

# Imaginary Roadblocks

By Jay Goltz

What an interesting industry. It's a business, you know — the art of framing. Just like photography, poetry, painting, acting, baseball. They are all professions that are driven by passion, but they all have that business side: making money.

Over the years, I have heard numerous reasons why people in the picture framing industry feel they can't make money. They are usually balderdash (look it up, folks, this is a family rated column.) Here are the five most common:

**1. "I'M A PURIST . I'M NOT IN IT FOR THE MONEY ."**

I don't know what this means. Does that mean that those of us who use non-museum materials on a \$3.00 poster are impure? My mother would argue. I think purist is a word that should be used for one's own personal beliefs, not one's business. When you're in business, you have an added element: the customer.

When a purist tries to project their personal beliefs on someone else, they have crossed over the line to being self-righteous — unless the customer walked through the door knowing what to expect. I pity the unsuspecting customer who comes into what he thought was a frame shop, but instead finds himself in a museum. A lot of customers don't need or want to pay for museum quality framing. As a result, they go somewhere else.

**2. "OH, MAYBE YOU CAN MAKE MONEY IN CHICAGO , NEW YORK , LOS ANGELES ... BUT IN MY TOWN , THERE 'S TOO MUCH COMPETITION ."**

Good quality, good service, and good selection are universal. There's no question that

there are some cities that have a hard time supporting all of their frame shops. But their laws of competition dictate that someone has to be on top. Why can't it be you?

**3. "I CAN'T COMPETE WITH THE BIG GUYS!"**

The big guys are usually the easiest to compete with. Granted, they may have more buying power, but the picture framing world revolves around service, creativity, and quality. These are three things that big stores are not good at. Nothing compares to the watchful eye and personal attention of the store owner.

At the very least, the store owner should be able to make a decent living at what he is doing.

**4. THE "I CAN'T AFFORD ..." SYNDROME**

"I can't afford advertising." But can you afford not having customers come through your door? "I can't afford new equipment." But can you afford to re-cut mats, have broken glass or badly joined frame because of outdated or old equipment? "I can't afford to pay my employees more." But can you afford to have a regular turnover of employees, the problems that go with it, and losing the customer who goes somewhere else because their favorite framer has left you to take a better paying job with the competition? "I can't afford a better location." But can you afford to have customers coming in after you've been open for five or ten years, asking "When did you guys open?"

Sometimes you need to spend money to earn money.

**5. "I DON'T WANT TO WORK THAT HARD ."**

God bless America! I accept that. At least



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# goltz on business

this one makes sense to me. Maybe you are lucky enough to have someone supporting you, you're independently wealthy, or have some other source of income. Great! But I must say, I'm surprised that someone loves framing so much that they do it for next to nothing in return.

Just because you love what you do doesn't mean you're not in it for the money. And just because you are in it for the money doesn't mean you don't love what you do. They are not mutually exclusive.

I think there is great nobility in people who work in social services: while making little money, choosing to help others. But I don't view picture framing as a social service. Maybe some do.

Make a decision! ■

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*Jay Goltz started Artists' Frame Service in 1978 fresh out of college. Artists' Frame Service now employs 120 persons at its main location, a 35,000 square-foot showroom and production facility in Chicago. Goltz has received numerous business honors including induction into the Arthur Andersen and University of Illinois Entrepreneurship Hall of Fame (1992). He regularly speaks at business conferences on topics ranging from entrepreneurship to customer service. Goltz is best-known for his straight-talk on how to succeed in business.*

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