



Gary's Vacuums & Stamps

If you always do, what you always did; you always get, what you always got. A bit of a tongue twister perhaps, but a ton of wisdom resides in those words. In our struggling economy, businesses have to seriously evaluate what they do, why they do it and the effect of their actions. Today there is no room for business as usual.

Successful businesses understand the need to see the world with the eyes of their customers. As customers change, so must business. Cody has many businesses who are masters of "reinventing themselves" in order to meet customer needs. Perhaps the most creative is Gary's Vacuums and Stamps on the top of the hill.

The business, started 30 years ago as Scotty's, began with a focus on vacuums and vacuum products. The custom signs and stamp work filled in the slow periods for the retail store. However, the changing behavior of customers caused owner Gary Hoffman to seek ways to add customer focused services to his product mix. Previously, many orders had to be sent out of town to be done. Gary automated the in-house capabilities to meet the immediate needs of his customers.

Current owners Laura Nielson and Lynn Steward learned the lesson well from their stepfather. As an example, as hardwood floors have become more common, the store's product



Lynn Steward and Laura Nielson, co-owners, create intricate, tailored products with their new laser engraver.

line changed to meet those needs. Their engraving and stamp service has also grown with the times. The store recently purchased a laser engraver to enhance their ability to create tailored signage, name tags or unique customer products. This high tech device can take a complicated digital image and reproduce it in silhouette on a variety of mediums. They are currently experimenting with engraving on wood.

Businesses have to be creative to maintain their customer base. As Lynn says, "It's a customized world now." The ability to reinvent your business constantly may be the key to surviving the times.



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