
Show Tips for Artisans

This article contains hints and tips for doing a show, building a display, and attracting customers.

- **Price your items clearly.** Many people are too shy to ask, so you lose a sale.
- **Provide a list of future shows you have booked.** Some customers will go home and wish they had made a purchase. They will look you up at your next show if they know where to find you.
- **Have business cards out on your table.** They can be obtained so cheaply. That one follow-up sale often pays for their cost.
- **If you teach classes,** provide a list of your offerings and schedules.
- **Get a *real* cash box!** They can be obtained for under \$20.00 at most business supply stores. Working with a cardboard or plastic box looks unprofessional.
- **Make sure your table covering reaches to the floor.** Under the table is a great place to stash extra stock, but the clutter detracts from your display.
- **Everything on your table should be for sale.** Be prepared to sell that chair the teddy is sitting in, for instance. Many customers are looking for ways to display their treasures.
- Consider the purchase of decorating and craft magazine as a business expense. It's important to keep up with trends in color and style.
- **Focus on your customer!** Make buying a pleasant experience. Try to learn their name and use it often, it makes them feel important. If another crafter or visitor to your booth tries to engage you in conversation, say, "Right now I'm with a customer, we'll talk later."
- **Purchase bags!** Presenting a buyer with their newly purchase treasure in an old grocery bag is poor business practice.
- **Leave your children at home.** Shows are long and boring for young children. A whining child drives away customers and distracts you from your job .
- **Dress for success!** Be neat and well groomed. Dress in suitable attire.
- **Always wear a smile!** No one wants to buy from a grump!
- **It's fun to dress for the season or occasion.** A Christmas sweater or earrings make you more noticeable and reminds the customer there's a good reason to buy.
- **Photograph your display from time to time.** Review it at home with a critical eye and ask a relative or friend to do the same. Avoid that cluttered look.

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- **Set up a walk-in booth**, if possible. It allows for more personalized contact with customers. Get out from behind that table and actively sell.
 - **If you have complaints about the show or sale**, wait until it's over to air them. Negative comments turnoff customers.
 - **Constantly add new products to your line**. It keeps customers coming back.
 - **Price to sell and price for your venue**. Don't expect to get the same amount for your product at a small school show as you would in a large mall.
 - **Set up before the customers start arriving** and stay to the end even if it's going poorly. This makes a good impression on organizers. The next show may be better, but you may not be invited back!
 - **Have a receipt book**. Some customers may be buying for a social committee or the like, and require a receipt.
 - **Spring shows are notoriously slow**, but provide an opportunity for your crafts to be seen. Don't be discouraged. Customers may come back looking for you in the fall, to buy a Christmas gift.
 - **Create things you enjoy making**. You will never make your fortune in the craft business, so have fun!
 - **Demonstrate your art/craft**, or provide step boards. Customers like to watch an artisan work and to learn the steps in completing a project.
 - **Provide a resource list** of the tools, supplies, and materials necessary to do your craft. Include a list of related guilds and/or associations.

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