

Roger Minger

Umatilla, Florida



Jolly Roger's Guns Gold & Pawn Inc.

Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Roger Minger:

After a 31 year career as a Florida Firefighter-Paramedic Lieutenant, Roger Minger, Owner of Jolly Roger's Guns Gold & Pawn Inc., acted on a piece of advice given to him in 1996 by his best friend's father. Minger shared the story behind his journey and explained how the pawn industry is much more dynamic than just exchanging unwanted items for cash.

"I watched my best friend's father build a successful CB and Ham Radio repair and sales business," Minger said. "He literally started the business out of a closet in his house. He was the most successful business man I knew and that had a big impact on me. Around 1996, when I was having some career challenges, we had lunch and I asked him if he had the opportunity to do it all over again what would he do. He said he would start a pawn shop."

Minger, not only held onto that thought for nearly 20 years, he also spent many years studying the industry and researching how to own and operate a successful pawn shop. He also went to as many yard sales and auctions as possible. He wanted to learn what people would buy and how to properly negotiate. Towards the end of his career as a Firefighter, Minger received a second piece of advice that truly set the wheels in motion.

"A retired firefighter friend said I could take my entire retirement as a lump sum payout," he said. "That, along with a health scare in September 2014, is what gave me the push I needed to move forward. At that point in my life, it was now or never."

Minger proceeded to secure a location, completed all the necessary paperwork and licensing and got his financials in order for an April 2015 launch.

"We brought some stuff from home, but when we opened, the store was pretty bare," Minger said. "However, I quickly learned that with a pawn shop, you don't need inventory. Customers will bring it to you."

According to Minger, the concept of a pawn shop is simple, yet fairly complicated at the same time. To be successful, you have to learn, not only how to read people, but also how to speak with people and how to propose an arrangement that works best for their situation.

"People see Pawn Stars on TV and think that pawn shops simply exchange items for cash," he said. "We do much more than that. For

people in need of quick cash that don't want to let go of their items, we offer loans. It works like this. You bring me something of value, I give you the cash as a 'loan', I hold your item as collateral and then, when you no longer need the money, you pay me back plus interest and you get your item back."

Minger and his wife, Tammi, who handles the money and most of the paperwork, have dealt with challenges including stolen merchandise and the popularity of peer-to-peer selling websites like Offer Up, Craigslist and Facebook Marketplace. Nevertheless, they're excited about helping more customers and are optimistic about the future of their business.

"We're definitely looking to grow, but we're not trying to be giant," Minger said. "We'd like to eventually have a slightly bigger building and be in a position to hire some part-time help to allow Tammi and I to have some time off. Our ultimate goal is to build ourselves a better retirement."

What advice does Minger have for aspiring entrepreneurs? "Gather as much info and do as much research as possible before you take the plunge," he said. "Use resources like the Small Business Development Council (SBDC) and go talk to people in the business. The SBDC offers business classes. We found those to be extremely helpful. We also toured pawn shops all over central Florida. Also, remember that if your business is a brick and mortar, you have to understand that you just got yourself another house and another budget. That's the reality of it."

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