



# Technical Assistance Report

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## Strengthening Existing Storefront Businesses Walpole, MA

**christine moynihan**

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*Technical Assistance provided to the Walpole, MA Office of Economic Development*

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*Department of Housing and Community Development*

## Retail Program: Strengthening Existing Businesses

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The town of Walpole applied for and was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative to improve and strengthen existing businesses in the downtown corridor. Christine Moynihan and her **Best Retail Practices Program** were selected to fulfill the scope of work associated with this grant request. This program had two parts.

- 1) A community-wide educational component that involved a 2-hour workshop to which all retailers, restaurateurs and other store front service businesses in Walpole were invited.
- 2) A consulting component that involved eight (8) one-on-one store visit/consultations with individual storefront businesses within the downtown area of Walpole.

The timeline for this program took about 4 months with the actual activities supporting this program as follows:

In July, Christine Moynihan met with a steering committee for this project (Economic Development Department and volunteer committee) to share an outline of the workshop that would be delivered in September. At this meeting she also provided recommendations for questions that would be helpful to the application process to help the committee select the one-on-one participants from those who attended the workshop. She also helped develop materials for fliers and press releases to help market the program and recruit participation in the overall program. The flier and press release are attached to this report.

The committee then selected a good time and date for the workshop, reserved a large community room in the new library and began promoting the program and inviting local business owners to the workshop.

On September 10, 2013 Christine delivered a 2 hour workshop from 8am -10:00AM. The focus of the workshop was on how to apply Best Practices to your own small business in the areas of: business positioning, signage, windows and exterior presentation, interior layout, décor and display, in-store, in-print and on-line marketing and customer service. Approximately 24 retailers, restaurant owners and storefront business owners attended the workshop.

Applications for one-on-one consultations were distributed at the workshop. They were reviewed by the steering committee and 8 local businesses were selected to participate.

In October, Christine and Economic Development Director, Stephanie Mercandetti visited the businesses selected and met with the owners for about an hour and a half, each. At these meetings she reviewed their situation and took pictures of each business environment so as to prepare a set of recommendations that might improve opportunities for these businesses. The recommendations were then delivered at follow-up one-on-one meetings in November, 2013. A 4-5 page report was presented to the retailer with a copy to the town. Recommendations were specific to the needs of each business and involved ideas like:

Changing exterior signage to attract more customers.

Improving the impact of window displays.

Changing an interior layout to display products more effectively.

Adding interior signage

Changing round tables to square ones so that they can be pushed together as needed.

Create a website and launch social media campaign to reach a younger audience.

Flip a property so that the entrance was nearer parking.

Update communications and environment for a business that has a new positioning.

Re-arranging a store to have a better layout at the service desk.

Collaboration among craft stores to create an outreach program.

Subsequent shopping around Walpole (as a Walpole resident) showed that many recommendations were taken to heart and those that could be implemented easily, were. Conversations with business owners have suggested that other recommendations will be implemented when time and resources were available.

Examples of reports are attached to this report.



# Do you own a retail store, restaurant or storefront business in WALPOLE?

Come to a FREE Workshop designed just for YOU!

## Best Practices in Retailing



- ✓ Update the LOOK of your store!
- ✓ Attract MORE customers!
- ✓ Increase \$\$\$!

Tuesday, Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>, 8A to 10A  
Community Room  
Walpole Public Library  
143 School St. Walpole, MA

Contact: Stephanie Mercandetti  
For more info & to sign up  
508.660.7352  
[smercandetti@walpole.ma.gov](mailto:smercandetti@walpole.ma.gov)



**Eight (8) Walpole business owners who attend the workshop will get a FREE 1-on-1 consultation with Christine Moynihan of Retail Visioning AT YOUR STORE to help you get ready for the Best Holiday Season Ever!**

Sponsored by Walpole Department of Economic Development thanks to a grant from the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Stephanie Mercandetti

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***Best Practices in Retailing Comes to Walpole***  
**With Professional Advice and Fresh Ideas for Retailers and Restaurateurs**

Walpole, MA August 23, 2013--- Stephanie Mercandetti, Community and Economic Development Director for Walpole, is pleased to be offering a new program called *Best Practices in Retailing* to the storefront small businesses in Walpole. This program provides instruction, ideas and technical assistance in the areas of business identity and positioning, store and restaurant design, visual merchandising and retail marketing through a dynamic workshop and one-on-one in-store sessions. Tips, tools, trends and tricks of the trade will be shared -- and business owners' specific questions answered.

The workshop will be held on Tuesday, September 10<sup>th</sup> from 8 to 10 in the morning in the Community Room of the Walpole Public Library. Following the workshop, attendees may apply to be one of eight (8) businesses to have a free in-store consultation with Christine Moynihan, principal of Retail Visioning and founder of the program. After Moynihan's visit each participating business will receive a confidential written report detailing opportunities and recommendations that she envisions for them.

Ms. Moynihan co-founded *Best Practices in Retailing* in 2002 and has delivered her workshops and consultation sessions in communities throughout Massachusetts. Presently she is working with the City of Boston's Main Streets organizations helping their small businesses. Over 1500 retailers have attended her workshops and over 400 small businesses have taken advantage of her consultations. As a result of her work, Chris Moynihan knows small businesses and downtowns all over the area but... a bonus for our town... she and her husband live and frequently shop in Walpole!

*Best Practices in Retailing* is underwritten by a grant from the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative. The workshop is open and free to all businesses in the area. For more information or to register for the workshop please contact Stephanie Mercandetti at 508.660.7352 or at [smercandetti@walpole.ma.gov](mailto:smercandetti@walpole.ma.gov).

While all are invited, seating is limited and registration is recommended. Attendance at the workshop by a principal or manager of the business is a pre-requisite for the one-on-one consultations which are only available to businesses in Walpole.

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