

# Swapmeet Secrets

## How A Desperate Business Owner Pocketed Wads of Cash Using Free Merchandise... and *How You Can Too !*

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## Introduction

There is a truism of life that transcends time, geographic locale and even the state of the economy, and it is that.... Everyone loves a bargain. Just take a trip to any mall when there is a president's day sale. Memorial day sale, 4th of July sale, national Onion day sale or whatever and you will see jammed parking lots, packed aisles and eager shoppers.

In my home town the mall opens at 5 AM during the Christmas shopping season on select days and stays open until midnight...show up before 6 AM and you'll get the best bargains. People literally line up outside the stores waiting for the magical 5 AM hour so that they can save another 10% on whatchamacallits. I've seen news programs where people are literally trampled as rushing masses push to get into a Walmart or similar retailer for crack of dawn deals.

As the author of Surplus Secrets I have had first hand experience in the world of deeply discounted liquidated merchandise. As a liquidator I bought and sold truckloads of every conceivable kind of merchandise and sold these inventories to discount stores nationwide. To be successful I had to be in sync with the bargain shopping wants and needs of consumers as well as retail store buyers for chains and mom and pop operations.

It was almost by accident that my antennae discovered the profitability of swapmeets and flea markets. Daily I was in contact with sellers who had warehouses packed with unwanted merchandise. They would happily send me free samples, sometimes by the case, in the hope that I would offer to buy the balance. I would use these samples to show to my buyers and would frequently have some left over. In short time my offices were filling up with cartons and cases of everything from computer accessories, CDs, sunglasses, clothes, sporting goods, housewares, books, jewelry, holiday decorations, pet supplies, non perishable food, toys, computer games and the list goes on.

*I was almost desperate to find a way* to dispose of these items and make room for more samples that were arriving on a daily basis. Frankly, I was desperate for a solution. If I didn't find one I would not be able to accept many more deliveries.

One sunny weekend I was driving along the California coast and on my return took an alternate route and saw an enormous outdoor market, a swapmeet. The parking lots were jammed with cars and I decided to stop and see what all the commotion was about.

Entering the market I immediately became aware that this a true bazaar with every conceivable type of new and used goods being hawked in booths in row after row of sellers. It didn't take me long to see that the price of new goods was less than that which one would expect to pay in a retail store. Every type of merchandise I had sitting in my office was represented. And everyone of these sellers had found a wholesaler who could supply them with inventory at a such a low price that buyers would happily shop the swap meet and scoop up these bargains.

***I immediately knew that I had found a solution*** to my problem and a goldmine at the same time. I had brand new merchandise that was mine to keep or dispose of that had cost me nothing...zilch...nada. I knew that I could sell all of it at a lower price than any vendor and my profits would be 100% subject only to the cost of a booth for a day which at this swap meet was only \$20. Inexperienced in this type of business but determined to make room in my office I decided to give it a try. The following weekend I loaded up a Chevy Blazer with as much merchandise as I could jam into it and tied a table to the roof to use to display my products. Off to the swap meet I drove and as you will read in the following pages, I profited more than \$700.00 in a matter of a few short hours. An added surprise was that my booth was so busy because my prices were unbeatable that other vendors would come over and ask to buy entire case of different kinds of products if I could make them a deal... I did, and who wouldn't.

Many of these vendors asked if I had other merchandise they could buy. I invited those who had the ability to buy some volume to come by our location and I would show them other merchandise that we have purchased but had not yet sold. Sunglasses, toys, whatever. If they wanted to buy a quantity I would give them a good deal, make a profit and keep in touch. Now I had buyers for smaller quantities of merchandise that would not be of sufficient quantity to sell to a retail chain or store.

For several years I followed this approach in different communities in Southern California, selling of samples on a retail and wholesale basis. I would recoup my office space and make a nice chunk of cash every single time. In fact I once had such a demand for aviator sunglasses that I brought to a swapmeet that I had to call an associate and have him go to our warehouse and bring another load of them. Vendors were begging for them and it was a joy having to scramble to fill their needs and make even more money !

As you read my account of how swapmeets and flea markets work, how to set up your business, stock your inventory through surplus and other methods, grow your business and profits keep this in mind: It is NOT theory. It is exactly, step--by-step and account and a formula for success that we developed and used for years. If you do the same you have every possibility of success as well.

So enjoy the book and good luck making money and being your own boss in the discounted merchandise business !

Dr B

## **An Insiders Look at Swap Meet Day**

It's early morning, the sun is shining and cars are lining the drive waiting to enter the fairgrounds. Families, students, couples, seniors and singles all wait their turn to pay a few dollars for the right to park their car and enter the great American Bazaar otherwise known as the Swapmeet or Flea market.

Inside, vendors busily set up their tables, tarps, tents, stands, and booths, anxious to display their wares before the first surge of buyers rumble down the walkway. Radios, sportswear, cookware, tamales, computers, toys, clothes, hardware, plants, goldfish, canned items, jewelry, software, collectibles, giftware, clothes, cameras, keys and locks, batteries, sunglasses...everywhere you look more and different types of merchandise pop up and decorate the landscape.

New, old and handmade, there is no limit to the creativity that small business entrepreneurs introduce and sell successfully as these open air markets

On a clear day some swap meets report as many 15,000 visitors with the majority of the shoppers passing through between 8A.M. and noon. Nowhere, I repeat, nowhere else can a small business person get exposure to such mass audience in a single day with out spending hundreds or thousands of dollars for advertising or promotion. At Swapmeets, the vendor will pay a nominal rental fee for a space, frequently under \$20 for the day. That will give you the right to set up shop and be in business at the market..

With so many customers it's not unusual to sell all of your merchandise before the morning is over. In fact, we have used our cell phone for deliveries of additional merchandise to handle the volume of customers clamoring for our goods.

In [Surplus Secrets](#) we wrote about the surplus merchandise business we described the day discussed in the introduction to this book and how we made \$794.55 in a single day. This is not mentioned again as a bragging tool but to be instructive. Many vendors have made more than us and some make substantially less.

The focus of this book will be to show you how easy it is to be one of the big earners on a continuous basis. We know how to do it because we did exactly what we are teaching you here. We were not experienced flea marketers when we started. In fact the first day we worked a flea market was probably the second time we had ever visited one. If you have ever been to one then you have an advantage going already. You know what a market is and now you will learn how to pocket cash when you go to one.... So read this book carefully and get ready to have fun while raking in cash week after week.

## **The Birth of Outdoor Markets**

More than one notion exists as to the beginning of outdoor markets. One theory suggest that the first flea market may have been New York's Fly Market, before the American Revolution

Another theory originates the flea market in France where Le Marche aux Puces or market of the fleas was made famous by the ragtag merchants who worked the open-air bazaars selling wares suspected of being infested with fleas. Whatever the origin, the viability of these markets endures and now the opportunity can be yours. Let's get started.

### **So you want to start a Swapmeet business?**

If you have decided to start your own swapmeet business you are about to embark on a journey that has provided economic security, freedom and fun to thousands of people from every walk of life.

Many operators start small and supplement their present income making a few hundred dollars a month selling crafts. Others take a more aggressive approach selling new and used merchandise generating \$1000.00's of dollars monthly and even use the flea market as a spring board to opening full time brick and mortar retail stores.

We know of some flea marketers who still sell at flea markets and operate their retail stores during the week. The reason that they continue is that the amount of money that they make in 1 or 2 days at a flea market is more than several days sales at a normal retail location with less foot traffic.

And some flea marketers have used their earnings to expand their retail business to a chain of several stores.

In each of these examples the financial seed was planted and the fruits of profits plucked by selling at flea markets.

### **Freedom and Cash**

The idea of perpetual freedom, meeting new and interesting people at your hometown flea market or maybe even on the open road is an adventure that draws profit seekers like a magnet.

This opportunity can propel you to make more money part time than many people do with their full time jobs, working when you want, deciding what your income will be this week, working with merchandise that you found, you made yourself ..or that you just plain love because its uniqueness or public demand lures you.

Before the wind carries you away let's come back down to earth for a minute and take a look at what it takes to make it in this business...and if you still feel the magic then we'll wave the wand and together enter the magic kingdom of the world's flea markets.

### **The Market opens at WHAT Time again?**

Most of us endure an eight-hour workday, perhaps with overtime adding hours to a rather routine work schedule. Whether you work days or nights a routine schedule becomes familiar and contributes to emotional and well as financial security.

Flea Market life will turn you upside down and shake the cobwebs out of your routine the first week of your new endeavor. Don't get me wrong, this shaking can be the most invigorating, exciting and life changing experience you may ever encounter. But , it is different.

Let's take a look at an average flea market day for the perspective of someone who has worked these markets countless weekends. Spend a virtual day right now with us and become part of flea market life.

### **Flea Market Saturday...*a diary***

**4 A.M.** - wake up ..time for coffee, a shower and then down to the car where we packed all of our merchandise the night before to get an early start. Double check and make certain that the table is tied securely to the roof and that all merchandise set aside for today's event has been loaded.

- Review checklist
- Merchandise
- Space rental money
- Change
- Cooler
- Chair
- Tables
- Notepad and pencil
- Cell phone
- Pager
- Business license if necessary

**4 :45 AM-** head out for Market day. The distance to the market will affect your departure time. If the market opens at 7 be there no later than 6 A.M to be assure of a good space. Because the market we are going to opens at 7, we are leaving at 4:45 and will arrive at 5:30 AM. (Some markets permit you to reserve a space before market day in which case you can leave later .)

**5:30 AM** - Arrive at market and pull car into line awaiting assignment of spaces. When it is our turn we go over the available spaces on the map that the market assistant shows us and we pick a space out that is near the food concession, in the middle of the market where foot traffic will be heavy.

We pay our space rental fee and place the market ID Tag that proves our right to the space for the day and pull into our "store for a day."

**6:15 AM**- Hurriedly, we untie the table on the car roof and start unloading merchandise from the car and the trunk. Today we have men's and women's belts, sunglasses, sweaters, socks, tea pots and computer software. It's important to make our products look good because this is our store and customers will stop if what they see looks appealing. Shoppers will start touring the market the moment the "doors open."

Being ready to go can mean an extra \$50- \$100 or more in sales in the first 3--45 minutes. A vendor with merchandise dumped on the floor may make some money but not nearly as much as a vendor whose wares are neatly displayed, with well-marked signs, easy access for people to walk around and a neat and cheerful vendor happy to meet and chat with the shoppers.

Shopping at a flea market is an adventure and visiting with the vendors is part of the fun.

**7 AM**- Flea Market Opens-Customers start walking by in twos, fives and groups of ten and more...Some stop and as soon as more than 2 begin rifling through our boxes and displays more come. ( It's an absolute rule that if you can get a small group to show interest in what you are selling you may soon have a stampede of business...Everyone wants to know what the great deal is that the other guy just found.)

We always stand near our table greeting customers and answering questions...the more banter the better. Customers begin buying almost always asking if they can get a better price...Knowing that this is part of the culture of flea markets we intentionally start out at a price a little higher than we really want so that we can come down and make everyone happy.

**NOTE IT DOES NOT MATTER WHAT PRICE LEVEL YOU START AT...CUSTOMERS WILL ALWAYS ASK YOU FOR A BETTER DEAL.**

So this is not about being an honest vendor, as we said, it's the culture of the bazaar.

**8:15 AM-** The market is jammed and the sun is starting to shine brightly...it is going to be a busy day...as merchandise sells we restock the gaps frequently to keep a well stocked look. Note- **NEVER LET YOUR BOOTH /SPACE LOOK EMPTY IF YOU HAVE MORE MERCHANDISE...EVEN IF IT'S ALL THE SAME ITEM...IF YOUR SPACE LOOKS EMPTY, CUSTOMERS WILL BELIEVE THAT ALL THE GOOD DEALS ARE GONE !**

Customers start asking about deals for buying more than 1 belt or more than 1 software item. Quickly we give them a price that will still make us a good profit. 1 belt for \$5, 2 for \$9 , 1 computer game for \$2 or 3 for \$5... We paid only \$2 for the belts and \$.50 for the computer software so our profit margin was still good.

This really brings in a crowd and the table around the software gets crowded like a bus station...How much for 10 someone yells...9 for \$15 I answer...you get 1 free...before noon all 300 pieces of software are sold.

The belts are moving fast too...Customers love to buy in multiples for a better price....this is true in all retail sales...soon everything becomes a 2 for the price of 1 item and the sunglasses which we were selling for \$1- we start selling 10 for \$8....other vendors are start buying them....

**10:30 AM-** We grab the cooler and open a soft drink....word about our booth and the great bargains we have are now becoming legend this morning. Less experienced vendors huddle on chairs near their cars eating and talking to their family.... That's no way to make money.

We are really revved up now so we decide to pull in as many people we can like a magnet.

I grab a chair and stick in the middle of the walk way separating our booth from the booths across the aisle...Jumping on the boot I call to the customers..."Computer Games \$1-\$1 Computer Games. Sunglasses \$1 while they last"....That did it...we are now overrun with customers and other vendors all who want to buy stuff... So far a quick count gives us almost \$550.00 and there is still 1/2 a day left

**11:45 AM-** The crowds slow a bit as many are visiting the concession stands for hotdogs, tacos and Cokes I take a short break asking a vendor I know to keep an eye on my merchandise

*NOTE\_* You will met the nicest people at flea markets and the spirit of cooperation is evident everywhere.

**12::30** Lunch is over and buyers are moving through the aisles again , not as heavy as this morning so I move my chair back to the center and call for buyers again....at 1:35 PM I am sold out and start shutting down for the day.

After I pack up my table, cooler and personal effects I grab a Coke and sitting in my car take all of the cash from my pockets and put it into a small zipper bag. Calling my wife on the cell phone I tell her I am on my way home and we decide on going to see a movie.

Upon arriving home I open the zipper bag and pour the days take out on the kitchen table. Stacks of \$1's, \$5's, \$10's, \$20's and \$50 dollar bills are separated. We add the coins, quarters mostly, and begin to count. In less than 10 minutes the job is done...today's total \$677.55... Our cost for these goods was approximately \$260...that put our profit at \$417.55 for 1/2 days work. And it's all cash ! Could your family use extra cash like this?

### **Does your family support the idea of a home based business?**

When my father was a boy his immigrant father gave him what was considered solid loving advice. Get a job on the railroad punching tickets. If you work there for 30 years, you can travel anywhere on the railroad for free when you retire.

Whew! Well that was America during the 1930's for most people who did not come from wealthy families. As the years progressed my father was uninspired by a life as a ticket puncher on the railroad and after serving in World War II , returned to civilian life and entered college.

After college came more college and a career in education culminating as the head of a department at a major university.

Times had changed and just looking for security was certainly a thing of the past...right ?! Let's fast forward to 1968. I soon would enter college and my dreams were as big and grandiose as any young man was. Ready to take on the world.

Let me give you some good advice said my Ph.D. dad...get a lot of education and get a good job with security. When you retire you'll get a nice pension and can travel wherever you want.

Sound familiar?...it is...the level of psychological comfort zone had been elevated by education but the reaction of family to the unknown and the future remained constant

**SECURITY...**if you have it you are on the right track and the way to it is by working for someone else, making them rich and taking home your pre proscribed pay to mete out and save a little if you are lucky like a squirrel stashing nuts for the winter.

This held absolutely no appeal for me. And it's a good thing because the world was about to change. In my father's time people frequently worked for the same company for all of their lives. My father had exactly two jobs...as a teacher and as professor...that's it .

Today, that formula no longer applies. People change jobs 9-12 times in the course of a lifetime. Companies downsize, fold, move, transfer overseas, have employees telecommute, use free lancers and do all of the things we see and hear on the nightly news that are part and parcel of the Information Age and 21st century economy.

### **What about Job SECURITY?**

Isn't it Important?

Sure it is BUT... you better make it for yours elf....**Your JOB WILL NOT PROVIDE IT FOR YOU UNLESS YOU OWN IT !**

So when we take a look at whether your family will support your foray into the world of a flea market entrepreneur let's ask what's important to you and your family.

**Income?** You're in control. Work weekends only or work full time. Many flea markets are open 7 days a week and many flea marketers make \$1,000.00's of dollars every week.

**Time with family-** You're the boss. You can take a day off whenever you want. No need to call the boss and say "I'm sick today and can't come in"

**SECURITY-** You'll have it because you are the boss. You can NEVER be laid off, NEVER get fired, NEVER worry that your company is going out of business, moving , changing or looking to downsize and hire cheaper, younger, help.

Sit down with your family and discuss this with them. At first they may be unsure, after all you always brought home the company paycheck before. Isn't that what you're suppose to do? People are conditioned to think this way to keep a ready workforce for savvy entrepreneurs to make money from the sweat of their labor and talent.

Tell your family about your plans. What you will sell, where and how often. Explain to them how much traffic the flea market you will be attending generates.

Perhaps you know a flea marketer and have spoken to the market promoter where you will be selling. If so give your family an honest idea of how much you can expect to earn.

You might suggest starting part time and keeping your present job if that is possible. Show your family what this business can do .Before long they'll want to work for you. You will be the SECURITY as well as the BOSS!

### **How Much Do I Need to Earn Right Away .....and Can I Really Do it?**

It is very realistic to make \$300-\$1000 in a weekend depending on whether you work 1 or 2 days. And if you get ambitious there are even weekday markets in some cities and if you work at these your profits can quickly multiply.

A food vendor told us about a customer of his that bought a truck full of soda pop every week. By buying low cost soda pop he could attend 3 sales days a week and was clearing **more than \$2,000 weekly.**

Another vendor was selling Star Wars toys. He was attending big swap meets and setting up 4 tables full of Star Wars toys and memorabilia. Because of the demand for his merchandise he was **selling upwards of \$4,000.00 of merchandise in a weekend**...and he was buying some of it at retail stores and marking it up 5 times over the RETAIL cost ! That's because the demand was high and he would spend all week just looking for Star Wars stuff...not a bad gig.

Realistically, if you don't have a big truck for pop or an item as hot as Star wars you can still make a healthy profit every week. Our first event brought in more than \$600. In a ½ day. Other days we made \$300-\$450. And once a while we would come make less. In fact 1 day it rained and our take was a grand \$83. But we still made a profit for the day and laughed of the weather as we went to the movies.

### **How much time am I willing to spend weekly running my business ?**

It's up to you whether this will be a full time or part time enterprise. Some folks work the same events all the time developing a steady clientele who buy from them all the time. Other like the freedom of going to new and different events and are working just 1 or more days a month. The more market days you participate, the fuller your cash purse will become. It's just common sense.

### **Is there a demand for my product or service?**

Walk the market and see if anyone else has your items for sale. If they don't it may mean that the demand is low OR that they have not found a good source for that type of item We sold [surplus](#) software for \$1 that we found from a company that was going out of business.

We suggest that in the beginning you buy a small quantity of a variety of products and test them on at least 2 market days. If one item start to sell more than the others ask the buyers

what they like about that item, You'll get even more ideas for other merchandise to offer at the next event

### **What kind of set-up and equipment do I need?**

Most merchandise requires very little special set up. A couple of folding tables and a chair is about all you'll need, If you are selling jewelry or small knick knacks you may want to place some velvet material over the table to make an attractive display. Some people use a portable display case that holds rings and small knick knacks and can be use to transport them as well.

These cases are easily found at thrift shops and garage sales and can be purchased for under \$10.

### **Will my merchandise require additional storage or overhead costs?**

Here's the soda pop dilemma. If you plan to sell heavy items that take a lot of space you will need to make arrangements to store your unsold merchandise at a public warehouse. You can rent a small storage facility for \$50 per moth. But if your merchandise is software, sunglasses, jewelry or other small items you can store every thing in your closet or garage and pocket the storage fees.

### **Who is my competition?**

Walk the markets. Is anyone selling the same items as you. Is the quality the same? Is the price the same? Is their booth as attractive? Are the items easy for the customers to see? Is the vendor willing to answer questions or taking a nap? Be creative. If the item is selling at all, think about how you can improve the volume of sales. It's not rocket science.

We are not dissuaded when we see another vendor with the same thing we have. That means there is probably a demand for it. It's called "validating the market"

So if the items are the same we would be a little creative. Consider offering a package where the customer buys 2 and gets one FREE. You can even adjust your price to absorb the freebie depending upon your cost.

For example if buy a toy for \$1 and sell it for \$3 you can easily sell 2 for \$6 and give one away for free. Your cost is \$3 and your profit is \$3 so you still made a 100% profit and may clean our inventory out quickly making even more money that the vendor who insists on selling each an every toy for \$3 yet may need an extra day to sell all his merchandise.

### **Why will anyone buy from me instead of the other guys or gals ?**

Is my item unique?. Is my booth in a good location near an entrance or a corner or near the food concessions? Am I offering incentives to buy such as buy 2 and get 1 free. Is my merchandise easy to see? Am I willing to talk to customers and answer questions in a

friendly way? Do I listen to my customer's desires and get new ideas for more merchandise items to sell at future markets?

### **Legal Requirements**

It is important to remember that you are in business for yourself and as such you are responsible for all of your own income taxes, insurance and complying with any business requirements existing in your city and state.

You will want to select a name for your business such as National Surplus or John Doe Surplus. Make sure to check with your local municipal government and Secretary of State or Corporation Commissioner about registering your name. This is a good way to protect the use of your business name by others.

### **Sellers Permits**

If the name you have selected is available, you can file for a Seller's Permit (resale permit), Business Tax Certificate and other licenses that may be required where you live

You may need to file what's known as a Fictitious Name Statement or a DBA (Doing Business As) form at the County Clerks Office. These statements generally need to be published in the local paper. The county office can give you information on how to do this easily and inexpensively. We did this for less than \$30.

**Here are some general guidelines for Fictitious Names...** be sure to check with your local county and state office or your lawyer for the laws in your state.

- Within 30 days after filing the Fictitious Name Statement, publish a copy in a newspaper in your county of business once a week for four consecutive weeks.
- The newspaper will give you, or file for you at the County Clerks Office, an Affidavit of Publication. It is your responsibility to make sure that this is done.

We recommend that you visit the County Clerk's office in the state you live to get your paperwork completed as quickly as possible. Some jurisdictions may allow you to send the paperwork in by mail. If you do complete your paperwork by mail be certain that you follow the rules below to avoid any delays.

- 1) Fill out ALL applications and paperwork in blue or black ink unless otherwise directed.
- 2) Be sure to publish your new DBA or Fictitious name in the paper. (generally for 30 days )

3) Be sure that you have both a state sellers' permit and city tax license. If in doubt your local city hall, State Corporation Commission or Secretary of State and the office of the market you intend to work at are good sources of information.

### **Set Up as easy as 1-2-3**

Several options are available to you.

You may wish to set yourself up as a sole proprietor, partnership or a corporation. Whichever avenue you decide to pursue you must apply for a Federal Tax ID number which we will need for tax purposes, and any local business licenses required where you live and work.

This section is devoted to a brief overview of those forms of organization.

### **What's the Best Way to Operate?**

**If you have any questions about which is the best for you be sure to present those questions to your lawyer or accountant.**

**Sole Proprietorship-** This type of business has a "sole" or single owner in charge of the business. This is a very common form of business organization for home based businesses, where little capital is involved. In a sole proprietorship the owner is entitled to all of the income and assumes personal responsibility for any bills that may accrue.

Sole proprietorships are very easy to form and operate. Many people like this form of business organization because of the lack of corporate income tax. However, the owner of a sole proprietorship will be responsible for all tax on his/her income.

**Partnerships-** This form of business ownership became popular during the 1800's as a means whereby two (2) or more businessmen could pool their capital and expert resources in a venture. Generally, the profits and losses are equally shared. Two of the disadvantages of partnerships is that 1) all partners are liable personally for the debts of the partnership, and 2) the partnership ends upon the death of a partner.

**Corporations-** A corporation is actually a body of individuals that act autonomously and as such are vested by law with certain rights and privileges. Corporations are very popular due to a number of reasons such as:

1) Liability of an individual is generally limited to their investment

2) Ownership can be easily transferred by the use of stock

3) A corporation is a business in perpetual existence because the company continues to "live" even upon the transfer of stock.

Whichever method you choose you will need to check with the market that you plan to sell and see if you will need a city county license to sell at the market. If it is your first event many markets don't require a license but if you are a regular vendor you will need to get one

Within 30 days after filing the Fictitious Name Statement, you must have a copy published in a newspaper in the county of your place of business once a week for four consecutive weeks. The newspaper will then provide you, or file for you at the County Clerks Office, an Affidavit of Publication. If the newspaper returns the original affidavit back to you, it is your responsibility to file it with the County Clerks Office within 30 days after completion of publication. Failure to file a Fictitious Name Statement may bar you from filing any lawsuit on behalf of your business.

The following information on Licensing and Resources is based on research applicable for California. Use it as a model to seek out the procedures and resources in your local jurisdiction

### **Licenses**

To operate most year-round businesses you need two basic licenses: a State Board of Equalization Seller's Permit and a City Business Tax Certificate. Generally, sellers of new or hand-crafted merchandise must have a seller's permit and those who sell more than six times a year are required to have both licenses. The Seller's Permit can be obtained by contacting the State Board of Equalization. The Business Tax Certificate is issued by the City

### **Managing Your Finances**

Once you have set up your business format you will also be able to set up a business checking account if you wish. Once you start to make money you will be glad that you have a separate business account to track your income and expenses.

**Make sure to contact your lawyer and accountant with any questions about the best type of set up for your individual and business needs.**

### **Loans Really Are Available for Startups !**

In California, micro loans are available to help small businesses that can not qualify for loans at a bank. Micro-lending originated in Bangladesh in the 1970's and the country's Grameen Bank is the model for micro-loans.

This is an expanding field especially in tough economic times and it is worthwhile checking with your local municipality to see if they offer a program such as this one below.

ACCION San Diego, a local non-profit, offers ***business loans as low as \$300 up to \$35,000 to small businesses, which typically cannot qualify for credit at a commercial bank.***

ACCION San Diego acts as a bridge between commercial banks and small business operators, specifically, disenfranchised, low-income and minority micro-entrepreneurs. The advantages of an ACCION San Diego loan are regular market rates, flexible loan terms, fast approval and disbursement process and the opportunity to build a favorable credit history.

It's a good idea to get advice from a business counselor before taking on new debt. I would suggest checking out the [U.S. Small Business Administration](#), (SBA). They have a variety of free services and help from organizations such as SCORE, the Service Core of Retired Professional Executives who will guide down the right [path

### **Special Requirements to Sell Food**

If you are selling food items intended for human consumption, you must obtain a Health Permit. Health Permits are obtained at Environmental Health Services.

- Neither food preparation nor handling any open foods is allowed at a swap meet stand and is restricted to permanent facilities.
- Produce may be sold on stands in association with a vehicle under permit and with a sticker, or as a concession stand
- Vehicles that are used shall operate from a headquarters with a valid Health Permit. All food shall be stored at the headquarters when vehicle is not in operation.
- Vehicle requirements:
  1. Current Health Permit permits permanently affixed are required on all vehicles used to sell food.
  2. Signs shall be permanently fixed on both sides of vehicle showing the business name headquarters address and phone number
  3. Food products shall be stored or displayed above the pavement and protected with a cover over the display.
  4. Refuse containers are required and are the vendors' responsibility.

5. 100% pre-packaged, non-perishable foods may be sold from vehicles with the same requirements as above or at a permanent concession stand  
 Pre-packaged, perishable foods may be sold from approved vehicles and maintained at temperatures below 45°F.

6. Dry ice may be used for frozen food refrigeration.

**Items That Sell Profitably at Swap Meets  
 And Flea Markets ( open air and indoor markets)**

cassettes	software
toys	children's clothes
housewares	giftware
hand tools	computers
power tools	beverages
flashlights	pet supplies
lanterns	sunglasses
batteries	DVD players
luggage - vinyl and leather	ball caps
sporting goods	sweat suits
pool supplies	sweatshirts
outdoor gear	office supplies
camping equipment	ipods
levis	books
aluminum foil	stereos
diapers	pc games
paper plates	razors

socks	portable telephones
hosiery	cookware
tee shirts	calculators
shirts	electronics
blouses	portable radios
dresses	hardware
DVD's	garden equipment
shoes	musical instruments
undergarments	CD's
sports collectibles	CD players
cartoon collectibles	VCR's
ties	VCR equipment
lamps	scissors
light fixtures	picture frames
handkerchiefs	paper clips
pens	water filters
pencils	eyewear
china/glassware	lunch boxes
bicycles	roller blades
Christmas decorations	ice skates
Easter decorations	roller-skates

Halloween decorations	skate boards
birthday party supplies	athletic shoes
promotional specialties	dress shoes
aerosol products	keychains
janitorial supplies	nail polish
towels	lipstick
bath supplies	mascara
cameras	hair brushes
camera equipment	combs
film	cologne
books	perfume
giftwrap	air fresheners
computers	eyewear cases
paint	videos
printers	soaps
cigarette lighters	computer software
cigar lighters	computer software
smokers supplies	cell phones
fax paper	towels
DVDs	DVD players
computer paper	vitamins
school supplies	DVD players

roller-skates	DVD's
picture frames	auto accessories
posters	paint supplies
electric pencil sharpeners	bookends
perfume	moisturizer
fax paper	lamps

### **So Where do I Find all this stuff to sell anyway?**

That's easy if you know where to look. We are now going to make it easier by giving you some actual sources for items that you can sell week after week in your new market business.

It is a no brainer that many people sell garage sale items at outdoor markets. There is a lot of money to be made doing this. If this is your cup of tea then you will want to go to garage sales early on a Saturday morning and buy items that are in good to excellent condition.

If you buy electronics be sure they work. Plug them in. Games should be in clean boxes that look presentable. Clothes should be in near new condition. Forget the prices that are marked. Make the seller an offer on a bunch of items at a fixed price to take them all. Mentally take at least 30% off the asking price to buy a lot. The seller may or may not work with you but don't get tempted to buy it at the asking price...remember you need to make a profit at tomorrow's sale. There are a lot of garage sales and many sellers are happy to sell quickly and close up shop.

Our number one choice for making the most amount of money on an ongoing basis is surplus merchandise that is available for liquidation. Whether you sell samples on occasion or buy surplus and then sell it directly to retail buyers at swap meets as opposed to selling it wholesale to a retailer, the big bucks are in surplus. Open your copy of [Surplus Secrets](#) or [download it now](#) a now and get started building your inventory for a successful swapmeet business, You have the power to explode your profits with this type of merchandise so get out your copy now.

**The very best source of merchandise for swap meets and flea markets is direct from the source surplus merchandise that is being liquidated; NOTHING is more profitable as a source.**

**Wholesale Sources-** There are wholesale sources of new merchandise in every city across the nation and worldwide. If there is a wholesale district in your city go there and see what's available. Some may require you to have a resale license to buy from them but you can easily get one at you local city hall.

### **Buy Online Direct from Wholesalers**

There are wholesalers online that specialize in supplying merchandise to marketers. Some of the better ones are below. You can see what is available, place and order which will be delivered directly to you in time for your next market outing. What could be easier than that,

[Wholesale Central](#)- Lists wholesale suppliers by category

[The Buyers Guide](#)- a lot of offers for general merchandise, electronics and other products from manufacturers, wholesalers, importers, exporters and others in this publication.

**Note-**There is an annual subscription fee to cover postage and handling and you must be a qualified wholesale buyer.

There is an old saying in the wholesale business that goes like this

***“Selling is easy, it's the buying that's the hard part.”***

The reasoning behind this sage bit of wisdom is simple. When you are buying merchandise for resale, whether it is \$1. Or \$100 or more, the lower the price you get it at the more profit you will make. And if you pay just a little too much, you may have to price yourself over what the market will pay for that item.

So BEWARE of many wholesalers... Few will tell you this but we spent years buying and selling merchandise. A few cents here and there can make the difference between a big pay day and a not so jubilant afternoon.

.The wholesalers that we have listed above have some great deals ...and some not so great deals... You need to be able to spot the money makers from the money breakers.

**Thrift Shops** are another source of market items. Be sure to go early on a Monday or Tuesday when the new shipments come in...and make negotiate on prices here as well. If you are buying a lot of items a thrift shop operator may be willing to give you a discount to make a big sale.

**Dollar Stores-** We have seen computer games in dollar types stores that end up at open air markets selling for 5 times the price that was paid at the dollar store. It's a matter of being able to find a desirable item that is not available everywhere. If you see something like this, buy as many as you can. You may make a small killing fast.

*A Proven Source to knock the competition out cold.*

### **The Wholesale District**

In most cities there is a wholesale district with warehouses full of merchandise where buyers and sellers meet and bargain on goods to be resold in retail shops, at fairs, auctions and catalogs.

If you live in a city that has such an area do yourself a favor and visit. Become familiar with what type of wholesalers are there. Introduce yourself and tell them that you are looking to buy quantities of quality products on a regular basis.

Reputable wholesalers will only sell to you if you have a resale or business license so make sure to have some business cards and a copy of your resale license with you.

The advantage to actually visiting a warehouse is that you can see merchandise that most wholesalers may not have. You might be able to strike a deal on an odd lot of coats, watches, toys or cookware at lower than wholesale just because the warehouse owner needs to make room for a new shipment.

And you'll save on freight if you can carry the goods away yourself. Keep in touch with the wholesalers on a regular basis for new and interesting finds.

### **Sourcing More Wholesale Merchandise for your business**

Here's some more source which we found in our files. I have not worked with any of them nor can I assure you that they are still selling the items listed.

The following sources of supply are good for purchasing the merchandise indicated within each listing. These are the items that have proved profitable over the years by successful flea market merchants. Write to them for full pricing details (addresses accurate at time of publication, but cannot be guaranteed). Now let me be very clear about something. I am not promoting 1 company over another or any at all.

Lakeside Imports, 6800 N.Campbell Ave, Chicago, IL 60645. Provides a large selection of merchandise available at up to 85% discount. Write for catalog.

Atlantic Imports, 743 Beaubien, Detroit, MI 48225. Fast-selling low price items are available at giant discounts. Write for wholesale catalog and prices.

Sheldon Cord Co., 2201 W. Devon Ave., Chicago, IL 60625. Giant selection of nearly anything you wish to sell - featuring closeout prices on stereos, jewelry, toys, gifts, gadgets, etc. Send \$1.00 for giant catalog.

Wallfrin La Cal Industries. 1535 Har Pl., Brooklyn, NY 11224. Offers catalog of auto accessories. 50% discount and more.

North American Auto Supply, Box 897, Aurora, IL 60507. Oil filters for all makes of car. Write for price lists.

Unique Products, 426 S. Clinton St., Chicago, IL 60607. Air fresheners, deodorizers and novelty items. Catalog available - discounts to 80% or more in volume.

Bar Zim Co., 930 Newark Ave., Jersey City, NJ 07306. Games and toys. Free details.

Flinson Co., 6014 Kentucky Ave., Raytown, MS 64133. Fast-selling household items ideal for flea markets. Write for catalog.

Salton Co., 519 E. 72nd St., New York, NY 10021.

Or, Gallant Co., 527 W. 7th St., Los Angeles, CA 90014. Catalog on gift appliances available.

Scan-Am Co. 23404 Harland, Canoga Park, CA 91304. Large selection of gift products available, the kind that sell at flea markets. Free price list.

Ward International, Box 3268, Granada Hills, CA 91344. Loads of specialty merchandise that sells good at flea markets. Free catalog.

Edwards Products, Box 63, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034. Good products, such as the "Hamburger Maker". Free catalog sheets.

Leather Co., Box 71, Nestor, CA 92053. All types of jackets, purses, wallets, etc. 75% discount and more Write for free catalog.

American Cartridge Recording, 24 W. Sheffield Ave., Englewood, NJ 07631. Offers stereo tapes - all brands. Free catalog.

Jakla Gems Co., 2849 Southport Ave., Chicago, IL 60657. Catalog of rings and other jewelry -discounts to 90% of retail prices.

Worthington Gem Co., Box 1324 New Brunswick, NJ 08903. Catalog or rings and stuff - discounts to 80%.

Federal Vending Co., Box 1713, Des Moines, IO 50306. Complete line of vending machines. Ideal side-line profits at flea markets. Write for details.

Stride Publications, 11 W. 42nd St., New York, NY 10036. Assorted titles of paperback books - Free catalog.

Nostrand Book Co., 276 Brighton Beach Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11235. Used and over-print paperback books.

Select Discount Books, 712 S. Missouri Ave., Clearwater, FL 33516. Surplus, overstocks, remainders, etc., paperback and hardcover books. Up to 85% discount.

**Miscellaneous Sources of Inventory...**Check the local factories in your area. Seconds are big sellers at flea markets. Check the classified ad sections of your newspaper for super sales, going-out-of-business offers and that sort of thing. In this fast-moving market local closeout sales may be your best supply source.

[Attend Wholesale Trade Shows](http://www.goodridgeguides.com/TradeShowListingsHomepb.html)- Another great way to meet wholesalers and see the products they have to offer is at wholesale trade shows such as those listed monthly at <http://www.goodridgeguides.com/TradeShowListingsHomepb.html>

You'll have a chance to shop the vendors and the products and negotiate a deal based on the products and quantity that you are looking for.

### **How to Choose Sure Fire Profit Pulling Merchandise**

#### **It Must Be a Great Deal**

A great deal is any item that you can buy and resell for a profit. NOTE: We did not say SHOULD BE ABLE to resell but ***CAN RESELL for a profit.***

So in selecting items for resale we must look at a number of variables. As follows

#### **Who is our market?**

If you are selling at an antique open air flea market in Amish Country, Pennsylvania, a collection of electric radios and bartenders guides would probably be a dud. But those same items might go like hotcakes in a college town.

#### **Is this type of product sold at the market that we are going to work?**

Once again we looking to determine what types of things our potential customers like to buy...if there are booths with electronics and we can get a great deal on radios we might have a winner.

**Antique markets** call for *collectible items*. Anything that a collector might like will do well.

**Swap Meets** are *general merchandise events* and depending upon your area of the country everything from snowboards to sunglasses to radios to soap to socks to software may do well

**Flea Markets** are frequented by *collectible fans* and we would recommend accessories such as sunglasses, lighters, knives, figurines, lapel buttons and pins

The idea here is to go to a market first and determine WHAT THESE CUSTOMERS WANT TO BUY! Then ***find a product to FILL THE NEEDS OF THAT MARKET*** . If you do you are on the right track to profits.

Last, but certainly not least, how about looking around the flea market itself? Lots of people clean out their garage and bring their "junk" to the flea market to sell. If you catch them at the right time, make an offer on their stuff. If you are going to be there each week, you can afford to take the chance, whereas they don't want to have to cart back the stuff that doesn't sell.

### **How to Find Local Swap Meets and Flea Markets Near You With Hungry Buyers**

Just go to: <http://goodridgeguides.com/contents> -Here you will find a state by state list with market listings by area. Some marketers make it a point increase their market reach by setting up shop at events beyond flea markets such as festivals and special events like the ones listed nationwide [at http://www.goodridgeguides.com/festivals.html](http://www.goodridgeguides.com/festivals.html)

### **Online these Markets are called Auctions ( Duh!)**

So.....Sell Online ALL week long !

When the market day has ended most sellers pack up and go home and wait for the net market day to make money again. Our philosophy is that we should and do make money all week long.

Let's take a look at how you can too.

***"A Winner is a winner is a day and night profit maker" Dr B***

Let's suppose that one of the items that you have decided to sell is watches. Always a popular item at swap meets if you can provide an attractive quality watch at a bargain you know you have a winner so let's sell some more and make even more money.

Another way to accomplish this is to set up a low cost or free website that lists your watches and any other items that you want to sell. You would then list some of your watches for auction at eBay and other auctions such as one of the most popular low cost sites

If you are serious about maximizing your profits all week long you can sign up for a FREE ecourse covering ebay by sending an email with Subscribe in the subject to [ebaybizinfo@aweber.com](mailto:ebaybizinfo@aweber.com)

Good Luck !

***Dr B***

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