



Get To Know Your Stock: Dollar Tree, Inc.

Like many companies, Dollar Tree, Inc. (DLTR) started as something that it is not today. In the 1950s, a gentleman named Kenneth R. Perry opened a franchise of the Ben Franklin five and dime stores in Norfolk, Virginia. The Ben Franklin name came from Mr Franklin's saying, 'a penny saved is a penny earned.' The store sold mostly arts and crafts items. Noticing that toys were hot sellers at Ben Franklin, Perry and a few partners started K&K Toys, located in shopping malls. The mall concept was new back then, and K&K started with a bang. However, as larger competitors struck more favorable deals for the latest toys, K&K began to struggle. The group decided to try its hand with the five and dime store again, essentially copying Ben Franklin but including a wider variety of items for sale. These mall-based stores were called Only \$1. The sale of K&K to KB Toys (later Toys 'R Us) helped fund an expansion of Only \$1, which spread throughout the US.

The Dollar Tree name was adopted in 1993; the company went public in 1995; and by 2010 the company had expanded into Canada. Four years later, it won a bidding war for Family Dollar.

Dollar Tree has had its share of knocks. It has run into trouble selling some items from China that were considered unsafe; it has had issues with disarray in stores – boxes blocking exits for instance; and it is sometimes cited for low pay, though that's a bit unfair since most retail pay is on the low end. Still, the company offers a training program into its manager positions and is relatively quick to promote.

Merchandise is sourced from a variety of countries and can range from phone chargers to sunglasses. Not everything is sold at a dollar any longer, but the prices are still cheap for most items. However, per unit prices on some items are actually higher than your local grocery store, so don't buy spices or cosmetics at dollar stores.

What are the weirdest things sold at the stores? Well, you can buy a steak at some Dollar Tree stores, and reviews say they aren't bad! But avoid the fake cheese. Other oddities include a bikini top made of clamshells, a piggy bank that is half pig, half sheep, and the Bald Man's Comb.

We'll skip the merchandise and just stick with the stock.

