

10 Lessons New Shopkeepers Will Learn at Conference

NARTS Conference is full of opportunities, structured or free-flowing, to talk to attendees whose businesses are successful and rewarding. Ask those experienced shopkeepers how putting these lessons, compiled by Kate Holmes of *Too Good to be Threw* (www.TGtbT.com), into practice made their businesses thrive!

1 You'll learn how to plan on enjoying your business. From the start. Yes, your business will consume you, at least in the formative years. But keep clear on how important family and friends are as well. Accomplished resalers understand how to enjoy both their professional and personal relationships.

2 You'll understand how to use time wisely. Reserve a specific time, every day, to plan your business. Make sure your time (and energies) are used effectively. Are you waxing the rods rather than planning your advertising campaign? Hate to do something? Do it poorly or not at all, even though you know it's necessary? Hire it done, either with free-lancers or employees. Ask experienced shopkeepers how they knew they were ready to hire.



—Kate Holmes
Too Good to be Threw

3 Become a real part of your community. There is no excuse for not knowing your business neighbors and peers, for staying marooned in your shop. Root for (or sponsor!) the softball team, participate in local initiatives. It's the right thing to do for your community and your business. Ask skilled shopkeepers how to be a part of your local network.

4 Plan to over-deliver. The one sure way to stand out from new-merchandise *and* resale competitors. Customer service is both the least-expensive tool in your small-business arsenal and the most effective. Expert business owners have developed ways not only to over-deliver, but to do so in a way that leads to incredible word-of-mouth. Ask them what works best for them!

5 You'll get a grasp on how to aim for your goals. Every day in every way. Write them down. Make them specific, attainable, and measurable. See how to break long-term goals into manageable steps. Masterful managers understand that if they're not aiming for a goal, they won't attain it.

6 Teach yourself to be a pessimist. Yes, you read right. Everything will cost more money and time than you want it to. Once you get that, you'll be pleasantly surprised when it *doesn't*, and isn't that a good feeling! But see how experienced resalers don't let pessimism stand in their way. So what if it's never been done before? If you want and need to, you can. And seasoned secondhand shopkeepers can tell you stories that will amaze...and amuse...you.

7 Knuckle down and network. You need the contacts. If not now, some day. And they need you. Watch how truly great resalers give more than they get. Soon, you'll be sharing knowledge, contacts, and abilities with Conference attendees.

8 Beware growing pains. If your business is doing much better than your pessimistic side thought it would, don't expand too fast. Moving from a small location that is surprisingly profitable after only a few months could be a good idea... or it could be too-rapid over-expansion. Veteran business owners are sometimes veterans of growing pains and can steer you away from pitfalls.

9 Don't sponsor a race car. No kidding. I did, and I have the photos to prove it. Fortunately, it was a very modest race car and it got me a terrific man. The point: *keep your capital working on the business.* Don't buy toys, invest in tools.

10 Stories from shopkeepers of long standing will teach you to keep flexible. You didn't think your town needed a place to buy menswear? Guess what: it did. Don't think your customers want to shop at 6:30 in the evening? Hang around and vacuum. You may be...delightfully...surprised. Ask about the changes experienced shopkeepers have made...and the changes they are even now planning! :

Kate Holmes, author of [Too Good to be Threw, The Complete Operations Manual for Resale & Consignment Shops](#), publishes three web sites as well as Facebook and Twitter feeds daily. She estimates that over 20,000 resale shopkeepers have used the Manual to make their businesses stronger and more satisfying. Kate is a two-award NARTS winner, winning the Renee River Award for outstanding service and contributions to the Association and the very first Educational Service Award for significant commitment to enhance and enrich educational opportunities for the membership. She is an honorary Life Member of NARTS.

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