



STARS NEWSLETTER

South Texas Association of Resale Shops
visit us at: www.starsresale.com

Oct/Nov 2010

Volume 20, Number 5

Mark Your Calendars



Sunday, October 17, 2010

STARS Annual Meeting held at

Retail Therapy Resale

Owner, Kimberly Smith

Time 1-4 pm

Address: 10782 Grant Rd., Houston 77070

Phone: 281-955-0806

Email: retailtherapyresale@yahoo.com

December 2010

Next printing of the *STARS* Newsletter. We welcome news or articles from *STARS* members. Contact the Editor, Pat Swartley, at pswartley@yahoo.com or by phone 281-338-9360.

June 24-27, 2011

NARTS Annual Conference designed for the resale professional, The Westin Galleria, Dallas, Texas. Visit www.narts.org for more information.

STARS Annual Meeting at Retail Therapy

If you have always wanted to go to our annual meetings but couldn't make it, now is the time to really try to come. Kimberly says she and her mom, Cookie Sherrill, are looking forward to the meeting and they have "plenty to say" about their new make-over and other information they learned at the NARTS Conference this past June.

If you are a little down in the dumps over business, you need to come see and hear this "dynamic duo" all fired up to do the best job possible to promote and improve their resale shop. Learn about some hard decisions they made to improve merchandise offerings and why, and much more. Don't miss this very educational meeting.

We meet at 1:00pm to mingle, snack, oogle the store, and shop for bargains from the inventory of ladies, size 0-3X, and childrens size newborn to size 16, including toys from the Melissa and Doug line of toys and games. There will be "lot's of sales" from 20-80% off. **Our official meeting and sharing time is from 2-4 pm.** We want to hear about your store to help us make referrals.

Please call Kimberly before October 17 to let her know you are coming and to get directions to her store. BYOC (bring your own chair) if possible. Light refreshments provided.

The meeting is open to Resale store owners, employees, spouses and non-*STAR* resale/consignment shop owners. Take the opportunity to meet other resalers. I became friends with Yolanda at a *STARS* meeting 20 years ago (and many of you have bonded with her too!) and we have all benefited from her wisdom and support and look forward to her comments at the meeting.

The Editor

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S.T.A.R.S. Newsletter

About STARS...

The *STARS* Newsletter is published bi-monthly 6 times a year for Feb/Mar, April/May, June/July, Aug/Sept, Oct/Nov and Dec/Jan and is mailed to *STARS* members, prospective members and other interested persons.

STARS was founded in 1991 to promote education, networking, mentoring and co-op advertising among member.

Membership in *STARS* is open to “for-profit” resale/consignment shops in South Texas.

TO JOIN *STARS*: visit our website and click on “membership” for information.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR.....

So we hear the recession is over but there will be a long climb back. People are in the saving and thrifty mode. That should help resalers, but in case you haven’t felt it, here are some things to consider: when income drops find ways to cut expenses first rather than going deeper in debt, or cashing in assets.

To do this, take a good look at your employee expense. Can you reduce jobs and/or hours? Employee expense is second to rent for your biggest expense. Once I discovered I was paying a lot of salary for employees to pull out of date consignments to give back to people who didn’t really want them back, we fixed that problem. Going with a computer program saved me a whole employee and tons of time doing book work and hand-writing tags.

Next look at the advertising budget. Do only what really works for you, and do you really need that huge ad in the phone book? Social networking is very popular now for getting your message out there on the cheap. Cut back on mailouts, unless they are very successful for you. How about those cute little bags with your name on them? You have to make hard choices sometimes, and that means examining every little jot and twittle that costs you money in running your business.

At the NARTS conference workshop on how to make more money, one idea, certainly not new, was just simply to sell more of your stuff to the shoppers in your store. When you really know your stock it is easier to pull items together to go with a sale, whether it is a lamp for the table, a purse for an outfit, etc. Fewer customers means more time spent with each one to maximize their shopping experience.

Make it easy to shop in your store. There are 4 ways to merchandise your clothing: by **style**—all jeans together; **color** (a display of red for Valentine’s Day); **price** (all \$10 shirts as a special promotion) and **size** (all petites in one section). Effective merchandising can boost your sales—never stop caring about or trying to improve how your customer sees your product. Wide aisles and ease in moving around is huge in retail.

Get ready for a busy fall. Plan promotions and advertise them well in advance. December could be your best month of the year if you display and highlight items that could be purchased for gifts. Offer boxes and a wrapping service. I never did that but always thought it would be outstanding customer service!

Your Editor,
Pat Swartley



THAT AND THAT TIPS TO HELP CREATE A "BUZZ" IN YOUR SHOP

By Pat Swartley

I was in the "business" as an employee or owner of the Clothes Basket Resale Shop for over 20 years and the most important thing to me, always, was to have fun and enjoy my shop; and to share that with my customers. Here are some of my favorite fun things to do:

1. Decorate for the holidays on the cheap by collecting pine cones, acorns, twigs, thistles and other natural items and spray painting them silver, gold and red to add to displays, wreaths, and garlands. Maybe you have a creative, crafty family member or employee to do all that for you. Or, shop at a craft show and forget saving money. Whatever; decorating the store was always fun and customers loved it.
2. Have your standards and lists of what you accept or don't accept for consignment, but always keep your eye out for the unusual for that group of shoppers always on the lookout for such items. Displaying such items brings a smile and a buzz! So, the next time you are tempted to screw up your face and say, sorry, we don't accept that merchandise---take a second look.
3. Care about the smell of your store. Musty smelling? Pour plain white vinegar in a shallow bowl and leave over night. Pour down the sink drain in the morning. Check out those flameless candles, or tuck unseen sheets of fabric softener around the displays. I believe a smelly store is the biggest killer of "buzz" no matter what else good you have going on. Any unpleasant smell, however slight, spells OLD stuff.
4. Nothing creates buzz more than to change up your store. Keep it fresh and keep it moving. See the same stuff in the same place—spells nothing new coming in.
5. Never let a customer leave the store without something in their hands (hopefully a purchase!) or a newsletter, or an informational handout about the benefits of shopping or consigning. These things are so necessary to develop a connect with the customer.
6. Remember, customers love your store and shop there because they consistently receive value for their money and they are very satisfied with the service. They will carry that Buzz and become a "cheerleader."
7. Keep your ears and eyes open always for new ways to create Buzz. Get ideas from customers, employees, checking out retail stores and other resale shops or reading books on marketing. It takes never-ending WORK, folks, to be successful. Every word on this page has been said before, just a reminder!



Dear Resale Queen,

I have been buying clothes at garage sales for the last 7-8 months and have 8,000 pieces. I recently rented a 3,500 sq ft. of retail space for a resale shop. Now what do I do?

Signed: Want to be a success

Dear Want,

Letters like this make me want to cry. And it is not uncommon to hear this story. Over 20 years I listened to similar stories and watched such people go out of business in a few months after borrowing money from family, friends or the bank. Maybe you are one of the truly rare ones who survived such a start up.

On the flip side, I have seen women living their dream of owning a resale shop spend a year developing a business plan, picking out their name, logo, contract, décor, build-out plans, computer software-- then renting a space-- and lasting a year or less. That makes me sadder.

Every one of you still in business after your first year is to be congratulated. Think about why that is so. What did you do to be successful in not closing up shop? Some will say "I was just darn lucky." For sure you had some clue as to how to run your business, or you got advice and help before you opened, and you survived your mistakes.

What advice would you give "want to be a success?" I have hired women who have come asking how to start a resale business. What better way to see first hand how the business works or if you have what it takes to do it. Anyone asking me the "how" question was told to work in a resale shop, then come back and ask if they still wanted to do it.

Dear Resale Queen,

I am new in the resale business and I guess it is obvious because my customers keep trying to tell me how to run my business. How can I stop that without being rude?

Signed: Thinking about wearing a "The Boss" pin

Dear Boss,

Yeah, I went through that. First of all, walk around the place like you own it (and you do). When someone starts giving you unasked for advice give them your full attention and do not interrupt. Thank them. Walk away before you are tempted to disagree or tell them to take a hike. Hey, they only want to help you be more successful. I remember when I first became an employee of the Clothes Basket and was shaking in my boots every time a customer or consignor came in. Yet, many times I was asked if I was the owner. I would say no and ask them why they asked that and they would say, "You act like an owner." Just do that and it will help. **And lucky you if you have employees who project that authority as a decision maker to your customers.**

The Resale Queen



NEWS AROUND THE GALAXY



Rosa and Paul Rivera, owners of Jackie's Resale, are looking to sell their small resale shop. Rosa has a full time job and Paul has been deployed overseas as a civilian worker.

Their shop is located in a great location on West Main Street in League City, not far from 1-45. Most of their merchandise, including new jewelry and purses, clothing for the family, home décor and more is owned by them, with some consignments. They have 18 months on their lease. If you are interested call Rosa at 713-876-6103.

The store is located in a strip shopping center with a pet grooming/boarding business, Domino's Pizza and a hair and nail salon, H & R Block and others included. Two children's resale shops are down the street.

Their address is: **1101 West Main, Suite C, League City, 77573.** They are open 7 days a week. Email: rjackiesresale@aol.com website: jackiesresale.com

Think About It

I really like to go into a business, any business, and see the employees wearing a uniform, even if it is just a cute apron over their regular clothes or a button down knit shirt with a business logo. The main reason I like it is because employees are immediately identifiable and I don't have to ask people if they work there and embarrass myself when they say no. Or spend time staring at possible employees. Even if there is just one worker, it is nice if they at least wear a name tag. This is just one more way to look professional to the public.

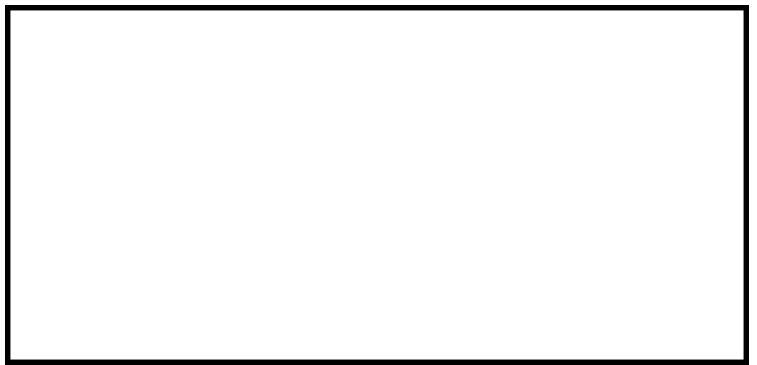
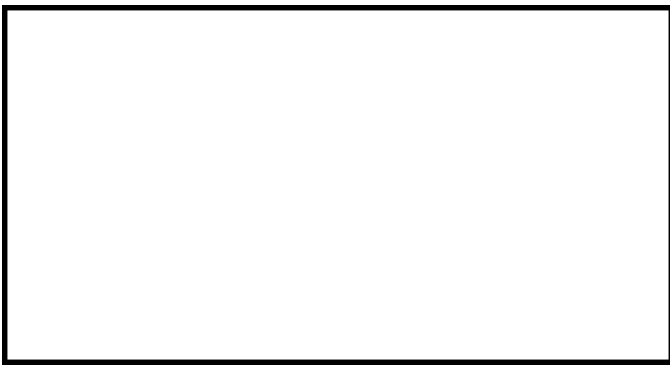
Do your employees dress appropriately for your business image? I was in a high end Resale shop recently and the employees and the owner were dressed and groomed drop dead gorgeous. Heels even. It spoke volumes to me—they know high end merchandise; care about projecting the proper image to inspire confidence in potential customers/consignors; and it made me feel good to be in such a classy place. It was obvious they were the employees also, because they were so upbeat and friendly to boot.

Any time I am in a business and the employees are not dressed appropriately for the business I am uncomfortable and unsure I want to do business there.

Check This Out!

Two favorite and much read books that I highly recommend is "50 Powerful Ways to Win New Customers" by Paul R. Timm, Ph.D, and "50 Ideas You Can Use to Keep Your Customers," Published by Career Press, 1-800-Career-1. Priced at \$10.99 USA each when I bought them. These are paperback books with 50 pages each with a wonderfully motivating idea on each page.

Dr. Timm says, "Getting Customers is an art and a science—an art because it calls for creativity and innovation: a science because it calls for systematic application of ideas and examination of the results. Keep your eyes open. Recognize clever and interesting approaches used by businesses to entice you to buy. Then see which of these might apply to your line of work."



S.T.A.R.S. Newsletter
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Since 1991