

## STRATEGIES

# The next boxing champ?

■ Best Price Boxes buys back old moving boxes and will accept unusable ones for recycling.

By **DANIEL C. BARTEL**  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR-TELEGRAM

COLLEYVILLE — Before junking those old moving boxes, you might consider taking them to Hix Hardy. His company, Best Price Boxes, will buy them from you.

Best Price rounds up and new and used moving boxes and sells them to movers at a discount. The company buys boxes back after the move is finished, paying from 10 cents to \$1 per box. Best Price will even drive out to a location for bundles of 50 boxes or more and pick them up.

This type of customer outreach routinely catches people off guard, Hardy said.

"No one can believe that we physically drive out and pay for the boxes we just sold them," he said.

The company itself is fresh out of the box, having opened in September. But the door-to-door service and word-of-mouth is creating a strong customer base, enough to grow the business. In the past nine months, Hardy has hired 10 new employees and opened three Best Price shops — in Keller, North Richland Hills and Colleyville — and helped set up a franchise location in Flower Mound.

Hardy said he aims to set up 10 to 12 shops in the next few years. The company sells bubble wrap, packing tape, and other general moving supplies and can ship parcels via FedEx or UPS.

Moving-box sales are a specialty niche already filled, it would seem, by larger moving and storage companies. Dozens of small pack-and-mail shops dot Tarrant Coun-



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Hix Hardy, owner of Best Price Boxes, said he hopes to open more shops that sell discounted new and used moving boxes.

ty as well, also selling storage boxes and packing supplies.

The key difference for Best Price is that the company smiles upon used boxes, even those marred with old tape and scribbling, so long as they're still usable. "A used box works just as well as a new one," Hardy said.

The company even accepts unusable boxes to go into the recycling bin, which customers appreciate, he said.

By recycling used material, the company can set prices well below the competition, sometimes 50 percent to 80 percent lower. For example, a small moving box would cost \$1.70 at U-Haul and as much as \$2 at Public Storage, according to the companies' Web sites. A small used box at Best Price costs 89 cents and a new one \$1.19.

Costs add up quickly when moving. A bunch of new boxes needed to move a six-room house can cost upward of \$200 without taxes and shipping if ordered online through U-Haul. Through Best Price, the same number and types of boxes would run \$120 to \$140, depending on whether the boxes were new or used.

For this reason, used boxes go fast, and it's been a challenge keeping them in stock, Hardy said.

This is especially true in the late spring and summer months, normally a peak season for movers. Most people don't go looking for stores that sell moving boxes, said Chris Guidry, a Best Price franchise owner in Flower Mound, so Best Price has done well to do print advertising in newspapers and direct mail. However, most of the company's business comes through walk-ins and referrals, Hardy said.

Before the box business, Hardy owned another company that printed and leased out reusable banners for apartments. He applied the same recycling concept to Best Price after noting that moving boxes were in such abundant supply but were either being stored up or thrown away.

In mid-2005, Hardy purchased the site in Keller where the Best Price started and grew.

**ONLINE:**  
[www.bestpriceboxes.com](http://www.bestpriceboxes.com)

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Hix Hardy owns Best Price Boxes, which has three Tarrant County stores.

## Outboxing competition

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Hix Hardy is making a business out of recycling cardboard moving boxes. So far, his prices have remained below those of major competitors.

Best Price Boxes also offers delivery and already has three locations — in Keller, North Richland Hills and Colleyville — and 10 employees.

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