

Retail guru Robert Gibbs' advice pays off for Santa Cruz retailers!

By JONDI GUMZ

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SANTA CRUZ -- Santa Cruz merchants who took the advice of retail guru Robert Gibbs say they are seeing more traffic and higher sales.

"All those points he made were great," said Alexia Martinez, manager at Arteak, describing sales of furniture and home accessories from Southeast Asia as good.



One of Gibbs' tips was "like bringing out a magic wand," according to Teresa Zolar, manager at Annieglass at 110 Cooper St. downtown. We can't keep it on the shelf."

Gibbs, who was invited by the Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce, recommended merchants make sure customers can see into their shops, use the color red to get attention and put three good things on sale at least 15 percent off.

Windows are critical, according to Gibbs.

"It takes eight seconds to walk past a storefront," he said. "If you go by, no one turns around to go back."

Martinez redid the window display at Arteak, which is located at 1130 Soquel Ave. on the Eastside, based on Gibbs' suggestions. She took away furniture that had blocked the windows, added red lamps, and decorated a bed in colors of

pink, red and gold to make it "eye-popping" from the street.

"Lots of people have been drawn in by that color," she said. After she changed signs saying "30 percent off" to bright orange and red, shoppers took notice, asking, "Is that 30 percent off?" She also set up a round pedestal table near the front to display Christmas ornaments. Almost all of them were sold.

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She placed a display of sale items front and center instead of scattering them throughout the shop, and shoppers noticed.

"It's been tremendously successful,"

she said. "The things that we moved to that spot, people would say, Is this new?" " She moved a display case to make it easier for shoppers to see inside, and eliminated another that Gibbs felt did not fit the store's ambiance.

"Customers are saying The store looks beautiful. What's different?" " she said.

Annie's new collection, the Nature Series, has been a big hit, she added. The collection features frosted glass embellished with a silver-toned tree or a gold-toned bird. A rectangular tray priced is at \$42.

"We can't keep it on the shelf," Zolar said.

Other Santa Cruz businesses are getting a boost from Think Local First Santa Cruz County and its first Shop Local Week. "I don't know if people are just trying to take better care of themselves, or just stressed," said chiropractor Erica Schafer, who has been busier than usual.