

## Are you a Habitual Shopkeeper?

**You'd better be. There are certain habits that will aid you in building your business. Here are some business habits worth cultivating:**

**Get in the habit of:**

Building connections. Don't just *meet* those who can be helpful to you, but develop *relationships* with them. Such people might include (but are not limited to!) peers in the resale industry, business people you admire in your community, or those with sage advice. Developing relationships means giving before you ask to receive: mailing an article that might interest a resaler you have met at a NARTS meeting, volunteering to help at a charity event organized by a local mover-and-shaker, inviting the fancy boutique's owner to lunch. Once you know the owner of FrouFrou Fannie's, it's a lot easier to ask her if she'll keep an eye out for clearance accessories sources for your shop when she goes to market.



—Kate Holmes  
*Too Good to be Threw*

**Get in the habit of:**

Listening for your customers' wants and needs. In some circles, this is known as eavesdropping. I prefer to call it "active listening" and have been known to butt in to a conversation and ask "So you have a hard time finding...?" With a little thought and a little informal surveying of your customer base, a lot of shops have come up with new ways to implant their business firmly in the hearts and minds of their clientele.

**Get in the habit of:**

Watching what you do well, what you do poorly, and what you avoid completely. If you don't or can't or won't, when is it time to find someone who will? Spend your time doing what *you* do well, and get someone to take care of the rest. That builds not only a healthy business, but a happy shopkeeper.

**Get in the habit of:**

Seeing the possibilities, not the problems. This habit served many shopkeepers in good stead just this year, when CPSIA proved to be a genuine problem. Those shopkeepers who saw the possibilities of changing their business model, rather than the problems of becoming an outlaw by selling sparkly T-shirts to 8-year-olds, have become healthier, more vibrant businesses.

**Get in the habit of:**

Staying OUT of "the habit." Life changes, business changes, and you must be flexible enough to keep up. You wouldn't leave the satin and velvet holiday gowns in your prime selling space all year 'round, would you? If the computer goes down, do you remember how to ring up sales?

**Get in the habit of:**

And finally, avoid like blazes the habit of spending more time than it takes to run your business. Don't make your shop a substitute for a life full of friends, family, and totally-unrelated-to-business fun. Keep your hobbies and your interests alive, and remember that you *will* get it done in time...if you don't spend *all* your time at your work. ♻️

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