



Darshan Singh sings the praises of Tradebank

Floor and wall covering store owner has done \$150,000 in trade in two years

By Leona Ens

From a new stainless steel refrigerator and dishwasher for his home, to signage and neon lighting for his store, the perks of trade have made Darshan Singh a happy man.

“It’s creating money for me where otherwise I wouldn’t have it,” says Darshan, owner of Discount Carpet Gallery in Guelph, Ont. “I’m very happy with all of the trading I’ve done through Tradebank.”

Darshan formerly belonged to another barter company but in 2003, Tradebank Waterloo broker Russ Hughes, one of Darshan’s carpet customers at the time, persuaded him to join Tradebank. The wide selection of goods and services available through Tradebank was a major drawing card, and Darshan wasn’t disappointed. Since 2003, Russ has been able to fill most of his trade requests.

In addition to signage, neon lighting and shelving for his store, Darshan has made many personal purchases on trade: among them a large-screen television, landscaping services and restaurant dining. He used trade dollars to buy flowers and chocolates as celebratory gifts when each of his two sons was born; and later, to purchase a bike for his older son, now age four.

As for the stainless steel refrigerator and dishwasher, Darshan was content with the ones he and his wife Sandeep already had. But Sandeep felt stainless steel would tie in well with their existing stainless steel counter top, sinks, oven hood and microwave. “Basically anything that I acquire now is a perk,” Darshan says. “I’m upgrading myself with trade.”

From a business point of view, the beauty of trade is that it attracts customers Darshan wouldn’t normally get, both locally and from further afield in Kitchener, Cambridge, Hamilton and Toronto. Also, trade allows him to get full retail value for his surplus stock rather than having it sit around at the store.

With 5,000 square feet of floor space, Discount Carpet Gallery sells much more than just carpet. It also offers vinyl, ceramic tile, laminate, hardwood and cork, as well paint and wallpaper. Thus the store’s motto: “We’ve got you covered from floor to ceiling.”

Darshan’s biggest trade items are carpet, vinyl flooring and ceramic tile, and his total trade volume since joining Tradebank is around \$150,000. He takes trade on anything he has in stock and accepts full trade up to \$5,000.



Darshan Singh sings the praises of Tradebank (continued..)

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Located at 65 Dawson Road in Guelph, Discount Carpet Gallery doesn't advertise in the telephone book. Instead, Darshan relies on referrals and repeat customers for most of his business. The bulk of his clients are commercial: among them Wal-Mart, Travel Lodge, Best Western and the Hilton Hampton hotel chain, including the new Hilton Hampton being built in Kitchener. Surplus product from large commercial jobs is often what ends up on the trade floor, to the delight of home and business owners looking to pick up carpet and other merchandise while keeping their cash reserves intact.

In explaining his business success, Darshan emphasizes service. Whether it's trade, cash or a combination, "I don't force anybody into a sale. I'm quite calm and relaxed. Basically we treat customers like family."