

Mattress Warehouse

“Your Best Dreams Begin Here”

By Jim Brumm



Keri and Stephen Schwartz

For siblings Stephen and Keri Schwartz, owning and operating a retail mattress store is more than just about selling beds. It's about a connection to the community.

The brother and sister team have run the Mattress Warehouse, in Napa's Riverpark Shopping Center since December of 2002.

Started in April of 2000 by their father, Eric Schwartz, who had been in the furniture line for 25 years, the Mattress Warehouse has become a mainstay among businesses in the community.

In the early years, Stephen and Keri worked with their father in his business, learning the ins and outs of the business and becoming experts on mattresses, while attending school in Berkeley; Stephen studying Business Administration, and Keri focusing on Legal Studies.

When their father passed away, Stephen and Keri stepped up to the plate, taking over the business and continuing their father's dream.

“We learned a lot in the first couple of months about the business end of things,” said Keri. “We knew the mattress end.”

Both Keri, 24, and Stephen, 28, grew up in Napa, attending Vintage High School and both feel a deep connection with their community.

Through hard work and a dedication to the business, they have grown the Mattress

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Warehouse into the valley's premier source for mattresses.

Part of their success is the philosophy they bring to their business. I noticed that they refer to mattress purchasers as clients instead of customers.

"We're locally- and family-owned," said Stephen. "Napa has a different culture as far as what they expect and how they'd like to be treated when they go into a store. We don't try to put people into a particular type or brand of mattress. We want to find the *best* bed for each client."

Stephen and Keri have adopted a strict no-commission policy at their store. They don't accept kickbacks, known as "spiffs," from manufacturers for promoting a particular bed, a common practice in the industry.

"We feel it's dishonest," said Stephen. "We view ourselves as teachers. Our goal is to educate people about how to choose their *own* bed based on their preferences. That's what drives our no-commission policy."

"People come back and thank us," said Keri. "When we do recommend a particular bed to someone, we base our recommendations on client feedback."



A good mattress, say Keri and Stephen Schwartz, can make the difference between having better energy during the day, or falling asleep at lunchtime.

mattress industry. It's a lot more than just picking out the same generic mattress. Now you can customize your bed."

There are a lot of ads that tout the benefits of a new, better mattress. No more sore backs, better, longer, deeper sleep, they claim. Does a great mattress really make that much of a difference? Keri laughs at this. "I've noticed that people who didn't even know they had a bad bed actually changed their lives after buying a new mattress," she said. "People really do come back and thank us, and that makes what we do so satisfying. We don't

actually sell beds," she added. "The clients sell themselves on the bed they choose. Ninety-nine percent of the people who walk through the door have no idea how to buy a bed, and there's no reason they should. That's where we step in to help. We educate them on how to make an intelligent choice to improve their quality of sleep. They tell us that they wake up feeling better."

So how do two siblings get along working so closely together? "Stephen is probably my best friend," said Keri, "We give and take a lot and work together well."

"There's a logical path to follow in running the business," added Stephen. "We get along well."

Since taking over the business, Stephen and Keri have become involved in other aspects of the community. They are members of the Chamber of Commerce, donate to scholarship funds at local schools and contribute to the music program at Vintage High School. "It's all about a connection to the community," said Stephen. "We want to give something back."

Stephen and Keri are part of the new wave in local business. Young and vibrant, they are bringing a new, fresh way of doing business to the market. Client care, honesty, integrity and concern for client satisfaction are the hallmarks of their business. This can be seen in their beautiful showroom and attention to detail when dealing with the public.

"Our goal is to make our clients happy," said Stephen. "If you go to other mattress stores, the employee might have worked there only a short time. Does that employee really have a vested interest in his customer? No. We think of it as a lifetime relationship. We'll be there when our clients are ready for their next mattress. And the next. If we find something that works for them, they're going to be happy. We're results oriented. No gimmicks."

The Mattress Warehouse is located at 1745 Imola Avenue in Napa, in the Riverpark Shopping Center. 707-258-2084.



The Mattress Warehouse stocks a wide variety of mattress types. All the popular name-brands are represented; Englander, Posturepedic, Simmons, Tempur-Pedic and more. It can be confusing. Want an adjustable bed? Need a special type of pillow? Keri and Stephen will help guide you through the selections until you find exactly what you are looking for.

"There are a lot of choices today," said Stephen. "It's like 20 years ago people just bought one brand of coffee, then Starbucks came along and people's consciousness about coffee was raised. It's the same in the