What is your Surf Monkey? The Power of a Gimmick That Keeps Customers Coming Back.

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When you're trying to get your business off the ground, finding your niche can be the difference between surviving and thriving. Every successful business has that *one thing* that makes it stand out from the competition. Sometimes, that thing is a high-quality product or exceptional customer service. But other times, it’s something a little more unconventional—a gimmick that keeps customers coming back again and again.

Years ago, I was running some basic sales reports trying to get a better understanding of what was really selling in our store. Having a very good understanding of our product line and what we reordered regularly, my gut told me it should have been something in the accessories category. To my surprise the number one item we had been selling over the last six months was not an accessory. It was a plaster of paris monkey that we started selling as gimmick for those surfers who remembered these statues from their surf trips down to Mexico. This statue of a chimpanzee on a surfboard was the number one item by deep double digits. The real question was why?

In reviewing our product line for both in store and online and comparing that to competitor businesses it's hard to differentiate our store from what the competition had to offer. Each of the competing businesses I looked at we're all very respected within the industry. We all offered exceptional service, and we all had very well-trained knowledgeable staff. So, what made the difference online? Turns out it was having a unique item that was hard to find.



In our case, it was Chongo the Tijuana Surf Monkey statues. The monkey became so popular we had to dedicate more space to it within the store. And our online business for the monkey grew to a point where we had to have dedicated packing and shipping materials for this one item.

This kind of gimmick works because it taps into curiosity and a sense of fun. It gives customers a reason to visit regularly, if only to see what crazy creation has been whipped up next. Plus, it's the perfect conversation starter—both in person and on social media. And in today's world, word-of-mouth and Instagram shares are gold.

So, if you're trying to carve out a space in a crowded market, don't be afraid to lean into something a little out of the ordinary. Find that unique twist or playful product that reflects your brand's personality and gets people talking. It might just be the thing that turns first-time visitors into loyal customers.

So, what is it about your store that draws people from miles away to come visit you or shop online? What is your surf monkey?