

Social commerce helps small businesses grow

By Yun Long, Reno Gazette-Journal

When you're trying to sell your product, exposure is key. And attracting that attention has become easier with the rise of social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter.

Reno resident Barbara Read's online business increased after she started posting her listings on websites and on the Facebook and Twitter feeds of friends and other potential buyers.

"It's about the exposure and the fact that you can deliver what you say you can," Read said. "It's about having satisfied customers. Because if you don't have satisfied customers, people are going to hear about it. Somebody is going to post it somewhere."

Read, 57, has been selling her crocheted items on eBay, Etsy, Yardsellr and other online marketplace websites to supplement her family's income after she lost her job in 2007.

"I don't make a lot," she said. "But I do make some, and it does help out."

Connections provided by websites, such as San Francisco-based startup YardSellr, which lets users post listings on almost anything on its site and sellers' Facebook pages, have increased sales.

"I had a few people go, 'Hey, can I put your stuff up on my Facebook page?'" Read said. "... I think that is why I have gotten more business."

Yardsellr founder and CEO Danny Leffel, 32, started the company in October 2009. Before launching the website, he

spent five years at eBay working on product strategy centered around a community of people who shared passions about a type of product. He left the online auction and shopping giant a couple years ago to work at another Silicon Valley startup before venturing out on his own.

Read the whole story