Turning A Lemon Into Lemonade

By Kitty Boyce

Right before we left our store for the NARTS Conference in Scottsdale (June 2003), we found out from the Illinois Dept. of Transportation (IDOT) that they highly recommend not selling used car seats due to the fact that you cannot prove a used seat has not been involved in an accident.

We, as resellers, assume the manufacturers' liability if the car seat we sell should fail. At my store we had always done a great business in car seats, I was hesitant to lose this business but I called my insurance agent. He also recommended that we not sell them as the liability was too high. So, on June 19th we stopped accepting and selling car seats. To make some lemonade out of the lemon of lost business, I e-mailed a press release to the local newspaper with information.

I lucked out. A reporter called the next day. I gave her the info I had received from IDOT and the name of the contact person. By the following day, there was the story on the front page of the State Journal-Register, Springfield's daily newspaper! In the story, the reporter had talked to about five different people—a mother, a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration child passenger seat technician, the occupant protection coordinator with IDOT's Division of Traffic Safety, a pediatrician, and ME!

The part of the article that included me said, "Kitty Boyce, owner of *The Kids Closet* in Rochester, said her store sold used car seats until she learned of the potential risks, such as that people selling the seats assume the manufacturer's liability if something goes wrong. The liability and chance a child could be injured was far more important than the money she lost destroying her remaining stock, she said."

This little plug in the paper was great PR and helped customers view us as a responsible business.

Kitty Boyce, NARTS Vice President, owns *The Kids Closet* in Rochester, IL. Kitty has been in business for fourteen years and her store is the largest children's resale store in Illinois.