

Brother International Corporation

Dealer Courts Sewing Enthusiasts with TV Spot

Here's every dealer's dream: A television crew rolls up in front of your shop. As lighting and cameras are adjusted, a well-groomed on-air reporter shoves a microphone in your face and asks you why the public's interest in sewing is increasing. (Cha-ching!)

For Laura Jordan, whose 4-year-old South Florida dealership represents the complete sewing, embroidery and quilting product line from Brother, that was exactly what happened. Her shop, Laura's Sewing & Vacuum in Palm Beach Gardens, was featured on local television news in a story about the recent revival in sewing. This dream exposure was no fluke. It's just one result from reaching out to her customers in ways, and into areas, she knows she's going to find them.

Specifically, Jordan used the funds accumulated in her Brother co-op account to create a commercial promoting her store and highlighting the classes and clubs offered. She booked the spot on the channels she knew her customers were watching and she says it was the best thing she could have done for her business. The commercials were effective in their own right, but the unexpected payoff came when a local TV news reporter saw the commercial and tapped Jordan as a lead source in a story on the resurgence of sewing.

"It was perfect timing! I was running these commercials and somehow people were talking about it. How many dealers do you know who want to hear that? It was the kind of moment any dealer dreams about," says Jordan.

"The commercials and the television exposure created a customer storm," she says. Traffic increased dramatically and interest in her already-full class schedule spurred her to tweak those plans, adding even more educational opportunities.

She also started carrying a more moderately priced line of Brother sewing and embroidery machines for beginners, including the 'Project Runway' Limited Edition licensed machines that have proven very popular in the wake of the hit reality TV fashion design series.



At 40, Jordan is one of Brother's younger dealers. Although she only opened her store in August 2005, she brings 30 years of industry experience to the task. Her father, a dealer in nearby Lantana, Florida, opened his own sewing machine and vacuum shop when Jordan was 10, so she literally grew up on the sales floor. Even during several years spent working as a legal secretary, Jordan continued to work intermittently in his shop. The satisfaction of working with customers proved

irresistible and Jordan eventually left the secretarial world to open her own store. She knew what customers in the upscale area wanted and she knew where to get it.

"When I opened up here, I said this is Palm Beach Gardens. I wanted Disney big-time in this area. I wanted Disney in my window," she says.

"Brother had Disney, Brother gave me a chance and it's been a great partnership ever since," she says. The uncommon level of dealer support including my

There were more challenges than she expected, but her practical experience, flat-out enthusiasm and the “day-one” backing from Brother made the difference.

ability to earn co-op funds, is remarkable. Business was strong from the start, requiring Jordan to add an additional 1,800 square feet before her first anniversary just to provide enough space for her popular classes. She now employs four people and has 10-15 teachers on staff, including her husband and co-owner, Dave, who is one of her best salespeople working during his off-hours from his full-time job with UPS.

Laura's Sewing has two monthly clubs, including one focused on embroidery and the 'Creative Club' which attracts up to 50 women at its monthly meetings. "The projects for this group don't always incorporate sewing or embroidery," she explains, "but cater to the fact that many sewing hobbyists also dabble in other creative processes."

A quilters club is in the works and the store has begun stocking more fabric and holding quilt-making competitions as part of its launch into that market segment. Laura's Sewing also attracts students with learn-to-sew classes, many of which are held at night.

"The people who work—maybe ages 25 up to 50—really want to learn to sew. It's the younger crowd, which I'm really excited about," she says.

Jordan pushes the hunt for the younger crowd even further with her successful 'Kids Sewing Camp' and 'Laura's High School Project,' which is a contest for students now in its second year. For this event, she contacts area high schools with sewing programs and invites students to compete in four different skill levels to win Brother sewing and embroidery machines. Contestants must make a dress, purse and skirt.

“Brother definitely supported me and I definitely think they support their dealers way more than others,” she says.



This year she had 50 entries. The competition stirs up interest and points the aspiring designers toward Laura's as a resource. "Plus its produced machine sales," she says.

Another of her successful classes is her 'Learn Your Machine' class. Jordan sees no reason to limit this to customers who have purchased machines from her. She opens it up to anyone who's bought a sewing machine anywhere.

"The classes, clubs and outreach to younger beginners are demanding, along with running a busy sales and service operation, but it's just part of her mission," she says. "I'm just trying to get the world sewing!" she says.

