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Meet Matt Leavell: CEO + Founder

Hello! I am Matt Leavell, an experienced entrepreneur who is not ashamed to say that through a tough journey I have found what works in the liquidation business. I am the founder of BuyLow Warehouse and I have experienced most of the ins and outs of the business.

I am happy that you have taken the time to read my article and begin your journey in the liquidation business! My business grew from selling on eBay out of my home with one employee, to being in a large warehouse with 20+ employees and selling over \$3 million of product per year through eBay alone. I have experimented with various sales channels, thereby, finding the pros and cons of each. I have extensive experience in selling through eBay, truckload wholesale, retail, flea markets, Facebook Marketplace, bins, pallets, etc. Currently, I sell only through truckload wholesale; however, I have the background and knowledge to help you develop your sales model in all areas of liquidation. I have a passion for helping other businesses thrive by helping them avoid the mistakes I made when I started. I am excited to be your resource as you begin your journey in the liquidation business!

For any questions, product purchasing or to sign up for one of our email lists, please contact me at support@buylowwarehouse.com. You can also CLICK HERE to connect with me on Facebook. I look forward to getting to know you and your business goals!



Tips to Selling Liquidation Merchandise

As you get started, there are a few things that you need to think about before you purchase your first product. I have outlined valuable tips below to better prepare you for your venture in the liquidation industry:

Protect Yourself from Scamming Suppliers

How do dishonest suppliers take advantage?

- Profit a large amount of money for very little work or value offered
- Sell trash or salvage condition merchandise as if it were normal customer returns or better
- Pull valuable merchandise out of loads and sell the rest like all items are still included
- Demand prepayment for backordered merchandise and then never deliver it
- Accept payment for unseen merchandise and deliver different, cheaper product than promised

In summary, protect yourself from scamming suppliers. Some of the above actions make sense for the buyer in certain situations depending on your relationship with whom you are working. However, be careful, ask questions, demand proof, and ask more questions when doing business with a supplier.



How to Sell Merchandise

So, how are you going to sell your merchandise? This decision will direct many of your other decisions, such as what type of merchandise you need to purchase, the time required to receive and inspect the merchandise, the time to prepare the merchandise received, and the amount of time you will have to spend in customer service or other administrative tasks.



Price Strategy

Your pricing strategy needs to be considered. Are you seeking to price items individually, as a percentage of retail, or a flat price? This decision also has a major impact on the type of merchandise that you want to sell.

Finding your Supply

Where are you going to find your supply of merchandise? There is a lot that goes into finding the right supplier, so you should spend some extra time on this step. Finding the right supplier will have a major impact on your business. A good supplier is worth their weight in gold-literally!

Solo or Staff

Decide whether you need help to complete all of the work. When initially starting out, it is ideal to do everything yourself so that you can learn each part of the process. It will also help keep your overhead low so you can put as much of your profit back into the business. If you need assistance, consider if you need to hire someone on a part-time or full-time basis. If hiring help is the right choice for your business model, first research software solutions that will help you perform certain parts of your workflow faster. For questions about the types of software tools in the market, feel free to contact me anytime at support@buylowwarehouse.com.

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A good supplier is worth their weight in gold-literally!

Get to Know Your Customer

Adjust your mindset to serve your customer demographic, not yourself. Understand the qualities that you value (brand name, item condition, time spent getting a deal, etc.) may not be of value to your customer. Trust me, I had to learn this lesson time and time again in the beginning stages of developing my business.

Learn from my mistakes:

- I chose against using certain types of sales methods because I personally would not be interested in shopping that way. I realized the sales methods worked great and the merchandise sold wonderfully when I eventually tried them!
- I decided against offering certain types of merchandise for wholesale because I did not know how to sell them. Once I started offering the merchandise, customers bought it and loved it! I wish I had experimented and been more open-minded.
- I chose to buy certain merchandise at a premium price because of the brand. However, the audience to which I tried to sell this product to did not care about the brand. I did not understand my buyer and as a result, my sales suffered.



Calculate and Track Your Profit

Decide how to calculate your profit and how you are going to track it. Business is a game, and profit is the scoreboard. If you are not tracking your profit on your sales, how do you know if you are winning or losing?



I did not understand my buyer and as a result, my sales suffered.

Offer the Better Deal

Understand the market you are entering and educate yourself on how business is conducted in that market. People generally expect to negotiate. For example, I quickly learned that eBay shoppers do not care about the price they pay for an item—they only care about getting a better deal than what is being offered. Buyers in the liquidation market expect deals, and they expect to negotiate those deals even further. Many times, it is a better idea to accept the first reasonable offer for less than the listing price than it is to let time go by and drop the price later. You will eventually end up at the original offer, OR **EVEN LESS!**









Buyers do not care about the price they pay for an item-they only care that they are getting a better deal.



Finding the Right Merchandise

Key Factors to Obtain Great Merchandise:









Trustworthy Supplier

Consistent Supply

Target Demographic

Sales Method(s)

How to Find Quality Product

I will talk more about characteristics to look for in a quality supplier below, but let's assume that every supplier is trustworthy (what a pipedream!).

Below are some methods to help you find quality merchandise:

- Facebook Groups: There are plenty of Facebook groups that are focused on connecting suppliers with resellers. Search for them, join them, and be active. These groups are a good source for information.
- Ask other sellers: Find other people who resell merchandise and see if they have any ideas for finding a good supply of merchandise. Some places to find other sellers include: Facebook Groups, flea markets, and regulars at retail bin stores. Strike up a conversation, build some rapport, then ask if they would be willing to tell you about any possible merchandise sources.
- Connect with people: Other ideas to find suppliers include signing up for email lists, asking influencers if they know any sources, and going to trade shows.

- Be creative: Lastly, you could skip the supplier hunt all together and put in some good old elbow grease by using one of the following methods to find merchandise:
 - Thrifting
 - Online Arbitrage (eBay, Amazon, Facebook Marketplace)
 - Local Arbitrage (retail store sales inventory, bin stores, flea markets, garage sales, estate sales, etc.)

CLICK HERE to search BuyLow's database of product.



Required Characteristics of Suppliers

It is very important you choose the right supplier. The supplier can make or break the development of your business. Think of your conversations as a series of informal interviews in which you learn qualities about the supplier and how they operate. Understand that everything you are expecting from your supplier is also expected from you as a customer! If you are not willing to operate in this way, a quality supplier will find another customer that does. He does not have to do business with you! Below are some characteristics in a supplier you should look for.

Trusting Suppliers

The absolute most important characteristic for you to find in a supplier is trust. You must believe that you are part of a win-win relationship with your supplier. If you have heard negative reviews of the supplier, or have received several dud pallets that were not as they were promised, you need to find another source for product. Sure, you are in the liquidation business, and you will inevitably receive some poor pallets every now and then, but the odds of the first three being duds should be very low. In the event this issue does occur, how does the supplier respond? Does he offer a credit or make it right in some other way? These are qualities your supplier should have if they are interested in a long-term relationship.

Additionally, the supplier should follow through with his word. Whether that involves providing the merchandise promised, timelines, returns and credits, costs, etc.

Another dishonest trait that you need to be on the lookout for is a supplier who does not try to understand your unique merchandise needs. How can they offer advice if they do not understand your needs? If they do understand your needs and are continuously trying to upsell you merchandise that does not fit your needs, this may indicate they do not care about your success with the merchandise purchased.

Lastly, a violation of trust to be aware of is a supplier who does not tell you the full journey of the merchandise. He does not have to feel obligated to divulge his business secrets, but he should be truthful about important facts. An example would be a supplier who sells merchandise in a format that differs from how they received it from the retailer, but says the product remains exactly as it was received (i.e. cherry-picking). If the supplier sorted the items, repackaged the items into smaller quantities, or performed another form of action to the product, they should tell you what action was taken so you can make the decision if it is the right product for your needs.

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The supplier can make or break the development of your business.

Suppliers Need to Educate

Your supplier needs to be willing to spend some time with you to help educate you on the merchandise, industry, and ideas to grow your success. If you are successful, your supplier will be successful, because chances are you will be back for future purchases. This is the foundation of a win-win, long-term relationship. If a supplier is unwilling to do fair business, it may indicate that they are not planning for a long-term relationship, or do not work with an abundance mindset. This is a red flag!

Communication Platform

Of equal importance, find a supplier that is responsive to your emails and phone calls. This is a business where time is valuable. It is crucial your supplier is willing to respond within a reasonable time frame so that you are not missing opportunities. If you see a good deal, chances are a competitor is also trying to buy the product. You need a responsive supplier in order to grab these deals before the other person has a chance!

Proximity of Your Product

A very important requirement to consider is the merchandise source's proximity to you. Notice how I said the "merchandise source's location" and not your "supplier's location." Freight costs can eat up a large amount of your profit. Sometimes, suppliers will drop ship your merchandise. This helps save on freight costs and, as a result, keeps your costs down. For example, if you live in Utah and are



buying merchandise from a supplier who is located in Georgia, they may be representing merchandise that is shipping out of Las Vegas. In this scenario, if the merchandise was being shipped from Georgia, the freight could have rendered the landed cost of your merchandise to be too expensive. By the merchandise shipping out of Las Vegas, your landed cost would be much lower. Along the same lines, if you are shipping merchandise by the pallet, it is generally better to buy a minimum of 3 pallets so that the cost of freight is spread over more pallets.

Recommended Characteristics of Suppliers

The following questions are bonus characteristics to ask yourself when selecting a supplier **ONLY IF** the more important issues required in a supplier are satisfied.

Does the supplier offer a variety of product types or quantities?

It helps to have a single supplier that you are able to get four or more types of merchandise from. That helps you grow your buying volume with the supplier and become a more important customer. Along the same lines, having the option to buy a new merchandise type by pallet offers flexibility to test new types of merchandise and grow your buyer base before having to buy a full truck.

Does the supplier sell on other sales channels?

This is not a positive, negative, or a tell-tale sign, but again, it is something to be aware of and ask questions about. If the supplier does sell on other sales channels, how do they get their inventory for those other channels? Do they cherry-pick the pallets they are selling to buyers like you? Of course, if you ask him, he is going to deny it. Your goal is to ask the question and listen to HOW he answers them.

Example Questions:

- Does he stumble while answering the question?
- Does his answer make sense from a logistics and business perspective?
- Does he try to hide the fact that he sells in multiple ways?

A benefit of the supplier selling on other channels is that he is knowledgeable about the selling on those channels and can be a better guide and teacher for you. This can help you avoid many mistakes.

Is the supplier willing to send you photos upon request?

This is not something that can be done on every truckload, but most of the time, this is a reasonable request for anything not being directly shipped. If a supplier is not willing to provide pictures, I would consider that as a sign that they are not willing to develop a relationship with the buyer. That is not someone whom I would want to do business with.

Does the supplier offer any form of guarantee?

Part of the liquidation business is that you are going to get broken items, missing pieces, used items, etc. Sometimes, a supplier will offer forms of guarantees for new customers, or for customers buying higher risk merchandise. If the supplier follows through on the guarantee when needed, that is a good indication that you are working with a supplier who wants to harness a long-term relationship.

How to Choose the Right Pallet

Now that you have found a supplier, you are ready to choose a pallet of merchandise to buy and sell for a profit. Be careful how you pick a pallet because, as with everything else, you make your money on the buy. Below are some strategies to help you choose the correct pallet.

What is your plan for selling the merchandise?

Too many people jump into buying a pallet without thinking about how they plan to sell the merchandise. Do you have an outlet to sell a large quantity of small, less expensive items (e.g. cases of lip balm)? If so, you can make twenty-five cents per item and have large profits if you are flipping 5000 pieces. However, if your plan is to sell only on Facebook Marketplace and eBay, that pallet may not be the right fit for that sales channel. In this case, you need to find a pallet with fewer and larger items so that you can focus your efforts on selling only 20-40 items from a pallet. It is important to consider your sales channels and the amount of effort and expense you will put into selling your items.

Has the pallet been processed?

Unprocessed pallets are great, only if they contain the type of merchandise you need. Do not get lured into thinking you should only buy unprocessed pallets. They are generally less expensive because no labor has been used in processing, but there is more risk associated with the purchase. What happens during processing the truckload (i.e. sorting out high-priced merchandise) should not be a concern if you see the product, like the product, and can make money off of the product on the pallet that you are purchasing.

Does broken product equal a loss?

This is one of the first criteria I look for when purchasing a pallet. You want to have as few broken items as possible. It is not an issue if some of the items are broken, but I want them to be the smaller, cheaper items, not the bigger, more expensive items that I depend on for profit gains. Unfortunately, this is something that you have to learn through experience. You can ask your supplier for guidance, but ultimately, breaking down multiple pallets will help you better understand profit gains and losses when buying pallets.

Is the manufacturer packaging in good condition?

The more damage the manufacturer packaging has sustained, the harder it is going to be to sell the item. Try to choose pallets where the manufacturer packaging is in really good condition. It will make your selling life easier. As a side note, if you do have seriously damaged packaging, do not try to sell the item in the original packaging. Take the item out of the original packaging and say the package was damaged.



Rule number 1: Never lose money. Rule number 2: Never forget rule number 1.

- Warren Buffet

Is the reward worth the risk?

I like to think about investing legend Warren Buffet's two rules of investing: "Rule number 1: Never lose money. Rule number 2: Never forget rule number 1." With some pallets, you can assume you will get your money back due to the merchandise makeup. This assurance provides less risk. These pallets will not be the pallets that you hit a grand slam with (e.g. \$4,000 camera that you buy for \$50), but it was the turtle that won the race, right? Find pallets where you know that even if you get a bad one, the chance of you losing money is small.

Does the pallet type fit your needs?

Understand your options in the marketplace before you start buying pallets. There are several different types of merchandise in this business. Know what you are buying.

- Different retailers: This is the most general division. Most truckloads and pallets will come from a specific retailer. This immediately will tell you if you are receiving the type of merchandise and brands that you feel comfortable with. For example, you know immediately that Target merchandise is more expensive than Dollar General merchandise.
- Different retailer programs: The next thing to be aware of is that each retailer does not produce just one kind of load. They are divided into what is called "programs." Truckloads and



pallets coming out of the same program (which will also be coming out of the same facility) are generally going to contain the same type and condition of merchandise.

- Different conditions: case packs, overstock, shelf-pulls, damaged packaging, store returns, online returns, store damage, salvage, refurbished, etc. I am sure that I have forgotten some, but the main point is that there are different conditions of merchandise, and you need to understand what the condition is before you purchase the merchandise.
- Different sized items: Truckloads and pallets are sometimes categorized into loads of only larger items and smaller items. The retailer has their own reverse logistics processes that they are running the merchandise through. This causes the merchandise to be categorized in certain ways.
- Different merchandise categories: Apparel, tools, HBA, food, electronics, mother & baby, sporting goods, etc. I am sure I have, again, missed some, but you get the general idea.



Manifested or un-manifested: This is a bigger issue when buying full truckloads. If a load has been manifested, this means the merchandise has gone through a sorting process where labor has been invested into the load. Understand that this labor expense has to be recouped by the manifester in some way. This may result in the buyer paying a higher price for the load, or that higher-priced or better conditioned items have been reclaimed from the load to be sold somewhere else. In addition, if it is not the retailer that manifested the load, then the load has had to be shipped to a 3rd party facility and there is now an additional cost of shipping that will be rolled into the final sales price of the load. None of this means the load is a bad purchase, but it does change the risk profile of purchasing that specific load and should be thought about and considered.

Un-manifested loads sell for less money due to the lack of labor investment and uncertainty of the type of product it contains. These loads may contain higher-valued merchandise or these un-manifested loads can also contain no high-priced items and be a dud! If you decide to purchase an un-manifested load, you will need additional sales channels to move all of the different categories of product included in the loads. Also, understand that buying un-manifested truckloads is a game of averages and that over multiple truckloads what you receive should even out. Un-manifested truckloads are not as risky when buying in volume, as compared to buying a single load from the program.

Picking the Winning Pallet

Below are a few helpful strategies for figuring out if the merchandise is going to be a winning pallet when you are selecting it from your supplier.



Calculating the Cost Per Piece on the Pallet

Count the number of pieces on the pallet and figure out what your cost per piece is. For example, if there are 40 items on the pallet and the pallet costs you \$400, then your cost per piece is \$10. As you view the merchandise on the pallet, do you feel like you can average above \$10 per item? This is a quick way to filter out bad pallets.

Find the Base Items and Calculate Profit

Find the merchandise that you know you will sell for enough so that you get your money back on the pallet. I call that your "base merchandise." The rest of the items represent your profit. Do you feel like you can sell the remaining items for enough money to make the risk worth it?

Research Selling Price of Each Item Online

Another way to analyze a pallet is to research every single item while looking at the pallet. There are apps that allow you to quickly scan a barcode to view the item's online selling value. This will help you identify which pallet is right for you. However, this takes a lot of time!

Pricing Your Merchandise

Now that you have your merchandise, how are you planning to price it to sell? Take time to decide your pricing structure because it will contribute to your overall business strategy. Additionally, how do you want to be known? Understand that your pricing strategy can help you gain marketing traction, which can lead to an increase in your selling volume.

Selling Individual Items

To find your listing price for selling an individual item, try some of the following techniques:

- Fallout percentage: It is important to know that some items will have to be discounted. It is then up to you to decide whether or not you will accept returns. You will also need to research, label, and test functionality for every item. The more you handle your merchandise, the more labor and time is involved. This additional fallout and labor needs to be factored into your pricing method.
- eBay sales history: Check to see what the item has recently sold for. Typically, eBay pricing is less than Amazon pricing, but it is a good guide for what items are currently selling for in the market.
- Active listings on Facebook Marketplace: Check to see what items are priced at. This is a local representation of the market. Remember that these prices do not have shipping or marketplace fees included, whereas eBay prices will.
- Price item as a flat price per piece: For example, every item is \$5 regardless of what it is. This is more common with very high-volume sellers, such as bin stores. This pricing method is not suggested unless you have a large supply of product and buyers that allows you to keep the cost of your overhead down.

Selling Bundles of Items

Figure out how many bundles you can make out of a pallet. Ensure that the bundles are essentially worth the same price and have the same general product makeup. Price the bundles so that the profit you make is reasonable.

Test your pricing strategies when working with bundles. Figure out at what price the bundles sell quickest and make the most profit. Bundles can be a great method for liquidating a large amount of smaller items at a faster pace.

Selling by the Pallet

Assess your competition and ask your supplier for advice. Flipping pallets will not work if you are in the same city as your supplier. You must create value in some other way. You can create value through cheaper pricing, different product selection, processing the product differently that results in a unique pallet type, or by breaking the pallet down into smaller pallets.

Your pricing strategy can help you gain marketing traction, which can lead to an increase in your selling volume.

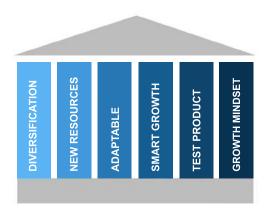
How to Sell Your Merchandise

There are as many ways to sell your merchandise as there are types of merchandise, so get creative! The sales channels listed below can be used in several different ways to liquidate product. For example, you can list per individual item, list merchandise bundles, or run nightly auctions, all on Facebook. Keep in mind that different sales channels offer different benefits. Some channels have higher fees and shipping costs, or returns are mandated. Other channels do not have any fees or shipping costs, and you are entirely in control of all your selling decisions. After you have created a plan for how you want to list your merchandise for sale, you will have to decide which sales channel best fits your selling needs..

Sales Channels to Consider:

- Amazon
- eBay
- Mercari
- Bonanza
- Etsy
- FB Marketplace
- Flea Markets
- Garage Sale
- Retail Store
- Facebook Group
- Facebook Auction
- By the Pallet—Raw
- By the Pallet—Processed
- Pallet Auction





Build a Stable Foundation

Below are a few helpful tips to keep in mind as you begin to build the foundation for your business.

Diversification is Key

Be diversified in your suppliers, your merchandise types, and your sales channels. In this business, everything is contract-based. You never know when a contract may change hands to a new supplier, leaving you without access to your favorite merchandise that you have built your business around. If you have multiple sources for the same merchandise, there is a good chance you can maintain access to it. Or, if you cannot maintain access to the merchandise but you sell multiple types of merchandise, then losing one type will not destroy your business. The same idea holds true for how you sell your items. If all of your sales are based on one specific sales channel, you are at risk of losing buyers and profits if something changes in that channel. For example, think about people who exclusively sold at flea markets when the recent COVID-19 pandemic affected the world. All flea markets were forced to close for several months. unexpectedly. Not having an e-commerce division really hurt these sellers.

Find New Customers and Suppliers

Seeking out new resources will compound over time and deliver big results. Once you find your first supplier, do not assume your work is done. Network, research on Google and Facebook, and attend trade shows. Continue to grow and diversify your business.

Be Adaptable

Expect the unexpected and be adaptable. Experiment with different selling styles and different merchandise types. Try new things. In this industry, sometimes you will need to shift to selling and buying trends.

Grow at a Smart Pace

Growing too fast in this industry can cause you to get over-extended with the amount of product that you have bought. You need to be selling as fast as you are buying. Remember to manage your overhead expenses and force yourself to work with less square footage and staff than what you think you need. This will help you to maximize your resources. Also, to be successful in this industry, you need a list of consistent buyers and logistics in place for positive growth. Growing at a rapid rate makes it easy to overlook some of these important building blocks to support a business of that size.



"stay stupid," and keep a teachable attitude.

Keep a Growth Mindset

Do not read or believe your own success clippings. As you grow, outside observers will gladly offer their opinions on your business, telling you how great your business model is and that you seem to have it all figured out. As one of my mentors likes to say, "stay stupid," and keep a teachable attitude. Always be paranoid that something is going to threaten your business. This attitude will keep you sharp and focused on the important details.

Testing Your Merchandise

Test new merchandise types in smaller quantities before committing to larger volumes. New merchandise types carry new risks because you will not have a history with this form of product. You can manage this risk by starting small, even if you have to travel further to obtain the merchandise you want to test.

Warning Signs

As you grow your business, there are warning signs that you need to be on the lookout for. It is critical to catch these signs early, before they turn into big problems.

Your Pile of Unlisted Merchandise is Growing

If your merchandise has been sitting around longer than 30 days, it is a sign you are not selling your items as fast as you are buying them. This also means you are paying for unnecessary square footage. Continuously compounding your purchases will lead to bad habits, which in turn, makes liquidating product difficult if you are trying to sell by the piece. What will happen is you will continually liquidate your in-demand merchandise from each new load; however, merchandise that is less in-demand will get overlooked and build up on your shelves. This will result in a flawed view of your profit because old merchandise will not be accounted for. To learn more about how to solve this problem, email buylowwarehouse.com. I am happy to walk you through it.

STOP! If Your Credit Card Balance is Growing Each Month

This is a sign of one of two things. It either means that you are losing money, or that you are growing faster than your profits can support. Either way, this needs to be reviewed and either corrected or accounted for.

Listed Merchandise is Not Receiving any Activity

Take immediate action. The market will dictate the price of your merchandise. Sitting on merchandise for a long period of time will not result in eventually selling it for your asking price, unless it is seasonal and bought cheaply enough on the front end. Even if you eventually meet your selling goal, your money has been tied up for too long. When merchandise is priced or bundled properly, it will sell within a reasonable amount of time.

Not Valuing YOUR Time as a Cost When Calculating Your Profit

If you are not counting your time as a cost, you are not getting an accurate representation of how well your business is performing. It is important to consider the amount of time that you are spending to get merchandise sold, or you may be working for free! When I calculate profit, I always include my time spent. I measure time at what it would cost me to hire someone to work in that position. For example, in Tennessee, I use \$15/hour.



Start Smart With Resources

Below are ways you can connect to the resources you need as you begin your business venture. I have included links to the variety of product that I offer, plus a link to my software solution which is designed to help you maximize your liquidation business.

Current Truckload and Pallet Lists

If you are interested in purchasing your first truckload or seeking a new supplier, click the link below to sign up for my daily truckload-buyer's email list:

AVAILABLE TRUCKLOADS EMAIL SIGN-UP

If you are interested in merchandise that is sold by the pallet, pre-register for my daily pallet-buyer's email list by_clicking the link below:





Building Relationships

I am pleased to have shared my story in the liquidation business with you. This business can be very profitable, but it does not come without risks. As with any start-up business, it takes experience, testing, and adaptation to create success.

I hope I have prepared you for the beginning stages of your upcoming business venture, and have sparked your interest in developing a relationship with me. If you have additional questions, comments, or just want to chat about the industry, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at support@buylowwarehouse.com. I am here to help you!

Best.





Connect with us

