

To whom it may concern,

I am not typically enthusiastic about funerals. While they can be hopeful I'm not often caught walking away with a smile. However, the funeral for my Huntsville store has been an exciting occasion. Granted a business lacks the emotional connections of people...

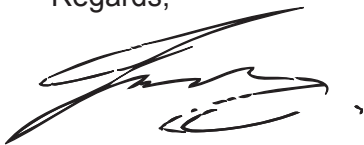
When I interviewed with Mr. Smith along with a partner, our GM, I sensed that if we were to hook our horse up on any pole, this appeared to be the right pole to hitch it to. However, it was a gamble. Mike and his team had scant experience in our notoriously tricky industry. This was as much an adventure for them as it was for myself. However, their approach, their ethos, and their methodology identically matched who we are and what we wanted to achieve. If we were going to outsource this endeavor, Mike and soon Matt Miller were the men we needed.

When Matthew Miller came galloping to Huntsville with all the command of a confident sheriff, he had little idea what issues would soon arise. Understanding these issues, I was very guarded in my expectations. I expected a million things to be his potential undoing, and though I was not dour, nor pessimistic, I neither allowed myself to form expectations as we approached opening day of our sale.

Expectations in some form are unavoidable. And what ever form they took, they were certainly exceeded. Not only were sales far more robust out of the gates than we anticipated, Matthew's ability to drive sales, to manage a complex affair, and to preserve motivation and momentum were remarkable. My hat's off to Mike, Matt and their entire team.

It has been a pleasure, virtually every step of the way. And in spite of my years in this business, my experience in retail, I too have learned a thing or two from these men. I could not recommend hiring Smith Solutions more enthusiastically. I am practically inventing reasons to have them back, albeit not for a funeral, but for some fantastic sale event. They understand, they understand my need to focus on my business even as this one winds down. They understand our need to make good margin to offset the cost of closure. They understand the position we are in shutting an underperforming asset. And more importantly, they understand the anatomy of a sale and the impulsive mind of the consumer. They have demonstrated their ability and expertise in yet a new and different industry.

Regards,



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To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter as an addendum to one I wrote as our sale was underway. Our GOB carried on for three months, from Mid-February to Memorial Day. Today is almost a month after closing and we are in the final days of sweeping clean the old location in Huntsville.

As I mentioned before, I avoided forming concrete expectations though some measure of expectations are unavoidable. Or maybe hope. Maybe I was able to avoid expectations while maintaining some muted hope of a smashing sale. That said, our event exceeded my hopeful ambition, both monetarily and logistically. Logistical challenges constantly arose, but they were predominately welcome challenges: ie, moving old merchandise from other locations to the GOB so that we could preserve our perpetual momentum. Other challenges arose concerning staff and fulfillment. Remarkably, Matt Miller handled these issues with skill without ever losing his vision for driving sales and preserving as much margin as possible.

When Matt called nearing the last day of the sale to claim he had about cleared 'this PIG', I was not prepared for the comforting extent that he had succeeded. When I first visited the store after the close of the sale, I found enough open space to spark a rugby match. 'The pigs' were gone, and throughout, money was made and made well. Five year old inventory, the impossible-to-sell goods were almost all gone. Among the few sets of casual furniture that remained, most of it was current stock that I was happy to bring back to my other stores where I knew it would move and move quickly. The place was clean and financially, depending on who you ask, we muscled past an informal finish line by between 200 and 300K. In the end I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that I made the best choice possible in teaming with Michael and Matthew of Smith Business Solutions and from just about any and every conceivable angle, goals were exceeded and our sale was a smashing success. And finally, I will no longer be calling those loser goods that don't move 'dogs', from this point forward they will forever be pigs in the pit.



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