



STARS Newsletter

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

April/May 2007

Volume 17, Number 2

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ADVERTISING

Every storeowner dreams of the perfect advertising opportunity: it's cheap or free and brings scores of customers running into your store. It is still a dream for a lot of you, but keep searching for it. Some of you might think if an advertising venue costs a lot it will benefit you the most. (I'm thinking flyers taped on delivered pizza boxes) Wrong! Cost and benefit have nothing to do with each other. The most successful advertising I ever did was to be in a Chamber of Commerce coupon book, and the ad was FREE.

So what are you to do? View advertising opportunities with these considerations: **1.** Can I afford it? **2.** Does the advertising target my potential customer base? **3.** Is the advertising distributed in a 5-mile radius of your store? **4.** Is it reliably distributed?

Try to track the success of the advertising. Did you at least get a return of the money you spent on it? Constantly evaluate what works and what doesn't.

Best advice: When you find the best advertising method you can afford, keep doing it. A Clothes Basket customer said to me one day, "I see your ads everywhere and I finally decided to visit the store." Here is the kicker: My ads weren't everywhere but they were out there often enough to make the lady THINK she saw them everywhere! My best months in the business happened to be the months I spent the most on advertising, yet sometimes I spent a lot and got little return for the money. You may also, but don't cut advertising out of your budget, just give careful consideration to every advertising offer you receive.

Editor,
Pat Swartley

Mark Your Calendars

April, 2007

The March Official *STARS* Directory has been delivered to all advertisers. If you have any questions as an Advertiser, please call Jacke at 1-409-771-6493.

If you are not an advertiser but would like to have a copy, please call Yolanda at Second Childhood, 713-789-6456. or visit a *STARS* member near you who is an advertiser.

June 1, 2007

Next mail-out of the *STARS* Newsletter. We welcome news or articles of interest to our membership. Send to: Pat Swartley, 2206 Waters Edge Lane, League City, TX 77573 or call 281-338-9360. Email at pswartley@yahoo.com

June 22-25, 2007

NARTS Annual Conference in San Antonio, www.narts.org for more information.

September, 2007

Fall delivery of the *STARS* Official Directory.

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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, *STAR*lets and other interested persons.

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

Membership in *STARS* is open to any for-profit resale shop in business for 1 year or more in the Greater Houston area. 2006 Membership dues are \$50 per year and new members are accepted at any time. *STAR*let provisional membership is offered to new resale shops in business less than 1 year. *STAR*lets enjoy most benefits of membership for free.

STAR membership provides the opportunity to have a listing on the *STARS* website, www.starsresale.com. You may also place a website link for a one time fee of \$50. Contact *STARS* at 713-789-6456.

The bi-annual Official *STARS* Directory is published in March and September. For information please call publisher, Jacke Shipwash at 1-409-927-1295.

STARS volunteer board members are: Yolanda Ramirez and Sandra Marin, Second Childhood on Fountainview, 713-789-6456.

STARS Newsletter Writer/

Editor:

Pat Swartley

281-338-9360

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Karen Frerking

Advertising is accepted.
Members may advertise
in a classified section free.

Letter from the editor...

We would like to welcome a new annual advertiser to our newsletter, Jacke Shipwash, our Directory publisher. Jacke is a busy lady doing directories and other publications in South Texas. Her popular Resale Shopping Guide lists 39 resale and thrift shops from Pasadena to Galveston, Texas. Several *STARS* advertise in this resale guide also.

Call Jacke on her office phone, (409-927-1295) or Email her at shipwash1@verison.net if you are interested in more of her advertising products, and check out her ad on the back of the newsletter.

By the way, *STARS* does not give permission to anyone to use *STARS* as an endorser of their product, nor can we recommend that you use a particular product or service. We can only give information in our newsletter of products or services that may be of interest to you, but it is up to you to determine whether or not the product or service will benefit you.

No one should call on you to sell their product and say *STARS* recommends their product except Jacke for the *STARS* Official Directory, because she is creating a product FOR *STARS*. With all of our advertisers *STARS* can only recommend that you consider using their products if you are in the market for their product or service.

With all that said, I personally have been a satisfied customer of all of our advertisers, and have given each of them permission to use my name as such, but I do not speak for *STARS*, and I have given no one else permission to use my name.

I hope I have made this issue clear because sometimes I hear that someone is approaching our members and saying *STARS* is behind their product or service. Yolanda and I both have discovered that our names have been used as an endorsement when all we did was talk to a vendor.

Recently, I agreed to write an article for a new resale publication with the understanding that my pay would be a free plug for *STARS* in this publication. Neither I nor *STARS* have an opinion about the business plan, distribution plan or value of this advertising venture. Everyone must evaluate the opportunity for themselves.

Pat Swartley



VISUAL HORIZONS SOFTWARE—FRONTRUNNER IN RESALE SHOP SOFTWARE.

ConsignPro, a product of Visual Horizons Software, is a well-known and widely used software program available for resale/consignment shops today. One of the reasons this is so is because the owner, Brian Wilson, continues to improve and add updates to his product about 6 times a year. Future changes this coming year will include customer purchase tracking, listing items for sale on eBay, and touch screen capability to add efficiency to your checkout process.

Also available is MyResaleweb.com that allows your consignors to check their own account online! Resale shops using this service report a dramatic drop in consignor phone calls. And imagine how much this feature promotes trust and accountability for your store to your consignors.

For complete information about ConsignPro please visit their website, www.vhsoftware.com . See their ad on the back of the newsletter.

A-1 Store Fixtures, Inc.

Debbie Damon, still recovering from a move from a 3,500 sq ft store to a 1,500 sq ft store, wants to thank Dwayne Stokes for helping her remove the extra fixtures and decoration items no longer needed. She was very pleased with the service rendered by Dwayne and his company. Three men and a truck showed up at her door when promised and they cleared out the garage at the bungalow of all unwanted stuff. She was given an itemized list of what was removed and the check is in the mail. All Debbie had to do was sweep the floor and thank her lucky stars she didn't have to have a garage sale.

Got stuff you no longer need? Give Dwayne a call at 713-699-4350. Be sure and check his ad on the back of the newsletter.

IDENTITY THEFT ON THE RISE

Getting your identity stolen is an ever-present risk. Here are some tips on avoiding this happening to you, and how to handle identity theft problems.

1. Never sign the back of a credit card. Instead write: "photo ID required." Reality is, however; most businesses do not even look at the back of your credit card, or require a photo ID along with your card presentation.
2. Place the contents of your wallet on a photocopy machine. Do both sides of each item. You will know what was in your wallet and all account numbers and phone numbers to call and cancel.
3. File a report of stolen credit cards immediately in the jurisdiction where your 1. credit cards, etc. were stolen. This is the first step toward an investigation if there ever is one.
4. Call the 3 national credit reporting organizations to place a fraud alert on your name and Social Security number. Here are the numbers:
 1. Equifax 1-800-525-6285
 2. Experian (formerly TRW) 1-888-397-3742
 3. Trans Union 1-800-680-7289
 4. Social Security Admin—fraud line: 1-800-269-0271
5. When paying credit card bills by check you are frequently asked to write the account number on the check. Only put the last 4 digits of the number so that no one who handles the check will have your full account number.
6. Everyone knows not to print their Drivers License, SS number and date of birth on checks, but it is also suggested that you put a work phone number rather than a home phone number on the check.



MAKE eBAY WORK FOR YOU

By Yolanda Ramirez

Far from being a threat, eBay has turned into an economic and social phenomenon that no retailer can afford to ignore. Ignore eBay at your own peril, as the numbers are staggering. eBay has over 203 million registered users worldwide, with 90 million registered in the United States. Currently, eBay users worldwide trade more than \$1,640 worth of goods every second. 2007 online retail sales are expected to climb a whopping 20%.

Before jumping into eBay, retailers must do their homework. For example, before listing an item for sale, look at similar items already listed on eBay to get a feel for what such merchandise is selling for. Most importantly, retailers must use good digital photography and give a good detailed description of the merchandise as well.

Find a small corner or closet or other such space to be used specifically for entering eBay items. Designate a person on your payroll to do all eBay activity. This person needs to educate themselves on how to manage an eBay account. This information is available on the eBay site. It is very important that the designated eBay employee check the emails frequently during the day as eBay buyers can be impatient and may move on if a query is not answered within a few hours. You also want to remove sold inventory from your account as soon as possible.

Just like a brick and mortar store, customer service makes the difference and will give you a good rating for potential customers to see. A very important element in completing the sales transaction is in the shipping method you choose. Experiment with various carriers for the best service possible. Which carrier you pick will depend on your time zone, the destination, the package size, and how quickly you can get the item on its way.

There are tools on eBay that will walk you through mailing procedures. When selling overseas you will need to look into custom or duty fees, especially when selling brand new items. You may, however, choose to limit your sales area and exclude overseas.

eBay has ProStores which help you create and manage your own website. You can create an online presence and customize it in a very short time. Remember, eBay has the widest range of customers and now is the time to exploit the Online store opportunity.

*Editor's note: We welcome submissions from **STARS** members, and reserve the right to edit the content to fit the space available or to make the message clearer.*



NEWS AROUND THE GALAXY

NEW STORE OWNER—Lori Polanco, a former long time employee of **Changes—Ladies**, in Webster, TX recently purchased the store from Cheryl Corbett. Cheryl still owns **Changes—Kids** in League City. Her store ad will be in the next *STARS* Official Directory.

NEW LOCATION--MOVING ON UP—Debbie Damon, recently moved **B'Dazzled** down the street to 1308 West Gray, citing an outrageous rent increase as the reason. The new location is in a darling bungalow with a full bath and kitchen—and a garage for storage. Chandeliers, and ornate mirrors adorn some rooms and nice rugs are everywhere giving the store an elegant, yet homey, inviting look. Parking is available in the furniture store parking spaces next door by arrangement between Debbie and the owner.

The phone number, 713-387-2525 is unchanged. For complete directions go to the *STARS* website, www.starsresale.com and click on **B'Dazzled's** website link.

NEW SHOP POLICY—It has been noticed that some *STAR* stores no longer accept checks for payment of merchandise. Even though signs about the policy are prominently displayed, they all make exceptions for good loyal customers. One could wonder if someone would notice that payment by check is accepted from some but not from others, and if that might become a problem. However, one must balance the potential problems with the obvious relief of having few, if any, bad checks!

NEW IDEAS TO PLEASE CUSTOMERS—One *STAR* store offers customers a 10% discount if they pay with cash rather than check or credit/debit card. Some businesses accept checks that are directly processed out of the customer's account. In this process a voided check is returned to the customer at the time of the sale. Ask your bank if this service is available to you.



AN OLD PROBLEM THAT NEVER GOES AWAY!

Every year *STARS* gets at least one call from a member, usually a new store owner, about being asked by their Appraisal District to supply the names, addresses, and amounts their consignors earned the previous year. You are told your consignors will be taxed. **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO FURNISH SUCH INFORMATION TO ANY APPRAISAL DISTRICT.**

Your consignors are **NOT IN THE BUSINESS OF SELLING MERCHANDISE. THEY ARE SELLING PERSONAL ITEMS AND ARE RECEIVING FAR LESS THAN THEY ORIGINALLY PAID FOR THE ITEMS.** If you have a consignor **in the business of selling merchandise, with a DBA, the law applies to them.**

If an agent from your appraisal district visits you with the famous consignor request do not waste any time arguing with them. Tell them you will certainly have your accountant check it out with the head of your appraisal district, and end the conversation. Recently a new *STARS* member was told that **THE CONSIGNOR LIST** requirement was a new law on the books only a few years. This is not true.

What is true is that it is now a violation of the law if you do not fill out and submit the appraisal form from your county postmarked by April 15th. Failure to do so could result in a fine.

***LOOK INSIDE FOR THE LATEST
S.7.A.R.S. DIRECTORY INFORMATION***



S.7.A.R.S. Newsletter
C/O Yolanda Ramirez
1922 Fountain View
Houston, TX 77057

First Class Mail
Address Correction Requested



A PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTH TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF RESALE SHOPS