

## Merchandising Memorabilia

Autographs are a prized possession for any sports fan, and autographed memorabilia is a great way for the average fan to own beautiful items from their favorite athletes to display in their homes. If you want to attract more fans to your store, a selection of autographed memorabilia is a great way to start. And if you want to boost sales of autographed items, you need to make sure you are merchandising your memorabilia in a way that attracts the attention of your customers.

**Make it a focal point** – Autographed memorabilia is a very visually stimulating type of collectible. People are drawn to it and love to look at signed items, much like art lovers enjoy walking through a museum or gallery. To draw more attention to your memorabilia items, give them a prominent display in your store. For instance, don't hide items on a shelf behind the cash register. Instead, consider a display in the center of your store. Or devote a single wall in your store just to items such as signed photos or plaques. Trading cards might look fine in a showcase, but memorabilia needs more of a premium-looking display. After all, these are premium-priced items.

**Appearance is everything** – Not only should your memorabilia be in a prominent display, sales will improve if the items are mounted in premium, ultraviolet-protected displays. Place your autographed baseballs in a ball holder. Autographed jerseys that are already mounted in a framed and matted display are more likely to sell than a jersey that is simply folded and stored in a display case. The nicer your item looks on the showroom floor, the more sales appeal it has. Someone who is buying an item as a gift will appreciate not having to worry about separately purchasing a display or frame. Plus, these types of displays add a nice profit margin to your memorabilia sales.

**The 'wow' factor** – Want to attract some big spenders? Then invest in a couple of pieces of very high-end memorabilia. Super-premium Upper Deck Authenticated items signed by the likes of Michael Jordan or Tiger Woods and their new line of Breaking Through pieces have numerous benefits if displayed in your store. First, they'll attract attention from all of your customers, who will likely tell others to stop in your store to see these amazing items. Second, they'll identify your store as one that offers access to the best memorabilia available on the market, which will help boost your other memorabilia sales. As a result, the word will get around to the big spenders in your area that your business has these items available.

**Variety is the key** – From current stars to retired Hall of Famers, the demand for autographed memorabilia spans a wide variety of consumer tastes. Be sure to offer a variety of items that cater to these tastes, as well as a variety of budgets. Also make sure to highlight the newest additions to your inventory. This will motivate customers to check with your store on a regular basis to see the newest items.

**Local flavor** – As you build your memorabilia inventory, be sure to offer an emphasis on the local history of your marketplace. Every sports team has a long line of players who may not be nationally recognized, but are remembered by fans in their respective markets. Find out if any of these former players still live in your area and contact them for a potential appearance in your store. Use these sessions as a way to boost awareness of your overall autograph inventory.

**Stand behind your products** – Make sure to educate your customers on the steps being taken by companies like Upper Deck Authenticated to certify the authenticity of their items and educate them on the fact your store only deals with reputable companies such as this. Also stress to your customers that you stand behind the authenticity of the items in your store with a 100-percent, money-back guarantee. Make sure customers know they cannot find this same type of service and credibility from on-line retailers in most cases.

Autographed memorabilia is a natural ingredient for any diversified sports collectibles store. How well you merchandise these items is critical to how well they will sell. Take the time to create a

memorabilia section for your store that will be considered a must-see attraction for your customers.