

## Title:

How to Open a Boutique

## Word Count:

947

## Summary:

A boutique is defined as a small retail shop offering specialized products and services, often selling gifts, apparel or accessories. In the last few years as the number of people interested in starting their own business has increased so has the number of boutiques across the United States. Boutiques can be found in malls, shopping centers and outlets, offering a chance for customers to find unique merchandise at prices they can afford with superior customer service and quality.

## Keywords:

Hip Hop Clothing Wholesale Hip Hop clothing and other accessories

## Article Body:

So what does this have to do with opening a boutique? Mostly it's about defining a destination. The first actual step in opening a boutique is desire. Many of us work a weekly job, full time in and full time out under the direction of someone else. For some people it's not a lifestyle they prefer, but one that pays the bills. Sooner or later many people hit on the idea that it would be great to run their own business, which would still provide financial security, but would give them the flexibility to live their lives to the fullest while still pulling in a paycheck, and even doing work that they love. With a strong market demand and fairly straight forward methods of operation boutique ownership appeals to many and creates that opportunity to get out of a dead end job and start doing something you love.

Once you've made the decision to start a boutique there are many initial questions that you may be asking yourself on how to begin. Taken all at once these questions can be overwhelming, enough so that many people return to their jobs and just dream about what they could have done instead of venturing onward. Instead of giving up take the time to sit down and write down your questions. This way you can decide which aspects are most important and focus on those first. These may be questions such as:

1. What kind of boutique do I want to run?
2. What will I sell and where will I get it?

3. Where will I locate my boutique?
4. How will I finance my boutique?
5. How will I get customers?

These five are some of the biggest questions and the ones that will be discussed here.

What kind of boutique?

This is one of the most important questions to answer as it will determine the answers or at least the right direction to look for answers for the other questions. In order for a boutique to be successful it needs to fill a niche in the community where it is being opened. This does not mean that it has to be the strangest idea that you can think of, but that you need to take a moment and look around the area where you are thinking of starting your boutique. What kinds of shops already exist there? What is missing? Your niche is in that space of what is missing where you will provide the best customer service and prices for what you choose to sell. For example there may be many clothing stores in your area, but nothing specifically for teenagers interested in reasonably priced hip hop clothing. This is a niche you can fill.

Once you determine your niche write it down on a piece of paper. This will be the start of your business plan.

What will I sell?

Having determined the niche you wish to fill it make take a little research to decide what inventory belongs in that niche. Check out websites and, if possible, talk to some of your potential customer base and see what items they are looking for. In our Hip Hop example some of the items might be the following:

- Nike Air Jordan shoes
- Fleece Hoodies
- Military style jackets
- Multi pocketed jeans
- Multi finger rings
- Head rags or bandanas

You may not choose to carry everything that goes on this initial list but it will give you an idea of what you are looking for.

Where do I get it?

There are many options for where you will acquire your inventory. You will need to research your local wholesalers and manufacturers to see what they carry that you can invest in. As well in most major cities there are markets that are designed to bring together manufacturers and small business owners. A little research will help you determine what cities near you have such markets and when they are open. Cities like Los Angeles may have consistently open markets while other cities may only have a specific weeklong show. Get on the lists for these shows and attend. While you are at the show take your time to make sure you've looked over all the possibilities at that show before you put in orders and begin to acquire your beginning inventory. Think about colors and cuts that you want and order in appropriate quantities. Most manufacturers will require that you buy at least four pieces in any given style per color. Do not buy more than this as it will be too much for an opening shop and keep your options simple the first time out. You want to have a full boutique, but not break the bank on your first shopping trip.

Where to put your boutique?

When deciding where to locate your boutique you will want to consider several things. First of all you will need to decide if you want your boutique in a mall or a shopping center. A mall guarantees a certain amount of traffic because of the location, but also requires that you work within the rules of the mall including hours of operation, pricing and possibly shop design. A shopping center gives you more flexibility but requires more work in advertising to drive business to your store. If you want to be in a mall you will need to contact the mall in question and get from them leasing information and mall requirements. The same is true in the case of a shopping center, but you will be inquiring of the Landlord for lease information. It takes approximately 30-90 days to prepare a shop for opening so you will want to negotiate for at least 30 days of