A Guide to Opening a Scrapooking Store

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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Abstract
This paper is a result of my experiences in the past several years from working in a local scrapbooking store. My summer job taught me to love the hobby of scrapbooking and sparked an interest of what it would be like to open my own store someday. The purpose of this project is to provide a brief overview of some of the essential steps that are involved when opening your own scrapbooking store. Most of the information used was knowledge that I learned while on the job; the rest was from reading and research that I did, primarily from scrapbooking or craft retailer magazines.

Acknowledgements
I would like to thank Dr. Mark Myring for advising me throughout my project.
Introduction

In the busyness of life, everyone needs a chance to take a break and relax. We get so wrapped up in our lives and lists of things to do that sometimes we completely forget to enjoy ourselves. Some choose watching a movie, running, shopping, playing basketball, or simply drinking a cup of coffee and enjoying the sunrise in order to escape for a few moments. For me, the choice is scrapbooking. I absolutely love doing it. It is my hobby, my passion, and my escape from my stressful life. I take pleasure in every part of it, shopping for supplies, creating layouts, and proudly showing off my completed project. Everyone who has ever attempted scrapbooking, knows that it can become very addictive. Once you start, you just can’t get enough! There are always new techniques to try, new products to buy, and of course, new pictures to scrapbook. It is a way of preserving memories forever, and having fun in the process.

The only problem with scrapbooking is that there is simply not enough time to get it all done. I have learned that no matter how much time I set aside, it will take me an endless amount of time to get caught up to the current year of memories. Meanwhile, the pile of pictures keeps growing, right along with the stash of supplies. I started thinking about the lack of time that I had to devote to this hobby. It then occurred to me, why could I not turn this into my career? I could open my own scrapbooking store. This would not mean that I would have more time to actually do the scrapbooking myself, but I could be involved in the hobby in a different manner every single day. This would not be just another nine to five job, during which I would count down the minutes remaining in the workday, come home to complain about my day at work, get up in the morning and
do it all again, simply to pay the bills. Instead, I would be surrounded by something I love and get to spread my passion for scrapbooking.

This idea inspired me to complete my Honors Thesis Project on how to open my own scrapbooking store. If I ever decide in the future to actually pursue this dream, the work that I have done on this project will give me a jump-start in the process. It is impossible to cover every aspect involved in opening a store. For the purpose of this project, I will formulate a plan that lays out the basic ideas of opening a small scrapbooking store. This will be a useful tool for those who may be interested in opening their own scrapbooking store. Some of these ideas may even be helpful to others interested in opening a small retail store that may be focused on a different industry.

**Choosing a Location**

The first step is choosing a location. While considering the location, we must also consider the size of our desired space. The store is obviously not going to be a complete success immediately. There will be some start-up time involved while people are finding out about the new store and are slowing becoming regular customers. For this reason, it might be safer to start small. While this might be wise financially, it has some negative aspects. When we want to expand, we will have to search for a new space and move our entire operation. This is a lot of work; especially because scrapbooking involves so many tiny embellishments, there would be a million things to move. To avoid this, it is better to seek a space that would allow for growth. Choosing a larger space may also provide an area to hold crops, times where groups of people can bring their supplies and
scrapbook in the actual store. As we continue to expand, part of this cropping section can be transformed into product area.

Once we have considered the size of the desired space, we can begin the search for a location. In order for the store to survive, it needs to be located in a well-populated area where it can draw in a large group of customers. Because of the nature of scrapbooking, a store cannot make it on just a few key customers. The items for sale are not high priced items, such as jewelry, for which the markup is enough that if a few are sold a day, the store can continue to run. Our situation is the opposite; selling a few stickers each day will not keep us in business. Instead, we can only make it in the retail industry if we attract a lot of customers. As a result, a small town or rural area is out of the picture. A visible storefront in a busy area of town is just the kind of location that we will need. Many of our customers will just be passing by when they spot us, get a peak of curiosity, and enter the store to take a look around, giving us the opportunity to share our passion and get them hooked on scrapbooking.

An article in *CNA Scrapbook Insider* entitled “Location, Location, Location” provided several good suggestions about choosing the home of our new scrapbooking store. Safety should be key consideration. If we plan to be open in the evenings or hold night crops, it is important that we are located in an area in which customers will feel safe. A good resource is the town’s police department. It can offer information regarding the area crime, problems with burglary, shoplifting, and vandalism.
Store Appearance

Now that we have a location chosen, we can move on to the inside of the store. To set our store apart from others, it is necessary to give customers a unique experience each time that they shop. This is crucial in setting our store apart from the big retailers, such as Jo-Ann Fabrics, Michael’s, and Hobby Lobby. It is nearly impossible to beat their prices, so we must compete in another way, a memorable shopping experience. One way to accomplish this is through selecting a theme for the store. Do we want it to be serious or fun, crazy or calm? For our store, we are choosing fun and a little on the crazy side. According to the article “How to Boost Sales with Color” in *Scrapbook Retailer* magazine, “funky color combinations, such as yellow and purple, convey a daring, ‘out there’ feeling that promises something unique.” This is the kind of store that we would like to have. A lime green and purple color scheme will give us the fun, funky, and whimsical atmosphere that will make an impression on customers. The word whimsical means imaginative and impulsive; this is what we want our customers to be when they are in the store.

Store Layout

There are several features that are important to incorporate into the store layout. Many of our shoppers will have young children, and as much as I love children, they can be disastrous and cause damage in our store. With so many brightly colored things that intrigue the eyes and tempt the hands of children, it is difficult to keep them from grabbing products and wrinkling papers in their small hands. As a solution, we will have a designated children’s area that is filled with fun toys that are designed to keep children
occupied while their mothers shop. This area should be up front, near the entrance to the
store, so that children will immediately be attracted to it as soon as they enter the store.
This location will also allow sales associates at the register to keep an eye on the
children. While it is not a sales associate’s job to be the babysitter of shoppers’ children,
it may not be a good idea to leave them completely unsupervised. The location near the
cash register will be allow the sales associate to monitor the children without being
directly involved in their supervision.

Scrapbookers obviously enjoy spending time in their hobby. A crop area in the
store gives them this opportunity and adds a benefit for the storeowner too. Having
people right in your store while working on their albums will enable them to have all of
the supplies that they could possibly need, right at their fingertips. This is a wonderful
opportunity for you because you can observe their projects and suggest related products
that they can buy on the spot. This makes a crop area an essential. Large tables are
needed for scrapbookers to have plenty of space to spread out all of their materials.
Trashcans are also a must for this area, as cropping accumulates lots of scraps. Several	

After designating a children’s area and a cropping area, the remainder of the floor
space can be used to display products. There are two main ways to arrange product,
either by designer or by theme. We may have a combination of the two; however, our
focus will be on designer. This prevents a customer from coming in the store and
heading to one area to find the theme that he or she may be looking for, and ignoring the
rest of the products. A customer may be looking for wedding products. If all of the
wedding related products are in one area, the customer will not venture to other parts of
the store where he or she may have discovered a great new product to potentially
purchase. Arranging the product according to the designer will send the customer all
over the store searching for the desired theme, and along the way, be exposed to different
products that would have might have been overlooked.

Selecting a Target Market

Now that our store is setup, we need to establish a target market. Who do we
want as our customers? Who are our most likely customers? How can we design our
store to serve the needs of our customers? These questions all need to be answered when
selecting a target market. First and foremost, we want customers who are willing to
spend money. We need customers with a disposable income that will allow them to
invest their money in supplies to pursue their hobby. Moving on to the less obvious, we
need to determine who will be our most likely customers.

Our potential customers can immediately be narrowed down to half of the
population: women. While men occasionally venture into the world of scrapbooking,
they are not a common occurrence. Most of the time when men are seen in the store, they
either have a list in hand of items to buy for their wives or are searching for a gift for the
scrapbook-loving women in their lives.

After narrowing the customer base to women, the first group of women that
comes to mind is stay-at home mothers. Research done by CNA Scrapbook Insider for the
article “Scraper Stats: A Profile of the Avid Scrapbooker” reveals that “Contrary to the
opinion of many marketers, devoted scrapbookers are not all middle-income stay-at-home moms. They are female, but 90% of them hold professional or executive positions. Their ages range from early 30s through early 50s. Income for this group puts them in upper-middle to upper-class status.” Although a portion of our customers might be stay-at-home moms, the research indicates that this group is not the majority of our customers. To serve the working women, we might extend our store ours so that they are able to shop in the evening after work. It may also be beneficial to extend weekend hours to accommodate those who are too busy during the week to make time for running errands and for spending time scrapbooking.

Marketing Strategies

*Scrapbook Retailer* describes the “Five P’s of Marketing” in its article, “SRx: A Dose of Advice for the Scrapbook Storeowner.” These five P’s include: product, price, placement, promotion, and people.

**Product**

Earlier, we discussed the need to retain an edge on the competition of the bigger names in the craft industry. To compete with these names, we need to be unique, not only in appearance, but in products that we offer as well. If our store were only to offer the common products that are sold by Hobby Lobby and other chain stores, we would quickly lose out because customers could get the same product for a lower price by shopping there. It should be our goal to offer customers unique products that they may not be able to find elsewhere. It is also important to keep up to date with all of the new
scrapbooking trends and techniques and to offer the products that are advertised in popular scrapbooking magazines.

Price

The second “P” is price. Again, we have to come to terms with the fact that we will not be able to compete with retail chains in terms of price. The normal practice is to markup product to retail for twice the wholesale cost. To keep our prices low, we must also work to keep our costs low. It is usually beneficial to order in larger quantities to lower shipping costs. Selecting vendors that offer loyalty plans as well as discounts for paying within a specified number of days will be helpful in keeping costs low.

Placement

Placement is the next key to marketing. Think of a store that you frequent. Do you have a specific path that you follow upon entering the store? Most people do. Once they are through the door, most customers turn to the right and immediately begin the same path through the store. This causes them to miss seeing products that may not be on their route through the store. A solution to this is to constantly move things around. This does not mean that you have to rearrange the entire store every week, but you can do little things on a regular basis that will help. Rotate papers on the rack so that new papers are displayed in the upper portion of the rack. Move store displays around that will force customers to change their route through the store. They will discover things that they think are new, but in fact have been there for months, but were never passed during their routine walk in the store. Make certain that the store is easy to navigate. According to the article, “Customer comfort is related to the time a customer spends shopping in your store, which will likely equate to the amount of money a customer spends in your store.”
**Promotion**

Most people equate promotion with marketing. Although not the only aspect to marketing, it is a major one. In order to sell our products, we must promote them. While some scrapbookers are amazingly artsy people who need no guidance, many need a little help on the creativity side. Creating sample layouts for the store shows customers how different products can be used. These layouts can easily be copied by the customers, encouraging them to buy the products.

Demonstrations are also a helpful promotion. It is difficult for the average scrapbooker to stay up-to-date on all of the latest techniques and tools. Providing demonstrations on demand or scheduling them for certain days of the week gives customers the opportunity to learn new things and again, encourages them to buy the product. It may be beneficial to determine your busiest day of the week. It is most likely on Saturday when people are out running errands. This may be a good time to hold scheduled demonstrations. Designate a time each Saturday when a sales associate will be performing demonstrations in a specified area of the store. Make it a welcoming atmosphere where customers would feel comfortable pulling up a chair and observing for a few minutes. This will create a fun environment in your store on Saturdays, and will attract more business, as customers will become regulars on the weekends in order to catch your free demonstration each week.

**People**

If there is one key to the success of your scrapbooking store, it is without a doubt the people working there. The article on the “Five P’s of Marketing” says “your staff represents you to your customers.” If this is true, you want to choose wisely when
selecting your sales associates, because they will be a direct reflection of you and you want to ensure that you make a good impression on your customers. This idea will be discussed further in the next section.

**Employees**

As mentioned above, your employees are your means of making an impression. You only have one chance at a first impression, which should not be ruined by hiring the wrong person.

**Hiring and Interviewing**

Make every effort to hire good employees. Do not be afraid to contact past employers to gather more information about the potential employee. This person may be able to provide you with additional insight on the person that could not be obtained through an application or an interview. The employer can tell you about the person’s attitude, work ethic, and commitment. These are all key characteristics to consider when hiring. In the retail industry, your employees need to have an outgoing personality and be able to interact with the customers. A shy person may be overwhelmed in this job as he or she is faced with initiating a conversation with each customer that walks through the door. Outgoing and bubbly employees attract customers and put them at ease. As a result, they feel comfortable talking to the sales associate and are not too intimidated to ask for help. Your sales associate should be caring people who follow the Golden Rule, treating others as they would like to be treated.
Customer Service

You want the kind of sales associates who will treat your customers with respect. “Loyal customers are one of your most important assets,” says Jeff Hein in the article “Their Money Matters” in Scrapbook Retailer magazine. It is much more expensive to find a new customer than to retain an old one. Customers who feel respected and appreciated will more than likely return. They will also pass the word along to their friends, bringing you new business. If you do not treat your customers well, they will not return and as stated by Jeff Hein, “no customers means no revenue.”

Get to know your customers. Talk to them when they shop your store. The typical scrapbooker loves to share her current project. When prompted, the customer will more than likely be excited to talk to a sales associate about her latest scrapbooking venture. It is flattering to customers when you remember their name and greet them by it, also remembering their project, or previous requests. Show them new products that you think might interest them. All of these things will make an impression on the customer and build loyalty.

The article, “25 Ways to Shine at Customer Service” from Scrapbook Retailer magazine offers a few more suggestions to improve customer service. It is important to wear a company uniform and a nametag. This way, customers can easily pick out an employee who is wearing your store t-shirt or an apron. A nametag helps the customer to identify the sales associate, making it easier to ask him or her questions. Offer the customer assistance and tell them positive things rather than negative. For example, “I’m sorry, our store policy does not allow children under the age of 10 near our die-cutting center, but I would be happy to cut out the 25 flowers you need while you shop.”
Sales associates should go out of their way to help the customers. If a customer is looking at a product that may require additional knowledge, offer to demonstrate it. When a customer sees or is able to get some hands-on time with a product, he or she is much more likely to make the purchase. Many products, such as cutting tools, come with instructions that appear to be easy to understand. However, when customers get them home and attempt to use them, they may experience frustration when they cannot get the product to work correctly. When you hear of such complaints, suggest that the customer bring in the product and offer to teach him or her how to use it properly. The customers will appreciate this gesture and will feel more comfortable venturing out and trying a new tool or technique if they know that they have your support and willingness to instruct if necessary.

**Suggestion Sales**

Make a note of what your customers are buying and suggest related products to them based on the items already in their basket. This idea is referred to as a suggestion sale. We are all familiar with them, especially in the fast-food industry when the cash register clerk asks if you would like fries with your order. Anyone who has ever shopped on amazon.com knows that they make a habit out of tracking your purchases in order to cover the screen with related products that they think you might also like.

*Scrapbook Premier* magazine for storefront retailers says it all in the title of its article, “Suggestion Sales Make Cents.” Author Sara Naumann says “Scrapbookers want product options, but they also want expert recommendations on the best option for them.” If you have ever gone into a scrapbooking store, you know that it is close to impossible to find everything you might be looking for. There are thousands of papers to look through,
and unless you have an extraordinary amount of time on your hand, there is now way that you are going to be able to look through everything. Be observant and if you see a customer looking at birthday paper, offer to show them more of your party-themed papers. If you see a customer looking at a Mickey Mouse album, ask if he or she has seen the Disney papers and stickers that would coordinate with the album. At the cash register, once again strike up a conversation with the customers. If you see that they are trying a new product, tell them about the great new book that explores different methods of using the product.

One of the keys in suggestion sales is to not appear pushy. You do not want your customers to be annoyed by you. Make sure that you appear to be helpful and interested in what the customer is buying rather than pushy. In Naumann’s article, she encourages sales associates to follow the advice of Rick Segal, a retain guru. “Ask the customer, ‘Did you see this?’ The question is simple, effective and easy—and puts the emphasis on helping and serving, not on selling.” If the customer appears interested, now is your chance to share the product with them.

Training

All of the previously mentioned techniques for selling will be useless if your employees are not properly trained. There is nothing worse than walking into a store and the employee knows nothing about the product that the store is selling. It is a frustrating experience to ask a sales associate a question and receive nothing but a stuttering, “Uh, I don’t know” in response.

Your customers expect that you and your sales associates know more about scrapbooking than they do. This is why it is a necessity for your sales associate to be
interested in scrapbooking before you hire them. Ask them to bring some of their work with them to the interview, this way you can assess their skill level prior to bringing them on board in your organization. A sales associate does not necessarily have to be an expert in the field, but he or she should possess the knowledge and enthusiasm to appear to be one! An enthusiastic employee who enjoys scrapbooking is contagious. He or she will be more willing to share ideas and products with the customers.

As “Associate Education” an article in Scrapbook Retailer says, training your employees will be “an investment in your store’s success.” It is crucial to keep your employees up to date on all of the new products and the latest techniques. This is another area in which your scrapbooking store can separate itself from the competition. In larger chain stores that carry a variety of crafting supplies, the employees are not all well informed about the scrapbooking products and ways to use them. There is no personal attention in these stores, but your store is ready and waiting to fill the gap that the larger stores leave. Classes are not only for the customers. Take the time to teach your sales associates and let them experiment with the new products themselves. As a result, the sales associate can speak from experience when talking about a product and explaining how it works.

The article also suggests “daily and weekly meetings as well as coaching sessions and discussions can be built around the things that you want your employees to know.” The daily meetings can be used to quickly discuss new products that have arrived, a certain product to push for the day, and a suggestion on how to better serve customers. Weekly meetings can be lengthier and be more of a discussion time. Get your employees
involved in the conversation and ask them how they think the store is doing. Have them suggest improvements or new ideas that could be implemented.

**Evaluations**

Evaluations of your employees should take place every couple of months. These one-on-one meetings with each employee should be a time to talk to the employee and give feedback. Give them constructive criticism and suggest ways to make improvements, but do it kindly. You do not want to risk losing a good employee by hurting his or her feelings or making the employee feel as if he or she is not doing a good job. Use this time to encourage as well. Tell employees exactly what they are doing well by pointing out their strengths. Reward your employees through commissions, sales contests, and raises. Thinking of creative ways to encourage them in their jobs will increase your sales. Remember: happy employees mean happy customers, which leads to a successful business for you.

**Ordering**

Placing orders is a necessity in operating your scrapbooking store. Initially, you may want to be in charge of this yourself until you have an employee that understands the process and can handle the ordering for you. Employees should be aware of the staples of a scrapbooking store and make sure that these items are always in stock. Making regular observations of the product allows employees to notice when a product is getting low and needs to be reordered. Do not wait until an item is completely out before reordering. The ordering and shipping process may take a week or more, so it is important to anticipate needs early.
An article about stock-outs in *Scrapbook* Retailer says, "The worst six words your store clerk can say to a customer are, 'Sorry, we are out of stock.'" A study done by *Harvard Business Review* entitled "Stock-Outs Cause Walkouts" reveals what consumers did when a retailer did not have the product they wanted. The results of a study of 71,000 consumers are shown in Exhibit 1.

**Exhibit 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stock-Out Statistics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bought the item at another store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substituted another brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substituted the same brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delayed the purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not purchase</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study showed that "55% of the disappointed consumers did not make a purchase at the original store." Although it is costly to keep a large stock of all of your products, this cost must be weighed against the cost of losing customers as a result on constantly being out-of-stock of a popular item. Train your sales associates how to deal with out-of-stock situations. Encourage them to suggest others products that could be
used as substitutes in hopes that the customer seeking a product that you do not currently have will become a part of the 45% that is willing to substitute the product.

While you are walking around your store looking for products that are low, take a note as to what is selling well. This is information that can be used to guide your future purchasing decisions. Also be on the lookout for holes on the shelves. Have your sales associates rearrange displays to make them look full. “Full, well-organized product displays give your customers confidence and a sense that you are giving them many options to chose from.”

Point of Sale System

A point of sale (POS) system is a computerized cash register. The article “POSsibilities: Relying on Technology” found in CNA Scrapbook Insider reveals what a POS system can do for your store. “It can be an invaluable tool to assist with accounting, sales, services, marketing, purchasing, e-commerce operations, inventory control, returns, shopping and receiving, payroll, analyzing customer shopping patterns and more.”

This computerized system can help with the ordering process that we mentioned earlier. By keeping track of what products are in the inventory and how many of each item is sold, the system can be setup to notify a sales associate when a particular product is getting low.

A POS system is a priceless resource of information. It allows you to track sales with ease. Each sales associate must sign in before ringing up a customer, which enables you to gauge each employee’s sales for the week or month. This can be used as a way to measure performance before meeting with the employee for an evaluation. The system
can also tell you how an item was paid for, to determine what percentage of your sales come from cash, checks, or charge.

Keeping track of your customers’ buying habits is a huge task without technology, most likely next to impossible. A POS system enables you to enter customer information directly into the computer system and maintain a record of what customers are buying. This information can be useful if your store has a frequent buyer program. When customers become members, their information is logged in the computer and their name is entered into the system every time that they shop in your store. The dollar amount of sales can be tracked and when customers reach a certain level, they can be rewarded with a special discount or small gift certificate. Many POS systems even offer a wish list feature, creating a list of desired products for specific customers, for friends or family members to access for gift-buying purposes.

Inventory

Inventory is almost always a nightmare, especially in a scrapbooking store that may contain thousands of pieces of paper, sheets of stickers, and embellishments. Taking inventory of all of these items can be a daunting task. A POS system can help with inventory, but cannot be a replacement. Even upon implementation of a POS system, an inventory is necessary if you want it to be an effective tool to help with inventory in the future.

The article, “Inventory: That Time of Year” in Scrapbook Retailer encourages that “With proper planning, an inventory will run successfully. It can even be a fun time for everyone who helps with the counting.” The first step is the initial preparation. Make
sure that you have enough employees that will be able to work on inventory day. If not, look for friends or loyal customers who may be willing to help. Offer to pay them with cash or with gift certificates. The latter method will save you money since you are guaranteed to get all of it back in sales. Estimate how long it will take to perform the inventory in every department and assign areas to teams of employees.

The next step is to decide how you will count items that may take endless hours if you were to do them by hand. The article suggests renting a scale to weigh papers and stickers. Some of the counting may be done earlier than the actual day of the inventory. For example, when product is received, sticker rolls can be counted by numbering every 25th sticker from the end of the roll. This allows a roll of stickers to be counted quickly by searching for these numbers at a later date.

The article also encourages storeowners to make the workday fun. Motivate employees to work more efficiently by offering them rewards if the work is done earlier than planned. It even suggests hiding candy around the store for workers to find as they are counting product. Small details such as these will relieve the stress of inventory time.

After the inventory is complete, it can be compared with the inventory in the POS system. It can help you determine where mistakes may be happening or if theft is occurring. The inventory process will also reveal what products are not selling. This information can be used to change your buying habits or to make some selling technique adjustments.
Services

When opening your scrapbooking store, you need to determine what services you will offer your customers. Classes and crops are two of the most common services offered by scrapbooking stores. What other services can you provide that will make your store stand out in the minds of the customers?

Demonstrations

Since demonstrations were discussed earlier, they will only be briefly mentioned in this section. Demonstrations provide instant gratification to customers who are seeking to learn a new technique, but do not have the time to attend a class.

Classes

Training your employees to provide them with the knowledge of how to use scrapbooking projects can also translate into training them to teach classes. Classes can be categorized into beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels. Designing classes for each category will prevent students from being in over their heads or being bored because they already know everything that you are teaching. Classes will be covered further in a later section that will include class descriptions and a calendar of events.

Crops

Crops are events that encourage customers to bring all of their supplies to the store and spend a significant block of time scrapbooking. Smaller crops can be held regularly, maybe twice a month. You may want to reserve larger crops for just a few times a year. These can be exhausting to you as the storeowner and your employees. Crops give customers who may not have a lot of time to scrapbook, the opportunity to
designate a day devoted solely to scrapbooking. The larger crops can last an entire day. Make them fun for customers, incorporating games, contests, sales, and food.

**Professional Scrapbooker**

You may encounter customers who like the concept of scrapbooking, but lack the desire or time to do it on their own. To reach this type of customers, your store can offer them a professional scrapbooker. This person would be one of your employees who in essence, would create a scrapbook for the customer.

The professional scrapbooker would meet with the customer in a consultation to gain an understanding of his or her requests and needs for the project. This may involve bringing in and organizing pictures, setting a budget, and picking out supplies. The first hour-long consultation would be a free service to get the customer interested in this idea. The following meetings will be charged hourly along with the time that is spent by the employee to complete the album. The customer should also pay for all product used in creating the scrapbook. You might want to consider offering the customer a discount for the product that will be used. Make certain that you are charging the customer an hourly rate that is higher than what you are paying your employee. If you cannot spare the employee, and idea would be to allow the employee to complete the project on his or her own time, keeping the hourly pay from the customer. You will still receive the benefit of the product for the project being purchased in your store.

If the customer is happy with the end results, he or she will spread the word. You will more than likely receive additional customers for this service through the recommendations of satisfied customers.
**Personal Shopper**

There is also a type of customer who likes to scrapbook, but wants you or your sales associates, whom he or she most likely considers to be experts, to make all of the decisions. These customers cannot decide colors, papers, or embellishments that should be used in a layout. To better serve this type of customer, a sales associate can personally accompany the customer around the store and pick out products according to themes that the scrapbooker needs.

If you offer this service in your store, be sure that there are other sales associates who are available to greet and assist other customers. Otherwise, this single customer will consume all of the sales associate’s time and cause him or her to ignore other customers. If it is a busy time, gently let the customer know that you need to be available to other customers, but will be able to help in a few minutes as time allows. You can get the customer started by pointing out a few products that will fit the theme of the pages. This will keep the customer occupied until you can assist him or her.
Works Cited


Grimm, Pameal. “Surviving the Big Box Invasion.” *Scrapbook Premier.* July/August 2003. Pages 84-86.


