and companion sales. (A natural products line is a good start.) Check out Frontend- marketplace.com for ideas.
- Have a direct marketing program to attract new customers.
- Invest in roadside signage. It can be digital, marquee, and/or billboard. Recognize and list your strengths as a community pharmacy.
- Market your strengths! Solicit testimonials for online marketing.
- Set measurable goals! For example: “Four months from now, we will have 100 new customers. “
- Get valuable tips every two weeks by signing up for my Profit Makers tips (www.ncpanet.org/pm).

And for bonus points:

- Clean something.
- Paint something.
- Move something.
- Add something.
- Remove something (person, place or thing).
- Champion something!

Here’s more advice about getting started with improvement projects.

Get the entire team on board for a few improvements. First, paint the break room and modernize the employee restroom. Nope, I’m not kidding. Put your team first in your projects, and you will gain their support.

Avoid the word “changes.” Telling some staff members that you are going to make some changes makes them think that they have done something wrong. Replace “changes” with “improvements.”

Have the correct size for end-cap banners. When using banners on an end-cap, make them large enough to cover the entire end: 30 inches wide by 48 inches tall usually is a good fit.

Use postcards. When it comes to direct mail, I’m a big fan of postcards. Bulk mailing prices can allow you to produce and mail postcards for as low as 30 cents each.

When listing your strengths, do not write down customer service unless you can describe the act of customer service. As an example, filling most prescriptions in 10 minutes or less is customer service. Free delivery is a customer service.