

TOP 10 COLLECTING MISTAKES

by John Merrick # 905

1. TRYING TO HAVE IT ALL

If you are new to collecting Canadian Tire or even diversifying your present collection it is very tempting to want it all right away. You need to have a direction or focus on what you are really trying to collect. Eagerness and enthusiasm is a great thing but slow down and come to the realization that you can't and shouldn't have it all when you first start collecting.

2. COLLECTING ALONE

Collecting is a passion and the most boring way to collect is to collect alone. Although online sites certainly have their place as a collecting aide, it can never replace the personal touch. You will have much more fun, meet like-minded collectors that share your passion and you can be involved in auctions and selling and trading items. You will also learn more than you ever thought possible about collecting Canadian Tire.

3. COLLECTING EXCLUSIVELY ONLINE

It is very easy to fall into today's technology trap and buy and sell online exclusively. If you only collect Canadian Tire through online sites such as eBay, you're missing so much. There is nothing like seeing items in person at auctions or at local meetings. An online picture doesn't teach you much about an item and there is always the possibility of having problems with your online purchase. It's very difficult to see the condition of an item in a couple of small pictures and for every reputable seller out there are just as many that are questionable.

4. BUYING CHEAP

There is nothing wrong with collecting on a budget, and enthusiasm loves volume when you first start collecting, but if you control buying volume and save for better items, in the long run you will have a much better and more valuable collection. If you do buy lower grade items, remember you can always sell or trade your original items when upgrading later on.

5. FAILING TO FOCUS YOUR COLLECTION

This is a little like trying to have it all but different. For example, if you just collect everything Canadian Tire that you can get your hands on and you don't focus, you will end up with a broad but somewhat boring collection. Additionally, if you collect too broadly then you may end up with many low to medium level items and never getting to rarer or more unusual items. Focusing your collection is not only going to save you from adding an addition to your house but will allow you to become much more knowledgeable and learn one or a few areas of collecting in depth. This will help you make smarter purchases and have a much more cohesive collection. Once you have sufficiently finished focusing on an area of collecting, there is no rule that says you can't start focusing on another area!

6. NARROWING YOUR FOCUS TOO MUCH

This may sound like a contradiction to the last rule, however, you can narrow your focus too much. If you put blinders on and only collect for example replacement coupons or two dollar coupons, you may never notice what else is out there to collect. Even if you do have a narrow focus on your collecting, continue to read books, our club newsletter and other sources to see what is new and you may find additional items that spark your interest.

7. KEEPING YOUR COLLECTION STORED AWAY

Enjoy your collection! Display your collection whenever and wherever possible. There is nothing as sad as a collector with a great collection stored away in boxes or safety deposit boxes never to be seen. This applies to more modern items than rare vintage items but for example if you collect Canadian Tire key chains, get two, one for your collection and one to use.

8. NOT PARTICIPATING IN AUCTIONS

As a Club, we have Club auctions and Donation auctions throughout the year that you can send in your bids by email or regular mail. We also have live auctions at most local Club meetings. This is an invaluable way to add to your collection or find that coupon you really want. We have strict guidelines as to listing the condition or quality of coupons and in the case of a mail in Club auction, you can have a scan of the coupon(s) you are interested in sent to you before you bid. This is probably the best source you will ever find for coupons.

9. THINKING YOU CAN'T CONTRIBUTE

Whether you are new to collecting Canadian Tire or if you have been collecting for decades you would be surprised at what you can contribute to our knowledge. Newer collectors are consistently finding new items to share with us all and finding new information about vintage collectibles too. Don't ever think you have nothing more to contribute and remember that contributing ensures we all enjoy our collecting even more.

10. LIVING AND BREATHING BY PRICE GUIDES

Price guides are essential to collecting (I have written five guides myself). Collecting guides are a great source of reference material that can help guide your collecting, give you invaluable information on what else is out there to collect, what is rare or not and to help appraise your collection. My advice is don't become a slave to guide prices. For example, you may find an extremely rare coupon in perfect UNC condition and it may be so rare that you might never see it again in your lifetime, so don't decide not to buy it because it was listed for "more than the guide said". Also, be careful of items being sold well below guide value as there may be a reason for this ie. some type of flaw. Lastly, don't forget that there are sometimes just great bargains out there, plain and simple.