

Woman weaves livelihood around Oriental rugs

By **MARIAN GOAD**
For The New Mexican

TIPS ON SUCCESS

- It is important to develop a relationship with the people you want to deal with — on any basis, but especially in business.
- Integrity and honesty will bring you more business than anything else.

she said.

“This gave me the idea of the beauty of this art — I had a background of appreciating this art,” she said.

Medghalchi studied the physical skills of restoration at the Carpet Museum in Tehran. She later experimented with dyes and weaving in the fine arts department at the University of Tehran. But most of her skill has come through experience, she says.

“I have the basic training for what I do, but most of it is self-training. I have restored at least 4,000 rugs. Still, when I get a new (rug), there’s a different way to



Melina Mara/The New Mexican

Shahin Medghalchi, owner of D&M Rug Services and Heriz Oriental Rugs, sits in her showroom wrapped in a Turkmen Salor rug.

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do it. I feel like each rug talks to me and requires a certain way of restoring and dealing with it,” she said.

The large front room of the building where Medghalchi has her workshop is filled with handmade rugs, mostly from Iran and Afghanistan, and a few from Turkey. This is Heriz Oriental Rugs.

The reds, blues, corals, maroons, and greens seem to deepen as your eyes become accustomed to them. “I do not have quantity, but I have quality,” Medghalchi said.

She considers the retail store a showroom, where people can come to see rugs. “I have the front room because I love the rugs, I love the art,” she said. She tries hard to create an atmosphere where people feel at ease

rather than pressured to buy. “We’ve had lots of compliments for that behavior,” Medghalchi said.

But the retail rug business has become very tough in the last couple of years, she said. “I don’t count on retail. The market is so strange out there.”

Recently, there has been a glut of imported Oriental rugs for sale.

“The last two years, it’s been so bad,” she said. “The market has been so saturated because of all the product that these rug dealers have brought to Santa Fe and dumped in the flea market and several non-Oriental rug galleries downtown. This is killing everybody because they are selling underpriced, even under wholesale prices, and I don’t know why.

“That hurts our business. We have over-

head, we want to stay all year long and service people and give them accommodation, whatever they need,” she said.

Because of instability in the retail rug trade, Medghalchi relies on her growing rug restoration business. “The restoration is working so well,” she said. She also cleans and stores rugs, creates customized padding, and does insurance appraisals.

The work with rugs and textiles is “very natural to me. I was born an artist — I paint, I do knitting, sewing, design jewelry, ballroom dance, sing, play music. I look at myself as a very lucky person to be able to deal with the sensitive part of existence.

“It is through art that we get sensitive. There, we get compassion and understanding and the depth that we need to be able to create and be productive. That’s the important thing,” she said.