

Gold Shoes... An Idea Worth its Weight in Gold!

I was sitting in a hotel lobby in Las Vegas a few months ago waiting for my husband when the gentlemen next to me asked me why I had come there. I explained that I was on a shopping trip for my stores back in St. Louis. He explained that he too owned a business and was in Vegas interviewing a potential employee. He said he receives hundreds of resumes every year but this candidate in particular stood out. He went on to say that in lieu of the traditional resume and cover letter mailed in the manila envelope he received a shoe box containing a shoe with a resume and note attached. The note read, "Just wanted to get my foot in the door." I looked at him and said, "That is a million dollar idea and if you don't mind I'm stealing it!"

I returned to St. Louis armed with my Grand Opening strategy. You see, we had just moved to our new location and were about to host our official Grand Opening. I wanted lots of customers as well as press. I instructed my staff to round up all of the shoe boxes they could find and report to the parking lot behind the store. I met them there with 25 stray high heels, a ream of pink tissue paper and lots of gold spray paint. We covered every shoe box with gold paint and laid pink tissue in each box. We also sprayed the shoes gold and placed them inside the box with a note that said, "**Just wanted to get our foot in the door.**" The invitation to our Grand Opening was also placed in the box. It read:



—**Sue McCarthy**
NARTS Treasurer

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Grand Opening New York Style



***Local women's boutique prospers in failing economy**

Grows and expands with sales off the charts

***Recession Proof Business**

Partners with Make a Wish foundation for Grand Opening Event

***Live Mannequins**

Showcasing the latest in fashion from 15,000 suppliers throughout the world

Twenty-five boxes were mailed to every television and print media personality in St. Louis. This included the hosts of our local cable shows, the anchors of our news stations, editors of our two society publications, the editor of our alternative publication as well as our own St. Louis Post Dispatch. ►

Gold Shoes...

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A couple days went by with no mention of the parcels we sent out. On the third day I received calls from two of our news stations. Both received the box and both wanted to come to the store that day and tape a story.

I explained that the Grand Opening wasn't for another couple weeks but they insisted they needed to tape today. I said we would be ready and indeed we were. Both stories had the same angle "Local business prospering in failing economy." Hmm I wonder where they got that idea? You see, media is always looking for content. If you supply it they will use it. They are especially looking for positive stories because it is such a hot commodity in these dismal times.

The following three weeks were somewhat of a blur. I do know that I was in the media 17 times in 60 days. And the best part, it was all completely FREE! The Grand Opening was not only covered by every major media outlet, but was also attended by a record number of guests.

We had live mannequins who changed positions every 10 minutes when a bell rang as well as two masseuses who were offering chair massages for a dollar a minute. The store looked beautiful and was described as Nieman Marcus-like several times that day.

When the last customer walked out the door my staff and I ran to the register to batch out. We knew it was going to be a big day but were unprepared for just how big. The grand total for the Grand Opening day was twenty-two thousand dollars!

Six months later we continue to see business generated by the shoeboxes and our sales are up 25% since the move. ♻️

Editor's Note: Sue's new store, along with other NARTS member stores, will be included on the St. Louis seminar bus tour. Join us on November 8th for the seminar followed by the optional bus tour on Monday. We hope to see you in St. Louis!

Your NARTS Network—November 2009

YOUR
NARTS™ NETWORK

is published by the
**National Association of
Resale & Thrift Shops**

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Resale & Thrift Shops

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