

Promotional Ideas for Gun Stores and Ranges

Every business experiences slumps and slow times related to the calendar, season and weather, as well as the busy lifestyles of today's consumers.

Your shooting range is no exception.

If you have an outdoor range, you know the challenge. Cold weather often keeps shooters indoors or at home, waiting for spring to get outside for some target practice or recreational shooting. Likewise, summer heat can scare shooters indoors or persuade them to wait for cooler autumn days.

Indoor ranges experience parallel problems. When beautiful weather beckons in spring and fall, it's very inviting for shooters to do their thing outdoors. If you are located in a northern state with long or bad winters, summer shooting traffic can be an issue too. People prefer to be outdoors because they're cooped up for so much of the year.

Bottom line: No matter the time of year, what you are (indoor, outdoor or both), or where your range is located geographically, you can always use more customers filling lanes, buying products and providing revenue. The path to that result involves developing promotions that create excitement and value, and give shooters good reasons to come to your range.

Here are 11 promotional concepts to attract more shooters to your range at traditionally slow times and to leverage holidays and life events to generate additional traffic flow.

1. First Shots Seminar



Timing: Any Month

Details and Offer: A National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) First Shots Seminar is an effective way to build traffic at your indoor range at any time of year that may be slow and at an outdoor range when traffic is needed. A First Shots Seminar helps you introduce new participants to the shooting sports while creating potential return customers. Go to <http://www.nssf.org/FirstShots/RangeOwners/host.cfm> to explore the idea of a First Shots event.

Tip: If you've never held a First Shots Seminar at your range and you are a NSSF member, you automatically qualify for up to \$3,000 in cooperative advertising to promote your first First Shots.

2. Valentine's Day "Love to Shoot" Date Package



Timing: February

Details and Offer: Plenty of couples (whether married or dating) are looking for new and different things to do for Valentine's Day. So offer a range special for couples – perhaps two lanes for the price of one, the ability to alternate on a single paid lane, a clip-full of free ammo,

free lessons for one or both of the shooters or any other value combination that will make a pair want to join in on all the shooting fun at your range.

Tip: Team up with a local restaurant to make a “combo package” with free drinks, half-price entrée or other promotion at their restaurant when presenting a receipt for that day from your range. Both businesses win with increased traffic.

3. St. Patrick’s Day Lucky Shamrock Shoot

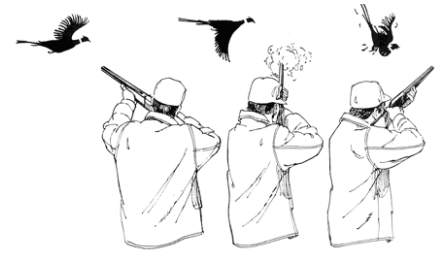


Timing: March

Details and Offer: Depending on your climate and the kind of winter your area typically experiences, March can be a slow month between icy vestiges of winter and some of the biggest snowstorms of the season. Folks just need a reason to get out of the house. If you’re in a milder climate, the first really decent weather may beckon. Either way, lure people out with a St. Patrick’s Day shooting package. During St. Patrick’s week, offer discounts to anybody wearing some green.

Tip: Enter every shooter during St. Patrick’s week into a Luck O’ the Irish Drawing for some free range time over the summer; the winners will come back and bring some paying friends.

4. Back-in-the-Shooting-Swing for Spring



Timing: Spring

Details and Offer: Celebrate spring with a shooter’s package at your outdoor range – perhaps a free hour with each hour purchased. Whether you run the promotion in April or May, create a special offer for your rifle, pistol or trap range and get shooters out when they’re otherwise thinking about yard work, fishing or other spring activities.

Tip: Offer free instruction and/or a free firearm rental to get new shooters to your range—and hook them for summer’s busy season.

5. Shooting with Mom: Mother’s Day Special



Timing: May

Details and Offer: Some moms just love to shoot. Others may have talked about it but never had the opportunity. And some never considered it, but would definitely do it—if only someone would take them. Make it possible! Create a Mother’s Day Special so sons or daughters can “take mom shooting.” Perhaps mom gets a free rental or an hour of free lane time with a paying customer. Also, offer up free services such as a free shooting or safety lesson; the idea is to create a fun experience and get that new shooter desiring to return.

Tip: One range offered any woman (mom or not) a free range membership with any firearm purchase in May (<http://www.leadfeathergunsandarchery.com/mothers-day-special.html>). It's a smart way to encourage firearm purchases, give people a place to try out their new firearm and hook them on the shooting sports.

6. Shooting with Dad: Father's Day Special



Timing: June

Details and Offer: Who doesn't like shooting with dad? You'll find a wide variety of shooters wanting to do it: Adults (men and women alike) with fathers for whom they'd like to return the favor of having been introduced to shooting or to introduce an uninitiated dad to shooting; and younger folks (including children with their mother's help) simply getting a veteran-shooting dad to the range for a nice Father's Day outing. Put a value package together with shooting lanes or time, ammunition or perhaps a firearm rental or lesson. **Tip:** Don't limit your Father's Day promotion to one day or weekend. Make it "Father's Week" for your special offer, including two weekends, to make the promotion work for you longer. (Same goes for Mother's Day Special, Promotion 5.)

7. Early-Bird Deer Hunters' Sight-In Special



Timing: July or August

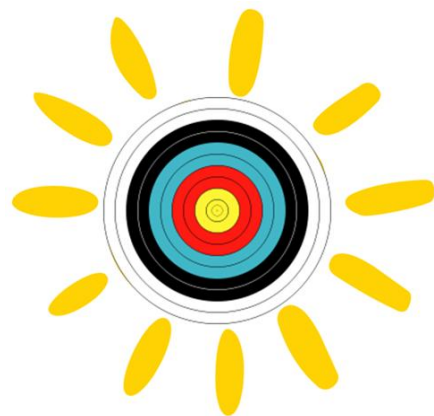
Details and Offer: Summer can get very slow at the range. This can be true across the country – in the North, where people are trying to fit in as many other summer activities as possible, as well as in the South, where heat can keep traffic down at your outdoor range. Summer is a great time for hunters to get their deer or big-game rifles sighted in, before other fall hunting seasons (duck, upland birds and small game) arrive. Over several weekends promote your 25-, 50- and 100-yard (and longer distances if you have them) ranges to deer hunters.

Tip: Offer a discount special if the shooter has a deer hunting license in hand, or can show last year's to make the offer ring true to deer hunters. Have staff on hand to help shooters get "on paper" and then dialed in.

8. End of Summer Shootout

Timing: September

Details and Offer: Hold a shooting contest or tournament at the end of summer—pistol, rifle, trap, skeet, sporting clays, it doesn't matter. The idea is to promote it all summer long as shooters are coming to your range and staff is



talking it up. Schedule it for a weekend, have an entrance fee and promote it via social media and word-of-mouth to build awareness and traffic.

Tip: Create teen and/or pre-teen divisions, too, to give parents all the more reason to come.

9. Grand Re-Opening or Anniversary Event

GRAND REOPENING

Timing: Any Month

Details and Offer: No matter what month of the year your business started, or how long you've been at it, a Grand re-Opening or Anniversary Celebration makes a great reason to promote your range and offer some incentives, such as a percentage discount or limited-fee range time, for people to reacquaint themselves with your range or try you out for the first time.

Tip: Bring in local shooting, hunting or dog-training experts to conduct free seminars and attract traffic. This gives hunters more reasons to come. Consider a free trapshooting or skeet seminar, a session on reloading or a training your retriever presentation.

10. Promotion: Holiday Parties

Timing: December



Details and Offer: December is one of the busiest times of the year for most people, especially families, so it can be a really tough month to bring shooters to the range. There's just so much

else going on, including parties and get-togethers. So, if you can't beat 'em, join 'em! Promote a "shooting party" to local small businesses whose employee profile might make them amenable to such an idea. Offer a number of shooting lanes and be ready to outfit folks with firearms and ammunition (all at their company's expense, of course). Work out a package price beforehand with the party leader and have an ala carte price list for additional services.

Tip: Work with a local caterer to provide the food and make it a full-service affair. Be ready with promotional materials to try to bring back the new shooters who might not have otherwise come to your range.

11. First Shots Second Round



Timing: Any Time

Details and Offer: Need a way to get those First Shots Shooters (see Promotion 1) back to your facility? Try the NSSF's Second Round event. Designed for First Shots graduates, Second Shots takes the next step and brings those shooters back for more.

Tip: NSSF offers a complete [Second Round Reference Guide](http://www.nssf.org/FirstShots/PDF/SecondRoundReference%20Guide_11-13.pdf) to help you plan one of these events..... http://www.nssf.org/FirstShots/PDF/SecondRoundReference%20Guide_11-13.pdf

armalot
The Right to Sell Arms