

Losing profitable

By Marie Cheetney
staff writer

Dick Schoenberg just lost \$100,000, but you couldn't tell it from the smile on his face.

What's the loss of \$100,000 if you've sold over \$1 million worth of snowblowers (that's 2,700 snowblowers, to be exact, all sold in a winter that didn't see much snow) and got mountains of publicity to boot.

"I got a lot of publicity and hope now to sell a lot of lawnmowers this year," said Schoenberg, owner of H & R Hardware, 37410 Joy.

Schoenberg's sales feat began last fall when he tackled a "full refund policy" onto each snowblower sold. If 48 inches of snow didn't fall by April 21, the policy read, customers could get their money back. Customers came in by the droves, much to the astonishment of competing hardware store owners who barely sold a dozen.

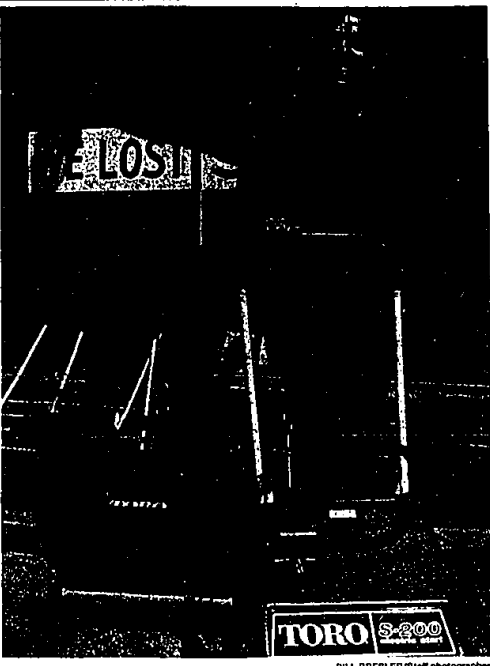
Well, 48 inches of snow didn't fall this winter, and last week 100 old customers showed up at Schoenberg's door, demanding that he make good on his promise.

"Most didn't want to return it, but needed the money because of the economy," said Schoenberg, a resident of Milford. "They were a little apologetic and said they would keep the unit if they were back to work."

Schoenberg is now recouping in a "slightly used" snowblower sale. He's shelved out in refunds. So far, he has sold 50 of the returned blowers, all at a reduced price. And he hopes to eventually "break even."

Would he do it again?

"You bet," Schoenberg said. "I'm now working on another promotion for next year and this one is going to be even better."



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