

Female Focus 2005

According to National retail demographic studies, 80% of the buying and dining decisions are made by women between the ages of 30 and 60 years old. Livermore Downtown Inc. decided that it was time to hear what this demographic group in Livermore had to say. We formed a focus group deemed “The Female Focus”, to meet in two working sessions in early 2005. In these sessions they discussed where they choose to shop and dine in downtown Livermore now and why they choose the places they patronize. The group was given a Holiday Home Work assignment that had them hitting the streets in downtown Livermore to do their Holiday Shopping and report their experiences back to the group in January at the first session. This feedback gave us valuable information that is being shared with our downtown merchants as to what our businesses are doing well and where they can do better. The second session was a discussion of what shopping and dining opportunities Livermore needs to add to our district.

We have compiled the Female Focus data for all of our City Leaders, Property Owners and Commercial Realtors representing downtown properties so that we can seek out these businesses. This report provides us with documentation showing that our community of shoppers and diners will support these additions. The group of women that we invited to this Focus Group represented many different professional, economic and community demographics. We were very excited about the commitment and enthusiasm these women brought to the program. Our time has come and females are focusing on helping to bring new and exciting shopping and dining opportunities that we have waited a long time for and know we deserve. We appreciate your taking the time to read the following information to see that we have much to be proud of but at the same time much to do in our Downtown Livermore. Soon to be the pride of the East Bay!!

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SAMPLE

December 5, 2004

Dear Downtown Supporter:

You have been chosen to participate in our Business Recruitment and Retention program called “Female Focus”. We have sought out women who meet the following criteria:

- 1) Between the ages of 30 and 60
- 2) Work and live in Livermore
- 3) Work outside of but live in Livermore
- 4) Live outside of but work in Livermore
- 5) Live within a 30 minute (non-commute time) drive radius

We have sought out a balance of participants so that each of the above criteria has representation.

The purpose of this focus group is to provide Livermore Downtown Inc. with “real life” information and input on what Livermore downtown offers now that is utilized by our shopping and dining demographic. We will discuss and ask for your experiences in utilizing our existing options and also document your desires for additional shopping and dining opportunities.

The Female Focus group will meet in three sessions. The first is scheduled for December 14th and will be held at the newest restaurant scheduled to open in December, The Blue Jean Bistro. This session will be designed as a meet and greet time and to layout the remaining two sessions’ goals and objectives. You will also receive direction in Holiday shopping opportunities in the downtown that you may not have discovered yet. You will be given the homework assignment of trying our downtown with your shopping list first and then documenting what gift items you had to leave the area for or situations that caused you to shop elsewhere. If you are one of those shoppers that will be done before December 14th, please use the enclosed shopping and dining guide to find your way around downtown and call me if you are looking for specific items.

The remaining sessions will be held in January, place and date to be determined when we meet in December. It is imperative that our participants commit to attending all three sessions in order to gather a strong amount of data. If you cannot attend, please let us know so that we can replace

your seat. We feel that 50 participants will provide us with a substantial over view for a Downtown Business needs assessment.

We are looking forward to getting all of you into one room and discussing the future of downtown shopping and dining. Not only will these be “working sessions”, we plan for them to be “a real kick” as well! We assure you that we have invited a dynamic and incredible group of women and we are sure that relationship building and networking will take place. I personally know almost all of you on the invitation list and can vouch for the fact that this is one heck of a diverse, dynamic and “opinionated” group. Many of you have already shared with us your visions for downtown and we have valued your input tremendously.

The information that we gather from all of you will be compiled into a retention and recruitment recommendation report that we will distribute to Mayor Marshall Kamena, all City of Livermore Council Members, Linda Barton-City Manager, Marc Roberts-Community Development Director, Kevin Roberts-Economic Development Director, all Downtown Property Owners, all Downtown Business Owners and Commercial Real Estate Agents representing the downtown core. We know that the input YOU help us compile and YOU add validity to as our true shopping and dining demographic will be invaluable as we move forward with the revitalization efforts of downtown Livermore.

I am thanking you in advance for your participation because who wouldn't want to join the team creating the downtown shopping and dining district that will be the envy of the East Bay!!!! Call me if you have questions or need more details at (925) 373-1795 or e-mail me at rachael@livemoredowntown.com.

Sincerely,
Rachael Lavezzo – Snedecor
Executive Director

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Your Holiday Mission.....

Prepare your list of all friends and family you must buy a gift for.

Grab your Downtown Shopping and Dining Guide.

Grab your Club Card (What..you don't have one yet? Buy it tonight..\$20.00 donation to Livermore Downtown Inc....You'll receive special promotions/discounts from participating merchants and monthly newsletter and e-mails of "What's Happening Downtown" from us..also discounts to our events)

Head to Downtown Livermore (No, not the Mall! Your car will want to head in that direction, you have it trained well. Teach it this new direction! Remember you are in control!)

Park your Car (No... you should not be able to find a spot right in front of the store you are going to first. This is Pedestrian shopping..True Holiday shopping. Crisp winter air, decorated storefront windows, new scarf wrapped around your neck, running into neighbors, kids' teachers, soccer coaches, old friends, your community)

Get out of your car and start the hunt.

As you find yourself entering a shop, notice why it attracted you and jot that down. If you find yourself passing on entering a shop, notice why it DID NOT attract you and jot that down.

When we get together in January, we will discuss our shopping experiences. We want to know your full story. What you found, how you were serviced, what you thought of the product displays on the floor and the displays in the windows.

We greatly appreciate your helping with this downtown shopping research. We will compile your results and report this to our merchants. Your participation and comments will be confidential in the report.

***THANK YOU FOR SHOPPING AND
DINING IN DOWNTOWN EVERMORE!***

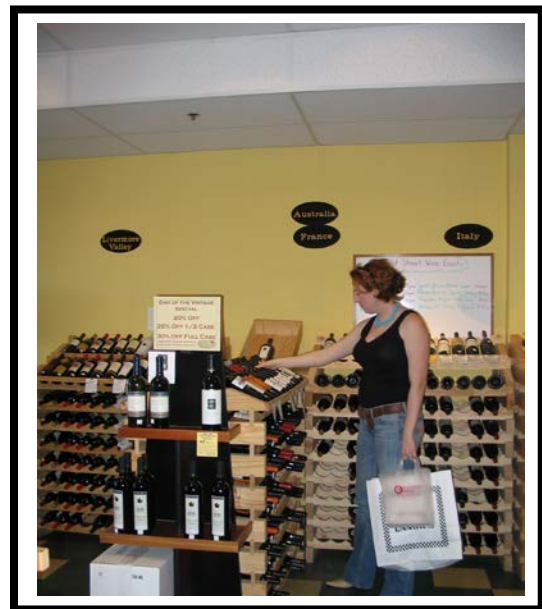
P.S. Don't forget to add See's Candies (2060 Second Street) and a copy of "Bruce Sprucetree" to your holiday gift list!!!

***Happy Holidays,
Rachael Snedecor***

Downtown.....The Haves

Our participants who did their Holiday Shopping homework were quite surprised at the amount of shopping and dining opportunities they did find downtown. They listed the items that they were happy to find and see as value in the district.

- ♦ See's Candies
- ♦ Stocking Holders
- ♦ Local Handmade Items
- ♦ Local Wines and Olive Oils
- ♦ Guitar Lessons and Music Supplies
- ♦ Asian Imports and Specialty Items
- ♦ Candy
- ♦ Hostess Gifts
- ♦ Home Décor
- ♦ Furniture
- ♦ Scarves
- ♦ Jewelry
- ♦ Sarongs
- ♦ Western Wear
- ♦ Dog Wash
- ♦ Knitting Supplies
- ♦ Craft Supplies
- ♦ Purses
- ♦ Antiques



Downtown.....The Have Nots

Our participants had many items on their shopping lists that could not be found in our Downtown district. The items that they felt were the most needed were truly every day use items. Many of these items could be added into the inventory of existing stores and restaurants in the downtown. For example, a Wine Shop could add Kitchen/Culinary items to their product list. A Gift store could add a section of unique stationary product. Beyond that, it is evident that recruitment of basic product suppliers, is desired by our community.

♦ **Computer Supplies**

♦ **Beads**

♦ **Clothing**

♦ **Boutique Pet Supplies**

♦ **Books**

♦ **Shoes**

♦ **Make-Up**

♦ **Toys**

♦ **CD's**

♦ **Deli**

♦ **Specialty Foods**

♦ **Kitchen/Culinary Items**

♦ **Bakery**

♦ **Science Products**

♦ **Sporting Goods**

♦ **Stationary**

Downtown....Great Service

Our homework participants were very happy with the level of professional service and customer service they received from the majority of their stops. The actions that are the most important to our local consumers are, to be greeted and acknowledged when they enter and to receive smiles and offers of assistance. One experience that we heard many of them experienced was the fact that many of our merchants referred them to their other downtown neighbors if they did not carry a product that the customer was looking for. That is a great testament to our downtown Merchants teaming and cross marketing each other. They are creating a shopping destination together.

- ♦ Greeted when you walk in
- ♦ Smiles and offers of assistance
- ♦ Referrals to other downtown stores if they do not have what you need



Downtown.....Not so great service

We do not receive a perfect score in the service category yet. A few of our participants did receive less than desirable service at a small percentage of our establishments.

- ♦ **If you did not look like their regular clients they did not offer you assistance**
- ♦ **No staff on floor or anywhere to be seen when you enter**
- ♦ **Closed during normal business hours**
- ♦ **Closed Monday before Christmas**

Downtown.... Great Product Displays

The overwhelming response from our group in regards to displays is that they need to feel that everything is accessible and easy to find.

- ◆ **Product Accessible**
- ◆ **Product Engaging**
- ◆ **Product fresh and reflecting the season**



Downtown.....Not So Great Displays

Our Livermore shoppers have a high level of expectations from their shopping destinations. They are drawn to outside retail centers because of the high level of care and commitment to the design and environment of those locations. The following comments reflect the display practices that are deemed disappointing by our shopping clientele.

- ♦ **Empty spaces**
- ♦ **Not sure what they sell when you first walk in**
- ♦ **Too cluttered. Scared to move through**
- ♦ **Dusty**

Downtown.... Great Storefronts

The Downtown Storefront is really the invitation to the shopper to come inside. An attractive inviting storefront increases the foot traffic and sales within that location. Our participants did have a few comments of windows that they felt drew them into the store.

- ♦ **Twinkly Lights**
- ♦ **Seasonal Appeal**
- ♦ **Live or Fresh Greenery and Flowers**
- ♦ **Pedestrian Signs**
- ♦ **Benches**



Downtown.....Not so Great Storefronts

There was a strong consensus within the group that overall, the downtown core needs storefront updates and makeovers. With a few locations mentioned positively, the majority received a “Needs to Improve” rating. The following comments reflect some of the negative storefront characteristics.

- ♦ No identity of what product is inside
- ♦ Need readable signage
- ♦ Look like Head shops from outside
- ♦ Windows Cluttered
- ♦ Outdated Posters etc.
- ♦ Dreary street presence
- ♦ Warehouse look instead of boutique look
- ♦ Outdated décor
- ♦ Old paint
- ♦ Cheap materials
- ♦ Can't tell what is inside
- ♦ Dirty Windows
- ♦ Painted Windows
- ♦ Old looking, not historic looking

What we Needand deserve

For the Appetite:

Livermore definitely has an appetite for fine dining experiences and we have been craving additional choices for some time. Our Dining community has very high standards due to the fact that we have many world travelers and culinary enthusiasts within our community. On the other hand, all involved wanted to be sure that we had the less expensive family lunching, dining and snacking opportunities as well. Listed below, we show what our participants feel we need added to our downtown district.

- ♦ **More upscale, unique dining experiences**
- ♦ **Yogurt and Ice Cream Shop**
- ♦ **Affordable Lunch locations that are more for quick and easy**
- ♦ **Lunch spots that compliment the shopping areas**
- ♦ **Upscale business luncheon experiences**
- ♦ **Bakery**
- ♦ **Authentic Deli with extensive collection of cheeses and meats**

For the Wardrobe:

The overwhelming, undisputed need stated is Clothing. At this time, the available clothing is Western, Winter and Sport Wear. The needs are as listed.

Women

- ♦ Lingerie
- ♦ Specialty Sizes – petites etc.
- ♦ Fashion Consultant Assistance
- ♦ Boutique
- ♦ Shoe Stores – Designer to Athletic

Teens

- ♦ Clothing
- ♦ Accessories
- ♦ Shoes
- ♦ Jewelry

Men

- ♦ Business Wear
- ♦ Shoes

Children

- ♦ Shoes
- ♦ Designer Baby Clothing

For the Office:

Our participants would like to be able to include business shopping in with their downtown lunch hour. Our downtown businesses have to drive out of the area for their supply needs.

♦ **Computer Supplies**

♦ **Science Products**

♦ **Books**

♦ **Stationary**

♦ **CD's**

For the Home:

Home décor and furnishings are available in our downtown but our participants would also like to pick up personal and basic home items while strolling through the downtown.

♦ **Computer Supplies**

♦ **Convenience Items
(toilet paper, nylons)**

♦ **Books**

♦ **Stationery**

♦ **CD's**

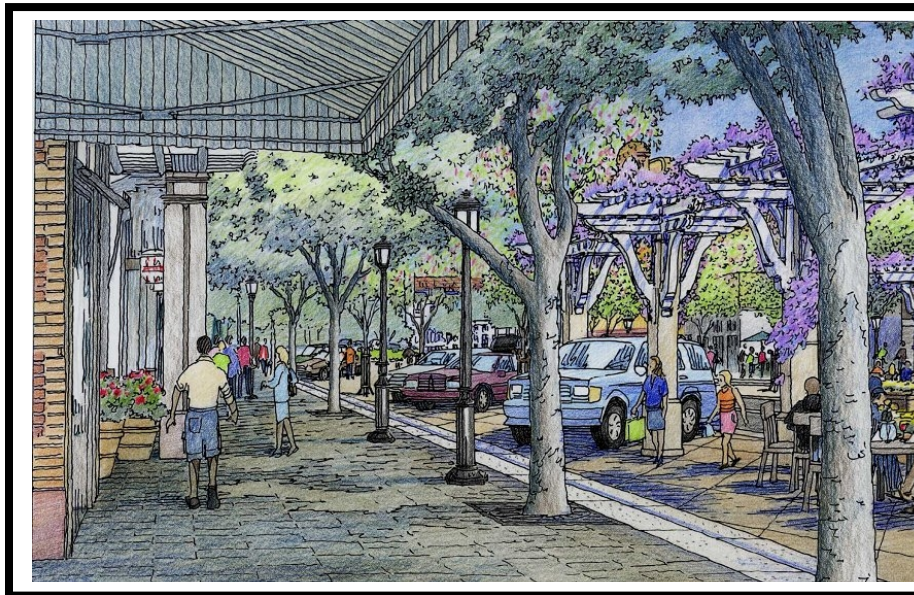
♦ **Kitchen/Culinary**

♦ **Boutique Pet Supplies**

What I want from my Downtown...

A Pedestrian Downtown was the desired environment stated by all of our participants. Beautification elements, safety elements and personal comfort items will inspire a loyalty to choosing downtown as their shopping destination.

- ♦ **A garden feel with greenery and flowers**
- ♦ **Benches and inviting seating areas**
- ♦ **Stores that are open in the evening and on weekends**
- ♦ **Special service and personal involvement of shop owners**
- ♦ **Consistency**
- ♦ **Pedestrian Signage that is visible**
- ♦ **Music**
- ♦ **Public art in all forms, sculpture, poetry, paint, pottery**
- ♦ **Clean Public Restrooms**
- ♦ **Slow traffic**
- ♦ **Well lit walkways**



Price Vs. Value

Consensus was that value was more important than price. Higher prices were acceptable if they bought you:

- ♦ **Higher quality of service**
- ♦ **Variety of unique products and services**
- ♦ **Attractive Environment**
- ♦ **Comfortable Atmosphere**
- ♦ **Convenience**
- ♦ **Unique and pleasurable experience**
- ♦ **Knowledgeable service**

In Summary

Throughout the Female Focus Program, it was very evident that the participants had a deep love of their downtown. They are proud of many of its historic and architectural elements and do identify the downtown as the heart and soul of our community.

Our participants are committed to patronizing and utilizing the business services available now but are very excited about what is to come. When given the choice, all of our participants stated that they would definitely appreciate having their shopping and dining needs met here at home rather than having to leave the community.

One exciting result of this Female Focus process is that out of the 50 participants, 18 are continuing on with us through joining our Promotion and Design committees. This has added tremendously to our ability to expand our programs in downtown.

The street presence has been the strongest deterrent for our participants when asked why they do not spend more time downtown. With the Highway 84 reroute, the new streetscape, public art and pedestrian amenities added, the downtown will reflect the standard of living that our residents with spendable income will choose to patronize.

The new look and feel will also strongly reflect the Wine Country theme that our Livermore Community embraces but will at the same time provide the entertainment and experiences that will be inviting to our families with children as well.

For the past three years studying, planning and preparing for the upcoming redevelopment and revitalization projects, a lot of conversations took place around what we do **not** have. This Female Focus Program was a wonderful opportunity to look closely at so many of the wonderful merchants and businesses that we **do** have. We have many examples of beautiful storefronts, comfortable gathering spaces and fine dining experiences. It is our duty and responsibility to aggressively invite those businesses that will complement and enhance the exceptional shopping and dining district we are all committed to developing. We look forward to continued partnerships and continued successes with all of you!