

BUSINESS

13 Coats for kids sought

15 Time for a screening?

17 Onions on the eyes

SECTION COORDINATOR Janaya Fuller-Evans, 604-444-3024 jfuller-evans@burnabynow.com

'ONE DAY I BOUGHT A BED. THEN, ONE DAY I BOUGHT A HUNDRED BEDS.' – JEFF SCHWARZ

City's liquidation king keeping it real

Direct Liquidation owner Jeff Schwarz often sees the value in what others cast off.

The Burnaby business man and star of *The Liquidator*, a reality television show airing on OLN, began his bargain hunting and selling business almost 20 years ago, when his wife's great-aunt passed away.

The family was trying to figure out what to do with her belongings, so he offered \$500 for the lot and took it to the Vancouver Flea Market to sell it off on the weekends.

"I saw potential," he says of the belongings, which filled about 50 pick-up truckloads. "I knew that I was going to run out of inventory, so I sort of had to figure out how to get more inventory."

He then went on to deal in second-hand furniture, he says, working his way up to his current business – buying and selling big batches of products from his 30,000-square-foot warehouse in Burnaby.

"One day I bought a bed," he says. "Then, one day I bought a hundred beds."

The space at 6990 Greenwood St. is filled with stacks of photo albums, baby toys, film props and furniture as far as the eye can see.

Within all that chaos, Schwarz and the crew from OLN film his television show.

Schwarz makes call after call, attempting to sell off a large batch of hockey jerseys. Meanwhile, the camera crew works around him, as do his employees. Customers wander in and out, and one man approaches, offering to sell him computer headsets.

When he finds out they aren't Bluetooth, Schwarz shakes his head – he's already got a large batch of Bluetooth headsets he's trying to sell.

"I'll make you an offer, but don't take it, OK? I'll give you \$200," he says.

While Schwarz can come across as brash and quick to make or reject a deal, he says he tries to be respectful in his dealings.

"If you negotiate with a bit of a smile, you're gonna get a lot further," he says.

One man enters the warehouse to get a photo with Schwarz – his wife is a fan of the show.

Schwarz started his dual career as a TV personality almost by accident, attending a launch party for another show with a friend. He met the executive producer and things took off from there.

"The next thing I knew, there was a film crew and they filmed a pilot, and the rest is history," he says.

While filming the show and maintaining his business is taxing, Schwarz has come to enjoy the pace.

"If it ends, there will be a void in my life," he says. "At the end of the day, it becomes part of you."



Larry Wright/BURNABY NOW

The art of the deal: Direct Liquidation owner Jeff Schwarz films his OLN reality TV show from his warehouse. The Burnaby businessman sells everything from beds to go-karts.



One of the challenges Schwarz faces is keeping the show as realistic as possible, he says, something he's learned isn't common for many reality television shows.

"I want to make sure everything is as real as it's going to get," he says.

Another challenge is finding buyers or sellers who are willing to go on camera,



he adds.

But every day is interesting and different, according to Schwarz.

On the day the *Burnaby NOW* visited the set, he had purchased a wrestling mat and was trying to find a buyer for it.

The most interesting purchase he has made was 36,000 sex toys, he says.

"Try selling that with a straight face,

at the same time you're selling mattresses," Schwarz says, laughing.

"Every day it's a new event," he says. "There's new people walking in your door."

Viewers can catch Schwarz's second season on OLN starting Nov. 8.

For more on the Burnaby store and the show, go to directliquidation.ca.

Check www.Burnabynow.com for breaking news, photo galleries, blogs and more