

Dakota High School-The Cougar Den

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Using Promotion to Increase Sales during Tough Times



The Cougar Den is a school store located in Dakota High School which operates as a learning laboratory for Marketing III students during school hours and Marketing I and II students for the 30 minutes after school. The product mix for *The Cougar Den* includes school apparel, spirit items, school supplies, balloons and balloon delivery, snacks, and beverages. Product selection is done by students to ensure that the store is stocked with up to date products that will appeal to students as well as staff and community members to maximize sales.

In order to boost sales in these declining economic times, *The Cougar Den* has utilized many different advertising methods. The most recent, and the students' favorite way to promote products, has been creating commercials to show over the schools closed-circuit television system. This is done on school computers through the windows Movie Maker program. Another popular way that *The Cougar Den* promotes its products is through PowerPoint slides, also shown on the school's closed-circuit television system, when the announcements are being aired, at lunch time, and passing times. Posters are also put throughout the school which can be made on either regular poster board with die-cuts, or even designed on the computer with Poster Artist and printed with the poster printer. Posters from the Cougar Den are known for their attractiveness and professionalism.

Customers encouraged to come into *The Cougar Den* will find the store is designed to maximize sales. In order to encourage the sales of products, visual appeal is key. To make the store visually appealing, the showcases in front of the store have corresponding themes and are updated every two weeks. One showcase will highlight our social responsibility to the community and one showcase will highlight products for sale. To arrange merchandise to appeal to the customers, we have brought in visual merchandise staff from the surrounding stores, such as JC Penny, to assist students with store and merchandise layouts.



To further encourage sales, we offer sales promotions during school wide events that many parents will be attending such as freshman orientation, curriculum night and conferences. We offer coupons to encourage them to purchase spirit wear for themselves or their children.



In addition to opening the store and offering discounts during school events, this year *The Cougar Den* decided to host The 1st Annual Holiday Shopping Night. This allowed parents to come in and purchase items for holiday gifts during evening hours. We promoted this event on our local cable station, our district wide email to staff, and the parent mail out distribution throughout the district. This event not only provided our customers with convenient store hours, but also made record sales in *The Cougar Den* and cleared our store of past inventory to clear space for new merchandise.

The Cougar Den's best practices come from student, staff, and community feedback. Our biggest compliments include visual merchandising. The store is visually appealing with up to date displays and trendy merchandise. Our school colors of navy, green, and white are complimented with the trendy colors of pink, black, yellows, etc. Our marketing students understand customer appeal and image. If you have any further questions regarding *The Cougar Den* please feel free to contact us at amseneker@cvs.k12.mi.us or natienaza@cvs.k12.mi.us.