

AHVRP 2016 Retail Excellence Award

Gene Collovecchio, Manager Retail Operations, University Hospitals Case Medical Center, The Atrium/Seidman Cancer Center Gift Shops, Cleveland, Ohio



Background: The Atrium Gift Shop was opened approximately 50 years ago. Current hours are: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-7 p.m., Sat. & Sun. 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m., also weekend hours on all holidays except New Year's Day, Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Current square footage of the Atrium Shop is 2000 sq. ft. and the Seidman Cancer Gift Shop is 800 sq. ft. The typical customer is 60% employees using payroll deduction with the remaining 40% of the business being patients and family members. There is no typical demographic. Customers are very diverse in terms of age, income, ethnicity, religion, etc. We offer a full line of gifts, home decor, jewelry, apparel including shoes and hand bags, UH Logo apparel and gifts, physical therapy aids, candles, plants and cut flower arrangements, magazines, toys and plush, baby gifts including apparel, cologne/perfume, collectibles, local sports team gifts and apparel, balloons, candy and snacks, greeting cards, and a line of bath and body care, African Art, picture frames and more. All items are available to build customer gift baskets that can be delivered to patient rooms.

Level of volunteer impact on staffing: The Atrium Gift Shop staffs 1 FT Manager/Buyer, 1 FT Office Assistant, 1 FT Supervisor, 1 FT Cashier, and 3 PT cashiers (30 hrs each). This is supplemented by 1 volunteer with over 50 years of volunteer history at University Hospitals, 1 volunteer who was recipient of the Pearl Saltzman Award in 2016, and 10-30 teen volunteers over the summer months. Shifts for paid employees vary from 9-5:30, 8-4:30, 11-7:30 and 9:30-5 on weekends. Volunteer shifts range from 9-1, 1-4, 4-7 and weekend hours. Paid staff completes a training program that is signed off as modules are completed. Many different components make up the training program. All modules of the training must be completed and signed off on prior to completing 90 days. Volunteers are trained hands-on, one-on-one by an assigned staff member. Major volunteer functions are cashiering, answering telephones and taking floral orders, and delivering orders to patient rooms. Paid staff completes all aspects of the store, receiving, cashiering, stocking, some ordering, with each staff member being responsible for a particular area in the shop. The store is managed by a Manager/Buyer, assisted in office duties and supervisory duties by the FT staff

positions, reporting directly to the Manager/Buyer. Manager/Buyer reports to the Director of Volunteer Services and the liaison to the Auxiliary. Profits from the operation benefit the Auxiliary of UHCMC and ultimate responsibility and direction also resides with the Auxiliary.

Engineered for sustainable and growth: Gene came in and restructured the store from the ground up. New display fixtures and storage fixtures were implemented to maximize stock of the sales floor and to adequately support sales of key categories. A new POS system was implemented which is now used system wide. Multiple upgrades and add-ons have taken place with this system as the business grows. Purchased stock and supplies based on market demands and sales. Built a customer base that returns to see "what's new" in apparel, jewelry, handbag lines. Responsible for creation of product development program and the sales of the products from the program. Responsible for retail operations at the Atrium Gift Shop/Seidman Cancer Center Gift Shop and the corporate sales program. Developed and maintained a shop website, corporate sales program, and a Skylight program giving patients and families access to shop merchandise from their bedside via technology, along with a holiday catalog program which reaches all administrative and healthcare areas of the main campus and two auxiliary Administrative centers off-site. Americas MART in Atlanta is attended twice yearly to keep merchandise offerings fresh and to grow proven sales lines. Merchandise buying is supplemented with finds from AHVRP and related conferences as well. Local events are maximized as micro-marketing opportunities, i.e., RNC in Cleveland, recent NBA Championship of Cleveland Cavaliers, Nurse's Week and Administrative Assistant's Day, healthcare providers for the Cleveland Browns organization, etc.

Marketing innovation: In 2013, the Atrium Gift Shop was featured in Museums and More Magazine with the article, Prescription for Retail Success, and an industry profile of Mr. Collovecchio. Also in 2013 a featured article in Americas Mart Magazine, titled Innovation is the Best Medicine, (Hospital Gift Shops Thrive With Proper Care), and another featured article in Gifts and Decorative Accessories Magazine, highlighting Gene as one of the 25 Gifted Retailers of the Year. A final article in 2013 in Souvenirs and More Magazine, Small Places Can Generate Big Results, featuring the Seidman Cancer Center Gift Shop, 800 sq. ft. Mr. Collovecchio also placed third in the Albert Maslia Memorial Award presented at Atlanta MART, sponsored by Burton & Burton for outstanding visual display. The gift shops have a web presence on the main UH site for patients and visitors, including pictures of sample floral arrangements and custom gift baskets that can be ordered. 2 Employee Appreciation promotions are held each year, offering a coupon for 20% off gift items, once in July and once in December, for a week each time. A Holiday catalog is distributed through the hospital during the months of November and December to encourage holiday gift shopping. This catalog features a coupon on the back page that can be redeemed in April for 20% off gift items, encouraging shoppers to return to see new, Spring lines. Volunteers are offered an ongoing 10% discount, with a 30% discount extended during National Volunteer Appreciation Week each year. Gift certificates are always available for purchase. The store processes payroll deduction transactions for Vendor Fund raisers sponsored by the Auxiliary several times a year. Gift baskets, with the business card attached, are

donated for hospital programs upon request. The Gift Shops participate in the yearly United Way Basket Raffle to increase awareness of merchandise offerings. Corporate purchases are extended a 10% discount to encourage departmental sales.

Employee engagement: Payroll deduction is offered to employees to encourage shopping and ease of purchasing in the gift shops. Employee appreciation events are scheduled twice yearly to draw employees in. Logo ware including lanyards and badge clips, t-shirts that are acceptable to Transport and Housekeeping services as uniforms are stocked regularly. A website featuring uniforms available through an outside vendor was designed and implemented during the last 2 years. The website coordinates with the gift shops to utilize the payroll deduction system and to distribute marketing materials. Samples from the website are displayed in the gift shop. Corporate employees utilize the gift shop regularly to facilitate sending floral arrangements, funeral flowers, and fruit baskets via a corporate account transfer that is acceptable to expense reimbursement. The gift shops have also become a destination shop for high-end logo retirement gifts such as clocks, crystal vases, desk accessories and engraved awards. Vendor fundraising sales that offer uniforms and shoes are supported by the payroll deduction system in the gift shop.

Patient and family experience: The gift shops primary goal is to support the mission of the hospital and the Auxiliary in providing the best possible experience to our patients and their family members. Customer service is a top priority with training and retention of staff members in the gift shops. The shop offers baby gifts and apparel as it is located directly below the Macdonald Women's Hospital and Gene has coordinated with the needs of the staff to offer products that support Macdonald's Safe Baby Designation. The Atrium Gift Shop processes sales transactions in support of the Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital Safety Store Program. The Atrium Shop also provides age appropriate gift to support the Swingo/Thingy Concentration Game that is played in the RB&C Hospital. Winners are awarded a \$5 gift certificate that can be used to purchase toys and small gifts in the shop. Physical therapy items are available to support the home therapy needs of patients receiving treatment through the hospital outpatient services. Magnifiers, erase boards, portable radio/CD players, battery operated shavers and pill boxes are offered for the convenience and needs of our patients.