

THE RE STORE

Strategic Marketing
Analysis and
Planning of a local
Nonprofit
Organization



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INTRODUCTION



The RE Store, a branch of the Bellingham-based nonprofit RE Sources, plays a vital role in local sustainability by salvaging and reselling reclaimed building materials, furniture, and appliances. As a community-focused retail operation, the RE Store aims to **reduce waste and promote reuse, aligning closely with environmental and conservation values**. However, in recent years, the RE Store has faced challenges in expanding and diversifying its customer base, prompting the need for strategic re-evaluation. Understanding the RE Store's mission and current challenges requires examining its parent organization, RE Sources. RE Sources is a well-established nonprofit **committed to protecting the Salish Sea and its surrounding environment through legislative advocacy, education, volunteer efforts, and community action**. As someone who has lived in Bellingham for several years, I have come to value the interconnectedness of the natural landscape and community action, which is why the RE Store has become the focus of this project.

MISSION, VISION, AND GOALS



The RE Store website states: “We exist to divert as much reusable material as possible from the landfill and to build a culture of reuse in our community. RE Sources’ vision is to see people living satisfying lives in accord with the ecosystem we depend on, generation after generation. Each year, the RE Store saves the community over **\$1 million in building materials costs, diverts over 2 million pounds of quality building supplies from the landfill**, and provides more than 1,500 hours of accessible training opportunities.”



TARGET PUBLICS

Within the nonprofit marketing scope, there are several publics present. This includes the internal, input, partner, and consuming publics. Within the scope of the RE Store's specific needs, the consuming public will be the main focus of this project.

01

ECO-CONSCIOUS CONSUMERS

DIYers and sustainable shoppers who prefer secondhand items

02

CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONALS

Local contractors and builders, already an established consumer base

03

LOCAL ARTISTS AND MAKERS

Creatives, treasure hunters, looking for specific items of interest

04

RENTERS

Students and younger adults who rent and cannot afford expensive/new furniture or appliances

05

LOCAL BUSINESSES

Businesses and organizations that could form partnerships to increase awareness and community outreach

06

VOLUNTEERS AND EMPLOYEES

People looking to get involved through salvage teams or just helping around the store

OBJECTIVES AND PLAN

Reuse:

- Divert reusable building materials from landfill
- Salvage and renew furniture and materials
- Help decrease carbon footprint and provide affordable, high-quality materials for all income levels

Community:

- Breaking down barriers to affordable materials, opportunity, and access.
- Stand against racism and injustice
- Center BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and economically displaced people in every decision made

Resilience:

- Preserving history through reuse
- Affordability for all to repair/maintain homes
- Developed the Community Jobs Training Program to decrease barriers to meaningful employment

OFFER

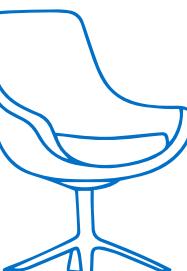
The RE Store offers the public a unique combination of affordable, reclaimed building materials, furniture, and home goods, paired with sustainability-driven services like salvage pickups, waste diversion partnerships, and community job training. Currently in the maturity phase of its organizational lifecycle, the RE Store benefits from strong local brand recognition and established community trust, but it also faces the challenges of market saturation and amid growing competition from online marketplaces and big-box retailers. As a result, its offer to the public must emphasize quality, convenience, and impact. Enhancing digital presence, deepening community partnerships, and highlighting the store's social and environmental contributions are key to refreshing its offer and sustaining relevance in a crowded, value-driven marketplace.



MARKETING MIX

Product

- **Salvage Services:** a free/low-cost pickup service for used building materials, fixtures, and furniture
- **Manufacturing Waste Diversion:** helps local manufacturers responsibly divert usable offcuts and overstock
- **Community Jobs Training:** workforce development through hands-on, paid training breaks employment barriers



Place

- **Storefront in Bellingham:** space for shoppers to browse & learn
- **On-Site Salvage:** Mobile teams travel to homes, businesses, and construction sites
- **Community Partnerships:** collaborations with manufacturers and job placement services



Price

- **Retail Pricing:** salvaged goods priced below market value
- **Donor Incentives:** donors to salvage services and manufacturers receive free pickups and tax deductions
- **Training Program:** Trainees compensated for labor ensuring there is no exploitation



Promotion

- **Workshops & Demos:** events highlight material reuse, upcycling, and green building techniques
- **Digital Newsletters:** showcase success stories from trainees, projects, and unique materials.
- **Partnership Campaigns:** marketing with manufacturers & employers



MARKET SEGMENTATION

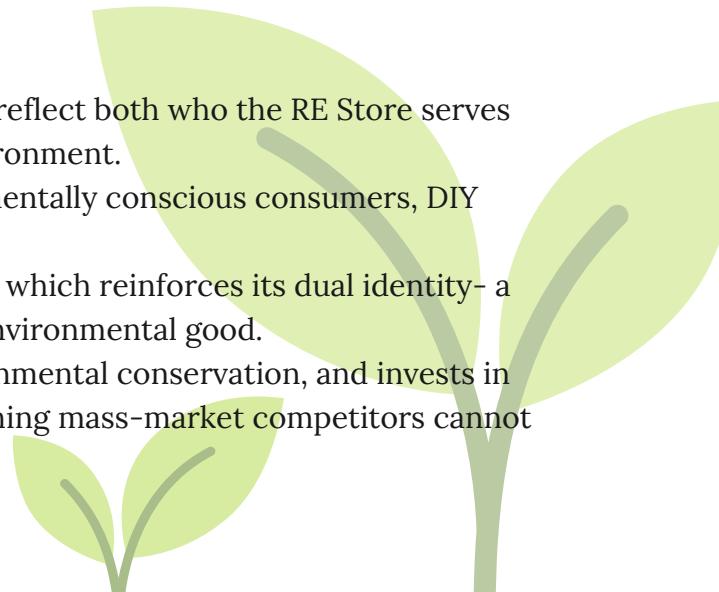
Segment	Enabling Characteristics	Distinguishing Characteristics
Eco-conscious Consumers	All ages, local residents	Value reuse, prefer secondhand
Construction Professionals	Prioritizes lower costs, big networks	Large quantities of standard stock
Local Artists	Often younger, creative fields	Inspiration in raw/used materials
Renters	Urban, budget constraints	Need affordable home furnishings

POSITIONING

Statement: The RE Store is a nonprofit retail outlet offering affordable, high-quality salvaged materials and job training programs, appealing to environmentally conscious consumers, DIY builders, and local contractors. Unlike big-box stores, it combines low-cost goods with lasting community and environmental impact.

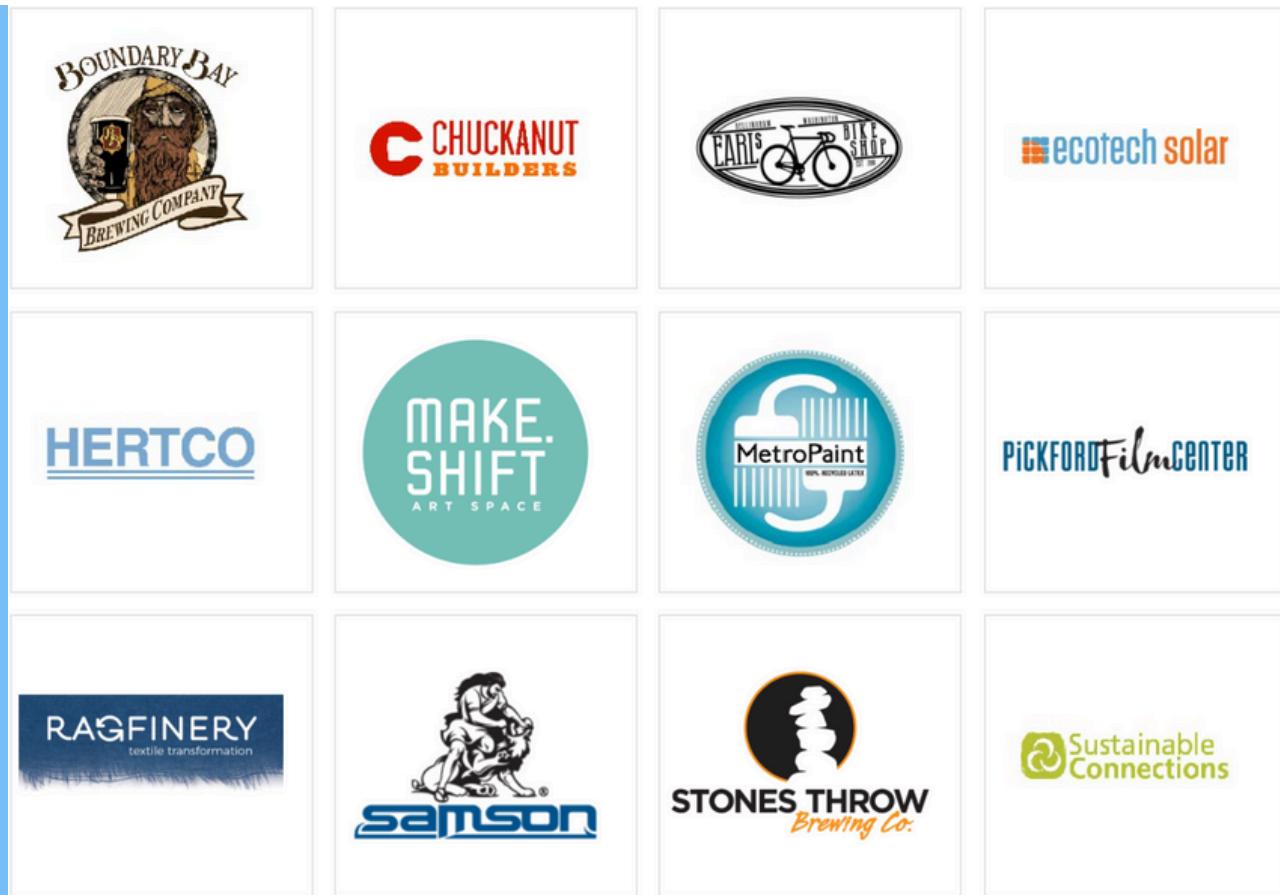
Rationale: This positioning statement is designed to reflect both who the RE Store serves and what differentiates it in a competitive retail environment.

- Highlights three core customer groups, environmentally conscious consumers, DIY builders, and local contractors.
- Identifies the RE Store as a nonprofit retail outlet which reinforces its dual identity- a place to shop and a place to support social and environmental good.
- Offers affordable products, contributes to environmental conservation, and invests in the community- this multifaceted value is something mass-market competitors cannot replicate.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Partnerships with local businesses and organizations helps the RE Store to fulfill its goal of building community and supporting others through sustainable practices. These are just a few of the many community partnerships that the RE Store maintains:



VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

The RE Store's volunteer program is essential to store efficiency and community connection, with opportunities for volunteers to take leadership roles, flex their communication skills, organize merchandise, and more. Within the scope of volunteering, the RE Store categorizes volunteers into three types:

1. **General volunteers** (long-term volunteers who visit regularly to help with various tasks)
2. **Group Volunteers** (groups of people representing any type of organization who come as a whole to complete whole projects)
3. **Special Event** (volunteers who assist with special events)

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Internal
- Strong fixer-upper/sustainability community identity
- Unique product offerings
- Environmental mission and variety of offerings

WEAKNESSES

- Internal
- Limited brand recognition outside Bellingham/outside existing customer base
- Limited online presence (website, social media)
- Small marketing budget

OPPORTUNITIES

- External
- Expand market to students/renters/younger audience
- Website/social media improvement
- More community partnerships

THREATS

- External
- Online marketplaces (Facebook, Craig's List)
- Fluctuating supply of salvaged materials
- Competing thrift/low cost stores

**SW
O T**

Based on this SWOT analysis, the RE Store's business model demonstrates strong long-term sustainability due to its alignment with rising environmental awareness, community support, and mission-driven operations. Its strengths- such as unique products, a loyal customer base, and integration with RE Sources' environmental mission- position it well in a value-driven market, with opportunities that would further this sustainable advantage. However, its limited digital presence combined with the rise of online marketplaces poses a threat to the RE Store's longevity.

MANAGERIAL ANALYSIS

Organizational Structure of the RE Store

- **Executive Directors:** Jay Kosa, Janet Marino, and Ander Russell
- **Board of Directors:** Ted Wolf, Erica Littlewood, and Alison Merz
- **Program Coordinator:** Zoe Fry
- **Communications Manager:** Simon Bakke
- **Development Director:** Callie Hamilton
- **Program & RE Store Staff:** Mike, Dani, Tyler, Jason, Aaron, Brooke, Ryann
- **Salvage Services Crew:** Nate, Blake, Kodie, Trent



Strengths:

The RE Store's integration with RE Sources ensures the store's activities stay tied to environmental justice and community impact, giving it nonprofit credibility. Alongside this, the job training program builds internal leadership capacity and reflects positively on the store's management ethos. Although RE Sources and the RE Store are separate entities, communication between them ensures that the programs don't operate in silos.

Challenges:

Although I have not experienced first-hand how the RE Store's management team functions, there are potential challenges with this layout. Like in any business, resource allocation can become a concern when trying to minimize risk of bottlenecks, which highlights the importance of clear, easy communication about decisions between levels of an organization.

Recommendation:

During my interview with co-directors Jay and Janet, one recommendation that we discussed was the implementation of performance metrics (KPIs) or feedback surveys within the RE Store team and customers in order to better grasp organizational perception.

ENVIRONMENT ANALYSIS

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

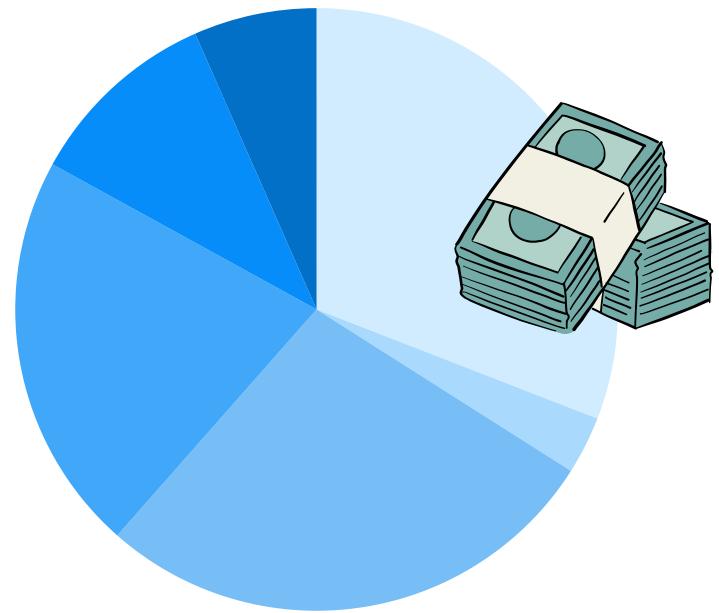
The RE Store operates like a circular ecosystem, where the money that is earned goes directly back into the organization itself. The 2024 RE Sources financial analysis reported \$2.40M in expenses with only \$2.49M in revenue, with the reinvestment margin being smaller than anticipated.

Due to the shifting political climate, government funding in 2025 is expected to be cut by a considerable amount, meaning the RE Store is more reliant on individual donors and grassroots organizations for funding. Out of the \$2.40M in expenses for RE Sources, the RE Store makes up 47% of that budget, meaning more strain on the entire NPO if margins continue to shrink.

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS & ADVANTAGE

Political: Federal cuts, state support
Economic: Rising cost of living, thrifty is in
Sociocultural: Interest in sustainability
Tech: Minimal online presence is drawback
Environmental: Climate crisis/awareness
Legal: Building codes limit salvaged items

- REVENUE**
- RE Store Retail Sales (30.9%)
 - RE Store Salvage Services (3.1%)
 - Foundation/Trust Grants (27.5%)
 - Individual Donations (21.5%)
 - Government Grants/Contracts (10.4%)
 - Other Income (6.6%)



Direct Competitors: Habitat for Humanity, Goodwill, Craigslist, Facebook Marketplace

Indirect Competitors: Home Depot, Lowe's, Amazon

RE Store's Edge: Localism, environmental advocacy, creative inspiration, job training

PROBLEM DEFINITION

During my interview with RE Store staff Janet Marino and Jay Kosa, we discussed some of the problems that the organization is facing. The RE Store relies on the local community for donations, purchases, and word-of-mouth marketing, but this current model is proving to be unsustainable for its long-term goals as an organization. Based on our discussion and further analysis, the RE Store is maintaining a stagnant customer pool while actively trying to reach new markets- which means that innovation is needed within marketing and outreach efforts.

STRATEGIC ALTERNATIVES



Here are a few strategies that the RE Store could implement into their NPO model to aid the increase of community awareness and the expansion into new markets.

- Improve UI/UX of existing website, as well as updating it with **more interactive features and new stories** and information to boost visitor interest and engagement
- Launch a variety of **content campaigns across social media**, for example, a “Before and After” with real customers revealing how they integrate RE Store items into their homes
- Expand partnerships into more local businesses such as AB Crepes, Wonderz Art Market, and other **popular places that college students frequent** in order to build brand recognition