

Students educating the teacher



Eric and Amanda Garst, owners of Garst Pharmacy in Fortville, Ind., have been teaching me a lot lately. It was supposed to be the other way around.

Earlier this year, I visited their store to offer ideas on how to remodel their space and make room for specialty lines. The young entrepreneurs also wanted to talk about additional signage and marketing opportunities. I simply planted a few idea seeds. They made them grow, and in a very short time made them happen. I swear that I could actually see Amanda's mind working. She would talk, I would listen, and Eric would nod his head and say, "We can do that."

I suggested that they add signage to the lower part of the store windows. The new signs would promote product and services, and also act as a shield to hide the cluttered look of the backs of cardboard displays that can be seen from the road. The challenge was getting the message across with minimal words large enough to read from the road.

The other issue was installation. I suggested contracting with a sign maker and having the company do the installation. The Garsts would need 15 signs, and my conservative estimate was at least \$500. Instead, Amanda and Eric had the banner signs printed for \$220.78. Obviously, I underestimated their ingenuity. The banners are made of vinyl and were \$13.27 each. Installation brackets are heavy duty magnets. They used 50 magnets at less than 44 cents each. Cost of labor? Nothing, as they did it themselves. After all, they are using magnets, so how much labor does that take? The signs can be swapped around and quickly taken down to allow windows to be cleaned. The Garsts continue to make the seeds of ideas grow.

Also, here's a quick note: Signs printed with small letters that can only be read when standing in front of the store do nothing to entice new customers who are passing by. Remember that the best signs are ones that can be read from the road.