



**Do What You Love!
Make Money from
Your Home *Or Website***



How To Start Your Own *Profitable* Personal Shopper Service

By Barbara Buyers

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Contents

	Page
Introduction (Read First)	03
The Tasks Of A Personal Shopper	04
Your Opportunities	06
Benefits Of Being A Personal Shopper	10
Are You Right For The Business?	12
Finding Your Niche	14
Basic Desired Skills	17
Learning Personal Shopping	20
Do Your Home Work	22
Becoming A Personal Shopper	24
Being A Personal Shopper	
Personalizing Needs And Wishes	27
Enhancing Your Service	31
Dealing With Vendors	34
Career Choices	
Employment Opportunities	42
Your Own Personal Shopper Business	46
Your Business Structure	48
Types of Insurance	51
Setting Up Your Office	53
Regarding Employees	56
Money Matters	57
Marketing Your Services	
Gaining Clients - Selling Your Services	62
A Word In Closing	67
Resources	
Resources - About Products	68
Business Resources	73

Introduction

Being a normal female I have always loved to shop. The old adage "Born to shop," is more than descriptive of yours truly. Above and beyond monetary considerations, the main roadblock for most people is time.

The responsibilities tied to today's adult life sure put a big crimp in my old *shop till you drop* lifestyle, as it does with most people. Today, an increasing percentage of people have less time for leisure, including shopping for clothing, gifts or even food.

With the growing demands on their time, busy people are increasingly turning to a personal shopper (conciierge). As a result, there are more opportunities than ever before to turn your love of shopping into a career as I did.

Of course, it takes more than a love of shopping to become professional and successful in this exciting business.

You must be able to juggle a dozen different projects at once and make sure they all turn out well, and within preset deadlines.

You are probably reading this book after thinking long and hard about starting your own home business. You are excited, anxious, maybe even scared, all natural emotions when considering such a lifestyle change.

Although I can't make the big leap for you, this book is deigned to give you the basic information, and to help you plan your next step.

Keep in mind, that a personal shopper service runs on the most basic of principle. That is, the fact that people want things done but don't have time to do them. At the same time, they are happy to pay someone to take care of their business efficiently and preferably with a touch of class. Why not let that someone be you?

This course's goal is to provide you with all the facts you need to:

- First, to decide if a personal shopper (conciierge) service is *the* right business for you.
- And, show you how-to promote your business for maximum results, and keep your business on the road to success.

I do hope that you are ready to learn everything about the world of personal shopper and that you are enthusiastic about undertaking a fun business where you can carve out your own niche.

But always remember, your new career will be exactly what you make it.

In the following pages you will learn about my profession, being a personal shopper, the different job titles that are commonly used, and the many benefits of this wonderful career of mine.

Best wishes;

Barbara Buyers

The Tasks Of A Personal Shopper

First, coming to grips with terms. The extent of duties you perform will characterize you as a "Personal Shopper," or a so-called "Concierge."

- purchasing clothing items
- grocery shopping
- pet grooming
- walking the dog
- booking theatre tickets
- cleaning
- house sitting
- deliveries and collection
- paying bills
- arranging birthday parties, etc..

Even though more and more people are becoming familiar with the term "concierge," very few know where this customer service-based profession originated.

The word "concierge" progressed from the French expression 'comte des cierges,' the "keeper of the candles," a term that referred to the servant who attended to the whims of visiting noblemen at medieval castles.

Eventually, the name "concierge" came to stand for the keepers of the keys at public buildings, especially hotels.

Service personnel known as concierges first showed up in some luxury hotels in Europe in the 1930s. Then, as now, their duties were to welcome and assist guests throughout their stay.

Traditionally, male concierges were mostly found in the better hotels. Today, there are as many female as male concierges in the United States, at the same time in Europe the concierge industry remains for the most part male.

In reality the two terms are basically the same and compatible, yet in this book I'll refer to the service as a "Personal Shopper."

A personal shopper is, simply, someone hired to shop for other people. While some personal shoppers specialize in a particular area, others may shop for virtually any product or service their clients want.

And, what do people want? According to an annual consumer survey, clothing and accessories top most gift givers' lists, so say 89% of shoppers last holiday season.

The most popular gift items named listed include:

- clothing and accessories (89%)
- toys and games (66%)
- perfume and cologne (53%)
- home furnishings (34%)
- experiential gifts such as a night out or spa visit (27%)
- health or sports equipment (26%)
- Gourmet food (22%)

One of the most popular specializations for personal shoppers is women's fashion. Personal shoppers are often hired by wealthy socialites as well as busy working moms to help them, look their best.

But personal shoppers are not only hired by individuals. A very lucrative specialty for some personal shoppers is buying gifts for corporate clients to give to their customers or employees.

These days, few people have the time they need to research markets, including online, that offer an incredible number of things to choose from as corporate gifts or personal purchases.

Add to this the reality that many people do not trust their own taste, and you have a large population of potential clients ready for your help.

Your Opportunities

The field of personal shopping offers *two* main career alternatives, both of which are included in this guide.

Being Employed By A Company

Where you wish the security that comes with being an employee, you could consider working as a personal shopper for a company.

In this case your best choice is the retail industry which is far ahead of any other industry in the sheer number of jobs for personal shoppers who want a steady paycheck.

Most of these positions are with the more upscale stores. In the midst of the many retailers that employ personal shoppers are: Macy's, Bloomingdale's, Neiman Marcus, Nordstrom, Saks Fifth Avenue, and Tiffany & Co.

Additionally, there are many boutiques and other retailers throughout America that offer personal shopping services to their customers.

In your capacity as a personal shopper for a retailer, your clients will be limited the store's customers. You will establish close relationships with them and keep track of their important events, such as birthdays, anniversaries, etc..

Whenever they need something, you will shop *within your own store* to find the perfect item, be it a gift, a business outfit, or an accessory for their home. Also, you will coordinate everything involved in the purchase, including any alterations, gift wrapping, and delivery.

Contrasting with a straight sales position, you are not expected to reside at the cash register and make yourself available on the floor to serve customers.

You are expected to communicate with customers and to make every effort to set up appointments convenient for them.

Going to work for a retailer can be such a fabulous job that many personal shoppers stay in that position for years, or make it their career.

In addition to these positions with retailers, there are associated job opportunities with other types of companies.

For example, a quantity of corporations employ personal shoppers whose job description includes shopping for products and services for their companies' employees.

Creating Your Own Clients

Then again, you can start your own personal shopping business. This way you can enjoy the freedom and challenge of working with a variety of clients.

In addition to clients who are, in reality, too busy to shop for themselves, personal shoppers are also hired by people who don't trust their own judgment when it comes to making purchases, and want an expert (that's you) to do their shopping for them.

Depending on what each client needs, you may be hired to buy hundreds of gifts or a single special item.

Here's a list of a few possibilities:

- You will be hired by busy executives to buy gifts for their, secretary, assistant, and family
- Hunting down the perfect gift baskets or other promotional items for a company to give their important clients
- Shopping for clothing, furniture, food, and other items for wealthy families
- Attending to the shopping needs of senior citizens and others who find it difficult to get around
- Deciding on gifts for birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, retirements, Valentine's Day, and other special occasions

Naturally, you will first confer with your clients about what they need and how much they want to spend, then you will make recommendations, find stores and companies that supply what your clients want, do the shopping and, if necessary, arrange for gift-wrapping or shipping.

For your regular clients, you will keep track of their preferences and sizes, and remind them of special occasions when they will need gifts.

Professional Titles

Here are several of the job titles you may hear when people talk about careers that involve shopping. Of course, this book only focuses on the first of these careers, Personal Shopper.

Personal Shopper

The expression "personal shopper" is used to describe people who consult with and shop for individual or corporate clients.

Some employers use this term to describe jobs that are merely customer service positions, such as taking telephone orders.

While there is certainly a element of consultation involved, the position requires not only determining if what the customer wanted was in stock, but also giving an opinion on sizing and so on. While this function isn't precisely personal shopping, it may be a way of acquiring experience for a consultative personal shopping job.

As stated, a *personal shopper service* is not employed directly by a hotel or a corporation. Instead you would market your services to clients you've located, and who pay you directly for buying gifts, travel arrangements, or a myriad other tasks.

Some of your clients may, however, be corporations which contract with you to be available for employee requests.

While personal shoppers typically appeal to a different market than those in hotels or corporations, their markets sometimes overlap.

For instance, a businessperson may use the services of a hotel concierge while traveling and the services of a personal shopper after returning home.

The personal shopper business is new and evolving so quickly that no hard and fast rules exist, in reality, this business is definitely what you make it.

A Gift Shopper

Naturally, as this name implies, the individual is a personal shopper who specializes in buying gifts, and is often utilized by gift stores.

A Customer Service Specialist

Some retailers bring into play this title for jobs that involve personal shopping. Customer service specialist can mean other things, however.

It can refer to a position in which you take care of customer complaints and problems, so be sure to ask exactly what the company means by the term before applying.

A Personal Concierge

This term is often used alternatively with personal shopper. Yet, it really implies a greater range of services to a smaller clientele.

Where you are a personal concierge, you may take care of buying clothing, household goods, and gifts, but you will probably also do other services for clients, such as receiving deliveries, overseeing household repairs, picking up dry cleaning, arranging theater or sports tickets, making restaurant reservations, taking cars in for servicing, addressing invitations and holiday cards, and so on.

Quite naturally, it requires that you know your customers, and their preferences and lifestyles extremely well.

An Image Consultant

Scores of personal shoppers also do some "image consulting," in other words, they give discreet advice to clients about how to improve their appearance.

Say you work as a personal shopper in the apparel area of a retail store you will do image consulting as well as shopping.

Likewise, if you have your own personal shopping business, you will be an image consultant for clients who want you to buy clothing for them.

On the other hand, the two careers are not exactly the same. Image consultants may give advice on many other aspects of appearance, like hair and make-up, as well as behavior and communication skills while not do any shopping for these clients.

A Retail Consultant

Occasionally you'll hear this term which is not used very often, and it often means just what it says:

That is, a 'Retail Consultant' is someone who confers with people who are planning purchases, but does not actually do the shopping and buying.

In fact, the term often refers to people who give advice to stores on a merchandise mix and so on.

A Shopping Service Provider

This category of business is also known as an "errand and shopping service." This form of personal shopping, involves shopping for precisely what the client asks for. That is, the client will already have chosen an item, including the color, style, etc. and simply needs you to pick it up for them.

In other words, much of the meeting aspect is removed from your duties. The items you pick up or shop for will be ordinary household goods, such as groceries, cleaning supplies, lawn care items and so on, and you will perform services such as picking up and distributing dry cleaning, prescriptions, and so forth.

A Stylist

As you might imagine a stylist specialize in fashion. They may offer image consulting and shopping services for celebrities, that is, helping them with their look for an awards show, or you may be hired to do "styling" for photo shoots.

Here you may select clothes for models in fashion magazines, find outfits for television shows, or coordinate the look of a group for a music video.

While this element of shopping is involved with being a stylist, the more important skill is having a good eye for what will look good when photographed.

Benefits Of Being A Personal Shopper

Whether it's because of time constraints or merely a desire for convenience, more and more consumers are turning to personal shoppers in an effort to streamline their lives.

While no official numbers are available on just how many people work as personal shoppers, you need to consider these facts:

More and more hotel concierges, after learning every aspect of the trade, are walking away from their jobs and starting their own personal shopping/concierge businesses.

Also, the Internet has made it easier for entrepreneurs to succeed in far-flung fields. For example, the Internet allows a personal shopper in Idaho to target potential clients in Louisiana, or even Paris.

Many reasons exist why personal shopping is an excellent career choice. The benefits of a personal shopping career include, among others:

No Formal Degree Is Necessary

Even though many personal shoppers do have an assortment of degrees, generally no degree is *required* or *needed* to become a personal shopper.

No special education, experience, or connections are needed to get started and to succeed.

An Exploding Field

Retail itself is a multi-billion dollar a year industry and opportunities for personal shoppers are increasing every year.

Although many personal shopping jobs are unadvertised, there are plenty of opportunities for newcomers.

Easy to Get Started

Contrasting to other enterprises that can cost you thousands of dollars to enter, you can become a personal shopper no matter what your current financial situation.

You can even start your own personal shopping business at home with little or no upfront expenses. Where you have access to transportation, a computer, and a phone, you have all that is necessary to get started.

You Have A High Profit Potential

As a personal shopper working for a large department store, you maintain a great deal of control over how much you can earn, especially where if your pay is fully or partially commission-based.

With your own personal shopping business you can earn up to \$50 or more per hour, depending on your location and clientele. Some of personal shoppers earn \$500 or more per day.

You Set Your Own Hours

Personal shoppers work by appointment, even where they work within a department store or other retail organization.

Even if you must be available when these busy people can fit you in, you can often develop a schedule with a great deal of breathing space.

If you start your own personal shopper service, you will have even greater flexibility to set your own hours and days of work.

Creating Good Relationships

Becoming a personal shopper gives you the opening to build good relationships with both your clients and your vendors. It's common to get thank you notes and calls, and some of your relationships will turn into long-lasting friendships.

Interesting Lifestyle

One thing I can assure you of, you won't be bored as a personal shopper. For instance, should you work for an organization, you've got to have knowledge of all the items they carry that fit your needs.

Beyond that, you've got to be aware of what accessories go with what outfits, or what add-on pieces of home decor go with which suite, and so on.

In addition you've got to be familiar with what the competing stores offer, and why your products and services are better for your clients.

So whether you work for one company or have your own personal shopping business, you'll be constantly learning about trends and what's coming onto the market in the near future.

Opportunities for Advancement

While personal shopping is itself a dream career, it can also be a stepping-stone to another fabulous occupation.

Once you're a successful personal shopper for a retail organization, many avenues for promotion will likely present themselves.

