Creating a Culture of Reuse

Presented by Madeline James
Reuse Store Consultant
madelinebonniejean@gmail.com
Shifting our perspective on thrift

- For profit
- Non profit
- Vintage shops
- eCommerce
- Consignment
THE BUYERARCHY OF NEEDS

Use What You Have
Borrow
Swap
Thrift
Make
Buy
Obstacles For Reuse

For Shoppers
- Stigma - it’s for poor people
- Uncertainty - not sure if they’ll have the thing I need

For Donors
- They’ve tried to donate, but have had donations turned away
- Rumors about what happens with the revenue from their donations
- Confusion/concern about what happens to your stuff - Does it get recycled? Does it get sold overseas? Does it go in the garbage?
“Thrift shops are for poor people. If I shop there I am getting things that were meant for folks less fortunate than me.”
2 million tons of clothes are donated annually in the United States for reuse/recycling. Only 25% of what ends up in thrift stores actually gets sold. There is simply not enough domestic demand for this huge quantity of clothes.
Opportunities

- Thrift is becoming more professional and mainstream
- 56% of Americans say they would give second hand gifts
- Konmari Craze may be a fad, but thrift can leverage the donation influx
- 87 percent of individuals who bought secondhand clothing online shifted their spending away from off-price retailers
Sustainable Work.
Stronger Communities.
“A mission-driven business will always fail. What we do is a business-driven mission.”
—Terry McDonald, SVdP

- **Economic** → revenue generation to fund social programs; reduced disposal costs
- **Employment** → training and jobs for individuals with barriers to employment
- **Environmental** → reduction in the amount of items and materials sent to landfills
- **Community** → quality items at affordable prices; strengthened community well-being and economy; enhanced corporate citizenship
FROM WASTE TO JOBS AND GREENER HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

Waste Suppliers → Waste Stream

Marketplace
- Raw Materials
- Books
- Batteries

Capital Creation
- Jobs
- Store

Waste Conversion
- Construction
- Mattresses
- Automobiles
- Clothing

Community
- Quality jobs
- Healthier life
- Green environment
- Affordable housing
- Job training
- Emergency services

Cascade Alliance Partners
Obstacles

- Fast fashion is the reuse industry’s equivalent to contamination in the recycling industry
- Cost of scaling—new equipment, bailers, forklifts, warehouse space
WE COLLECT... YOU CREATE
Promoting community, creativity, and environmental awareness through reuse since 1991

- 1800 sqft mixed use facility
- Offers unique, hard to find low cost resource the community
- Retail store voted Best Fabric Store in the Triangle region
- Workshops, Classes, Events, Open Studio Space
- Artist Exhibition and Services
- Collection Service
- Cultural retail entertainment destination location serving over 200,000 people a year
The Scrap Exchange now has 105,000 sq. ft. of commercial space and 12.5 acres to create a Reuse Arts District.
Links and Resources

- Scrapexcchange.org
- Cascadealliance.org
- The State of the Retail Thrift Industry, 3rd Edition
- U.S. Census Bureau, Monthly Retail Trade Report
- Robert Wood Johnson Case Study 2019