

Title:

How to Start a Clothing Store

Word Count:

1056

Summary:

So you want to break out of the day to day grind and start a business of your own. Congratulations! You are taking the first step towards a better life. It's important to maintain financial stability as we all know, but those that can do so while doing something they love are particularly fortunate and that is a fortune that doesn't just come on a whim but is reached through perseverance and choice.

Keywords:

Hip Hop Clothing Wholesale Hip Hop clothing and other accessories

Article Body:

Knowing what you want is the first choice that leads to bigger and better things.

Many different options for opening a small business exist, and all of them have their pros and cons. Of concern here is the opening of a small clothing store or boutique. There are several concerns that must be addressed by someone wanting to open any kind of boutique, and a clothing store must face these same concerns and then others that are specific to clothing lines and merchandise selection. The questions that a new clothing store owner must answer include the following:

What kind of clothing will I carry?

What sizes and colors do I need to address?

Where will I purchase my merchandise from?

How will I display my merchandise?

How can I build my customer base and return business?

What kind of clothing will I carry?

Once you know that you want to open a clothing store you will need to define what type of clothing you want to carry and what audience you are wanting to appeal to. The requirements for a shop catering to the exercise clothing needs of women from the ages of 20 to 40 are going to be very different from the needs

of a outdoor apparel shop for men interesting in hunting and backpacking. In order to best meet the needs of your specific audience you will need to do some research for what clothing items appeals to those needs. We'll take the example of exercise clothing for women. The following clothing pieces, at minimum, would need to be included in the business plan:

- Sports bras
- Sports shirts
- Tank tops
- Sports shorts
- Sports pants
- Athletic shoes
- Headbands and wristbands

What sizes and colors do I need to address?

Having narrowed down the type of clothing you need you will then want to consider what kinds of styles, fabrics and colors that you wish to carry. Write all of these down in your business plan. At first you will want to keep this scope narrow as your finances will not be able to cover every color and style that is possible. Your lines will be able to expand as your shop grows in size and revenue. Most shops that do well can expect approximately a 15% increase per year for at least the first five years and that will open up many possibilities for expansion as you go. When making purchases many manufacturers will push for you to purchase at least four pieces per size and per color. Four pieces is fairly reasonable as long as you keep the number of colors and sizes in check. If you are pressured to purchase six do not do so as it will be far more merchandise than you can turn over swiftly.

As far as sizes are concerned most sizing for tops runs in Petite to Extra Large, and pants from size 0-14. If you need to acquire sizes that are outside of these typical ranges you will have to meet with manufacturers that specialize in over or undersized clothing. You should plan to bring in several sizes per cut or style of clothing.

Where will I purchase my merchandise from?

Before you begin purchasing merchandise you will want to acquire your small business license and wholesale license. These licenses will open the door to merchandisers that otherwise you would not be able to make purchases from. It is vital that your own purchasing be at the lowest rates possible so that the merchandise in your clothing store can be kept at a reasonable price for your customers. Too much mark up in order to make up for high purchasing prices will

keep clothing from selling and be detrimental to your business.

Much of your purchasing can be done from local sources if such exist. You will need to do some research of what exists in your area in order to know what your resources are. Get on the local manufacturer's mailing lists so you can know about new lines when they come out and be involved in sales and discounts.

At least quarterly you will want to make large shopping trips where you will purchase most of your inventory for a three month period. These trips will likely require going out of your home area and attending a show or a market in a major city. Such shows run at various times of the year and in a few places, such as Los Angeles, there are markets that are open for purchasing year round. Remember to budget the cost for getting to one of these events in your financial plan, and make the most of your trip. Take time to look at everything you can and to compare and contrast merchandise and pricing. Many sales representatives will try to get you to place orders on the spot. Stand firm and be the one driving the deals. Manufacturers want your business, but you decide what will be purchased and when you will purchase it.

How can I build my customer base and return business?

Building a customer base is one of the hardest thing that any clothing store or boutique faces, especially in the early days of the business. Be confident that you will succeed and make sure that you, and your employees, are friendly and knowledgeable. This will help to make your customers feel confident in their purchasing experience and in your store. When you first open throw a grand opening party and advertise with a small space in local papers and fliers. Have those that attend write their name and contact information on slips of paper for a raffle and use these to create a mailing list. Keep the mailing list active and invite any new customer to sign up with you. Those that have such lists find that about 20% of their mailing list generates nearly 80% of their business, impressive numbers and a good impetus to grow that list as much as possible. Most importantly remember that word of mouth is your strongest advertising. For every customer that has a good experience two or three more will be directed to your shop. On the other hand each customer that has a bad experience will drive away just as much business. The power to bring people in and to help your business expand is in your hands.

Good luck.