



Employees at Store 701

Retailer of the Year
2010
TRADER'S FORUM
 trade shows • magazines • interactive media

★ **DOREEN SAMWAYS** ★
 ★ Bay Roberts Store ★



Books & Educational Items



Doreen Samways at Bay Roberts Store



Christmas Items



**On behalf of all exhibitors,
 Trader's Forum would like
 to congratulate Doreen
 Samways on being selected
 2010's Retailer of the Year!**



Kitchen & Everyday Items



Toys & Novelties



Doreen operates 5 Great Canadian Stores in Newfoundland which specialize in goods from \$3- \$20 retail.

In helping her run a successful business for over 10 years, Doreen attributes her accomplishments to hard work, perseverance and her team who administer the stores. "Thank you to the suppliers who bring in the new products and my customers who see value in them."-Doreen Samways.

Doreen was kind enough to take time away from her busy schedule and answer our questions.

Doreen, give us a little background about you. How and when did you first start out in the dollar/discount business?

My background has been in retail for as long as I can remember! I worked for 24yrs with a privately owned department store here in Bay Roberts, NL. I guess you could call me somewhat of a workaholic. Then 10yrs ago, I got a call from Donald & Jacqueline Spencer, who by the way are the owners of our five Great Canadian Dollar Stores. They were interested in opening dollar stores and asked me to come on board and as they say the rest is history!!

What do you consider to be your best selling categories?

I would have to say that our best selling category is seasonal. Christmas being #1 in all stores. Each year you wonder how you can do better. Everyday, all year long, housewares would have to be #1. We have 14 departments and we get reports each month. We study this and ask ourselves why or why not we are not as good as the last month or year and try to make the necessary changes. Its amazing how each one of our stores seem to perform in certain departments!

How do you prepare for a trade show?

Preparing for a trade show depends on why you are attending. The January show we look for new items to book. We get inventories on existing suppliers and make our plan on which ones we shall visit and look at any issues we have with each. We talk with our store managers to find out what they may need and about any new products our customers may be looking for. Being aware of potential trends is also important. How can we provide our customers with a range of products that is interesting and special?

"Our policy is to never say no to a customer"

How many stores do you currently have? What played a role in the location of the stores?

We currently have five stores across the Island and each has something unique to offer! Our locations are: Bay Roberts, Goulds, Gander, Bonavista and Deer Lake. Location was always a big issue for us. I guess the first thing Donald looked at was opportunity in that given area. What other retail outlets were existing and of course the population of each trading area.

What do you look for in items when buying them? Do you have any rules when buying an item?

Our rule for buying an item would have to be the cost versus retail factor. That determines how many we buy and what value we can pass on to our customers. Also, how it merchandises is a factor. What will it do for our store and will it make people talk.

How are merchandising decisions made in your store about selling certain items?

Merchandising decisions are made when buying new merchandise and talked about almost everyday with our fantastic store managers and merchandisers. We are a team and our great staff are full of good ideas and suggestions. Competitive shopping is a must. We ask all our employees to be aware of other stores and their prices. Are we reasonable? Do we have something unique to offer?

What do you think differentiates your store from any other dollar/discount stores in your area?

I think what differentiates our store from the rest is our exceptional customer service. I think our staff is second to none. We stress to our staff the importance of making our customers' shopping experience one which they themselves would like to have. Our policy is to never say no to our customers and we provide them with baskets and

shopping carts to make it as easy as possible.

What are your future plans/ goals? Do you plan to open new stores?

Our future plans are not to necessarily open new locations but to grow our existing ones. We always look for ways to improve our stores and we are in the process of doing just that. Donald has plans to relocate and renovate some of our stores at the moment and that should prove to make it much more comfortable for our customers.

Can you share some tips on buying and/ or running a successful store?

Running a successful store comes with an undeniable love of retail! You have to be as hands-on as possible and know what your customers needs are. Each store is different and you must instill in your staff why we want our customers to come back again and again because they can go anywhere and spend their money. Remembering that if one of our customers has a bad experience, then they tell 10 others and bad news always seems to travel faster than good. We try to bend over backwards to please our customers and I think we do a good job of that.

We also look at what we can do differently to improve as much as possible. As I said we are as hands-on as we can be. We

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look at our store each day and ask ourselves that on the end of each day, week, month, how is each section doing? Moving one section to another may mean the difference of turning your merchandise from 2 turns to 10 turns.

It's been 10yrs now and our customers love to shop with us because of our merchandise selection and of course our staff who are easily identifiable with a dress code. Our philosophy is to treat our customers with the utmost respect and make sure that they have a great shopping experience and always keep them wondering what's in store for them!!