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The Practical Collector II

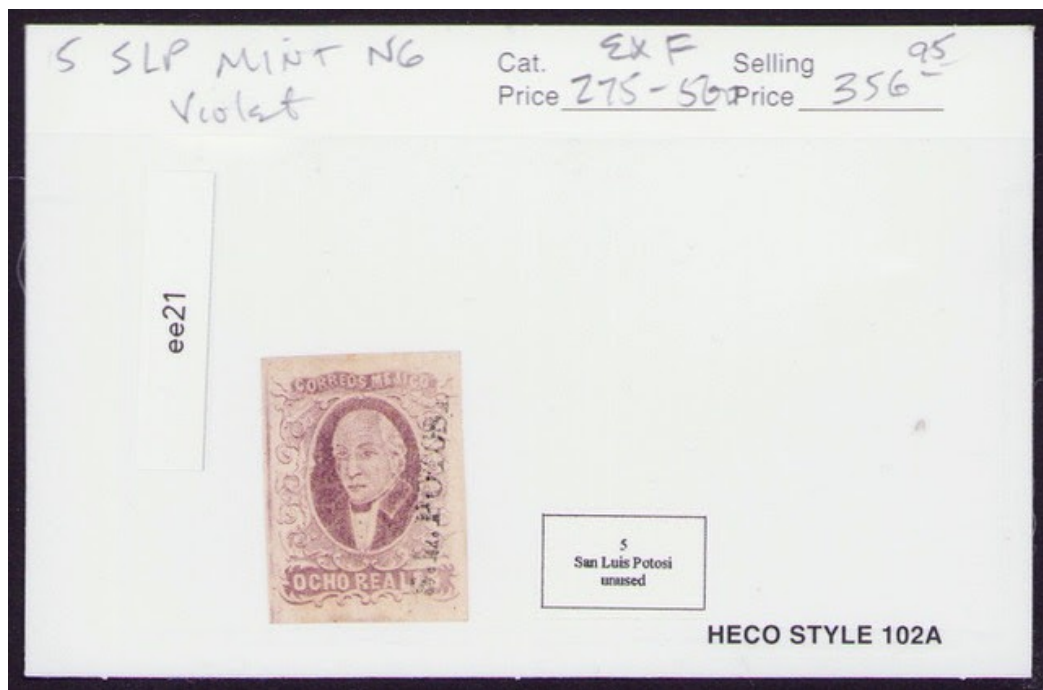
Opportunities We Overlook

Who would like to Deal in Stamps?



Online selling?

Many years ago, a famous stamp dealer, Dr. Ray Ameen, aka Doc Amen, passed away in his mid to late 80s; a good friend asked, "Who will replace Doc in the sale of Mexican Stamp?" For those of you who have never heard about Doc Ameen, he would bring large boxes of stamps to each of the national stamp shows. They were filled with many countries, but he was primarily known for having a good stock of Mexico. Not only was it deep in stamps of this beautiful country, his stock was also deep in Early Classics of Mexico. As a new-to-Mexico collector with a big appetite for the classics, I stopped at his table first. By his passing, I had already become an established dealer on eBay for Mexico. When my friend mentioned his passing with the woeful remark, it was also my question. Jump up twenty-plus years, and my friend mentioned the same thing upon hearing I was easing out of Mexican stamp sales. He said, "Bubba, who will replace you for the volume of nice Mexico for sale? I answered, "I do not know, but some other guys sell Mexico on eBay."



Typical 102A sales card for stocking and sales.

This stamp also has a MEPSI Certificate for Genuine.

My question today concerns someone wanting to be a dealer, regardless of what country or genre. I know from experience that many collectors have considered it. So, someone out there may like to hear my advice. I will form a list here off the cuff. I am sure many of my ideas only touch on the subject.

- The first thing is to know what you are selling. The biggest mistake many dealers make is to sell everything, including material they need to gain more knowledge about.
- Be fair about the prices you set for your material. Too high, and it will not sell. Too low, and you will not be fair to yourself.
- Realize that offering your material in any way takes considerable time. There is stock to add and scans to make; listing each item will take a lot of time if you sell them online. Then, you must deal with shipping and everything needed to finalize the lots.
- To be successful in listing, mention everything you can, including faults. If you hate returns, tell it like it is, or you will suffer with returns and the consequence of bad feedback.
- Avoid putting faults on the title, but mention them in the general description. Collectors will never open up a lot that mentions faults in the title.
- If you sell at shows, mention the faults because collectors will think your item is okay, only to get home and see the fault you should have mentioned.
- Do not brag about your material because if it is nice, the collector will know. But if you brag, they may disagree that you call something extra fine when they may think it is only very fine. Remember, the buyer is always correct. Calling something better than it is, will only ruin your reputation.
- Avoid asking extra for shipping on your material. Figure it into your sales as business overhead. Postage will only cost you around 1-2% of sales, figured out over a year as part of the cost of the material. Collectors will, however, understand the extra cost of shipping heavy items such as books or box lots.
- **DO NOT SELL FAKES! DO NOT REFUSE RETURNS! PAY FOR LOST ITEMS IN THE MAIL.**

Over the years, those last three things are in caps so that you will remember them. Know your material to avoid selling fakes or enhanced material. If you sell 'As Is,' you know you are selling something you don't know about or are not telling the buyers what is in the lot. If you are unwilling to pay for lost items, you will lose that client and everyone he knows. Just forget your clause that you will not pay for lost items in the mail. Used certified or registered mail on expensive lots.

Treating your client as you would want another seller to treat you is the only thing that can make you successful. Make a friend, and your success is guaranteed.

Enjoy!