



by Jay Goltz

Goltz On Business

Are You A Uni-Framer?

Are you a Uni-Framer? Holed up in your frame shop plotting your next move? Or, are you holed up in your frame shop *not* plotting your next move?

Being in business for yourself, whether you operate a bike shop, a frame shop or a butcher shop, can be a very lonely existence. Unlike other professions such as accounting, law, advertising or insurance, you are not in an office complex surrounded with people doing similar things as you are. You most likely do not have that physical proximity where you can compare notes, brainstorm ideas, give and receive moral support, as well as get a sense from others of what's going on in the market. There are, however, many different ways that someone in the framing industry can be in touch with other like-minded people and benefit from the resources they have to offer.

For one, there are franchises and large corporations. If you work for a chain of stores, you benefit from the organizational structure and resources of that company. There are many other managers, a marketing department, and other

specialists within the company that can help you do your job. If you are a franchise shop, part of what they offer is marketing support and other support services to help you run your business.

There are trade organizations. Our trade association, the PPFA, offers numerous benefits

to people that want to take advantage of them. They include offering and maintaining the CPF (certified picture framer) exam and certification, local chapter development and support, local and national competitions, workman's comp insurance, and an Internet discussion forum, just to name some of the major benefits.

There are also trade shows with educational seminars. I just returned from the West Coast Art & Frame Show and National Conference. For those of you that were there, you know that it was four days of interaction,

educational seminars, and last but not least, buying opportunities. In what has become the custom, there was a breakfast panel discussion on the picture framing industry. As usual, the questions from the audience were as interesting and provocative as the rest of the discussion. I

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can't tell you how many people I talked to that left with a newfound invigoration for their business.

And, there is "The Grumble." This is an Internet discussion forum where thousands of people in the art and framing industry, ranging from Uni-Framers to the most experienced and talented framing business owners across the globe can discuss framing techniques, products, marketing ideas, business issues, and, even, the proper consistency of wheat paste.

There is also FramersSelect (in the interest of full disclosure, I started this member network three years ago). FramersSelect offers independent frame shop owners the ability to network with a group of their peers through member workshops, meetings and a discussion board. In addition,

FramersSelect has a national directory of members on-line, and offers marketing tools and support for their business

The point is that there are some huge benefits to working with other people in the industry; either for the greater good or as a way to differentiate yourself from local competitors. Whether it's positioning yourself as part of a larger group, gaining expertise from education or getting tips from fellow framers, it makes sense to get out there and find out what else is happening in the world—especially the framing world.

The custom picture framing business has become much more complicated over the last several years. Different kinds of competition, a changing supplier network, new equipment, and the Internet

have changed the way business is done from both the customer's perspective, as well as ours. Whether you get involved in the PPFA, join FramersSelect, go to the next trade show, take some classes, or meet with some fellow framers, it is hard to imagine that you won't get something out of it and that some aspect of your business won't benefit greatly.

You are not alone! ■

Jay Goltz, Business Editor, started Artists' Frame Service in 1978 fresh out of college. AFS employs over 80 people at its main framing operation in Chicago, IL. Goltz is also the founder of FramersSelect. He has received numerous business honors and is best known for his straight talk on how to succeed in business. He has taught at the National Conference.