

START HERE

Downtown: As Austin As It Gets



Mercury Rising

When Steve Shuck and Bobby Johns opened their eclectic Mercury Design Studio in the 2nd Street District, they came in hopes of catering to the area's urbane, cosmopolitan customers.

"For us, it was about finding the urban customer with a sophisticated style, who can appreciate the aesthetic of our merchandise," Shuck says.

For Shuck and Johns, whose shop sells plush custom furniture, unique home décor and whimsical gifts, the downtown district provided them with not only their target client, but many more. Shuck says that the boutique's customer base is almost evenly split between regulars, who live or work downtown, casual shoppers who are in the area for dinner or an event, and tourists browsing for unique finds.

"I've found that there's a real intent to buy with our customers downtown," Shuck says. "There's an incredible rate of conversion from customers walking in our door to those making purchases. Our customers are sophisticated, have disposable incomes and are not afraid to purchase."

Personality Is a Plus

Shuck also says that doing business downtown has enabled the team to create a more unique custom store for the discerning shopper.

"For us, opening a shop downtown means we can put our own personality into our merchandise without the risk of alienating the traditional mall customer," Shuck says. "We are able to cater to a more savvy shopper which encourages us to supply more specialized items. It's turned out to be a great, mutually beneficial relationship for us and our customers."

New Urbanism

Shuck says that perceived obstacles to shopping and doing business downtown are just that – perceived.

"One thing people worry about is parking," Shuck says. "There's parking literally within footsteps of anywhere a customer wants to go. Plus, Austin is maturing in its urbanism and is starting to accept that paying to park is a reality of downtown life."

Shuck, who once worried a mall-based community like Austin wouldn't embrace the urbanism of downtown, finds that customers are realizing that a greater quality of shopping can be found in the city's core than anywhere else.

"Customers are embracing downtown life and its unique shopping," Shuck says. "They get excited to come downtown, and that's only going to increase as the area continues to grow."



"I've found that there's a real intent to buy with shoppers downtown...Our customers are sophisticated, have disposable incomes and are not afraid to purchase."

Steve Rose
Owner

For more information:
Linda Asaf
Retail Recruiter
Downtown Austin Alliance
P: 512.619.3303
linda@downtownaustin.com