

5 Huge Mistakes Craft Show Vendors Make

.... And How to Avoid Them

Our family has been producing and selling at CRAFT SHOWS & FAIRS for 23 years. During The 23 Years we made a lot of **HUGE** mistakes, but we also discovered some secrets, that help us make some serious money selling crafts.

Whatever your GOAL may be, **CRAFT SHOW MONEY MAKERS** can help you. You may need to just make some extra money to help with expenses. You may need to earn some extra income for your family, or you may need to have some extra cash to pay for your children's schooling. Whatever your need may be, **Craft Show Money Makers** may be able to help you as it has our family for the past 23 years.

HUGE MISTAKE NUMBER 1:

Wrong Product(s) ---When we started doing Craft shows we made Personalize wood Signs, or plaques. We poured our hearts and souls into producing them. We had about 15 different designs. Customers would tell us what they thought would be cute and their ideas. We produced and sold very nice plaques, and people did buy them. So you might be thinking, what was the huge Mistake? The Mistake was that at a good Craft Show we would sell 30 to 40 plaques at \$25 to \$40 dollars each. So we would gross between \$1000 and \$1500 for the weekend. One problem was that it would cost approximately \$500 for the materials and it would take us approximately 1 hour to produce the Plaque.

Recapping the situation: we sold 40 Plaques, grossed an average of \$1200. Raw material cost of \$500. However the time it took to produce the Plaques was about 40 hours. Now adding those 40 hours to the 16 hours to display and sell our plaques at craft shows was a total of 56 hours a week.

The additional cost for attending the event was: Booth Fees, Food Cost and Transportation cost. The cost for attending the event was around \$150, depending on the cost for the Booth. We would net around \$550. This was a good show for us. As you know not all shows are good.

However that is less than \$10 per hour, and less when you add another family member's time also. I hope you are getting the Picture!!

We had two small boys around 10 years old. They asked me if I could make them a POPGUN. We were already making wood plaques, and had a small wood shop, so we

began designing, and we invented a POPGUN. We used materials we had in our shop. Material that included: PVC pipe, Dowell rods, and some Corks.

Our Family kept Making and selling the Personalized Wood Plaques. Our sons asked if we could make about 20 pop guns, and allow them to sell at our next craft show. We agreed, and we enthusiastically made 20 pop guns. We agreed that they would sell them for \$5 each. They would make \$100 dollars, if they sold them all.

What we were not prepared for was that they sold these popguns in less than 2 hours after the show opened. You can imagine their excitement and ours.

The next week we made 40 popguns, you guessed it, now we grossed \$200!! And they sold quickly! The time and material cost to produce these POPGUNS was minimal compared to the time and material cost it took to produced the Personalized Wood Plaques.

What should we do?? DUH!! Right we quit producing and selling Personalized Wood Plaques and concentrated on POPGUNS. Most weekends we would net (after all expenses) around \$1500. What a **HUGE** difference from before.

The difference is: we found the **RIGHT PRODUCT.** We invented a product that would sell, and still sells today 23 years later; we can produce it at a nice price-point. We found a **Product** that is fairly simple to Build and assemble. Most Crafters can build a POPGUN for re-sale, some have tried, but there are a few secrets we have not disclosed to anyone outside of Family. We found a **Product** that took less time to produce, allowing us to make a greater quantity of our Product. We found a **Product** that sells and keeps selling year after year.

Having the **RIGHT PRODUCT(s)** is astronomical in assuring continued success at Craft Shows and Fairs.

A successful Crafter has or gets the **RIGHT PRODUCT(S)** . Today you do not have to produce the **right Products** yourself, but you must have the right product to sell at the right CRAFT SHOW or FAIR.

A successful Crafter is always looking for the **Right Product(s)** , and adding products that fits in with the type of Craft Shows and Fairs they enjoy attending.

CRAFT SHOW MONEY MAKERS can help you with acquiring products that sells and continue to sell. Please visit our website at. www.craftshowmoneymakers.com and register to become a member to buy our products at a price point that you can make money.

HUGE MISTAKE NUMBER 2:

THE WRONG SHOW or FAIR This is one of the costliest Mistakes that a Craft Show Vendor can make. I think that you would agree with me, when I say that if you do not make a profit at a Craft Show or Fair, you would have been better off to have stayed at home!! You wouldn't have spent the time, or the cost for the booth space, and other expenses such as your cost of your materials. One of my family members said "*you can stay home and break even.*" I agree with his statement to a point!!

What is **the wrong Show**? After you have been to a few Craft Shows or Fairs and have not made any money, you might be able to reflect and decide which shows are worth it, and which ones are not worth the effort. Why some shows were worth the effort and others wasn't. One of our *Biggest Blunders* was when we went to a highly publicized Art Fair. At this particular ART Fair, the vendors had very beautiful paintings, and exquisite Art Sculptures. You guessed it!! Our Products absolutely did not fit in at this particular venue. We knew from the very beginning, that we were like a fish out of water; we were at **the wrong show** for our products.

Look for Craft Show and Fairs that are **juried**. The juried shows are where the Promoter asks for samples or Pictures, and has certain guidelines for Crafters and their Products. Do not get your feelings hurt if your application is rejected, based on your products. My suggestion is to be honest on your application, and give enough information to determine if you and your products are a fit for that Craft Show or Fair. This Simple guideline may keep you from making a Big Blunder. I might also add that because a Craft Show is not juried does not mean it will not be a great venue for you and your products. There are other Parameters that will help you in finding **the Right Show**.

One of your Primary jobs as a Craft Show Vendor is to find the Crafts Shows or Fairs that are **Right** For you. You can begin by determining which shows to apply to, and which shows you definitely want to attend again. One source we use is www.festivalnet.com . They charge you \$49 a year to become a member. They will list all the Craft Shows and Fairs that you will want to attend. Your state may have some specific information about Craft Shows and Fairs. One example is for Texas is www.texasfairsandfestivals.com . Use Google to find Craft Shows in your area.

One method we use is to have the dates for the Craft Shows, we will be attending, posted on our yearly Calendar. We like to rate the shows we attended or visited as **for sure** or A+, **Probably** or B+, **Maybe** or C+. Anything else gets a D. Next time that festival or show comes up again you can review how you rated it. If it was a C or D show , note any extenuating circumstances like "rained" or "really cold", or maybe was scheduled at the same time as another large event where the show was going on.

Find out all the information you can about the Craft Shows or Fairs that will fit on your Calendar. If at all possible, visit the Show in person; ask questions of other Craft Show

Vendors. Try to meet the Craft Show **Promoter**. The relationship you develop with a successful **Promoter** will pay huge dividends in the future. A Promoter that usually has two or more Venues a year speaks volumes!! These Promoters will help you in determining if you can be a successful vendor at their show. Find out all you can about the **Promoter** and about the Craft Show you are interested in.

Ask if the Craft show has been run for a long time? If it is a first Annual Craft Show, there may be associated problems with the show. Problems like low attendance, little or no advertising for the event, parking problems, Vendor Booth lay out, Directions to enter the Venue not clearly marked, or signs not posted to direct traffic into and out of the Craft Show. A First Annual Craft Show could be **the wrong show** for you to attend if you are just starting out. We have also done quite well at a First Annual Craft Shows. First Annual Craft Shows or Festivals is a gamble we all take, and evaluate the facts about the Craft Show and make a well informed decision wither or not to attend.

Craft Shows or Fairs that **is not** a first annual, ask the promoter or organizer how many attendees come to their show. Typically a Craft Show has more attendees if it is Free to Attend. Ask how much the Promoter charges for people to get in to the Show. Also ask if there is a charge for parking at the venue. What we have observed over the year's is that attendees only have so much money to spend, and if most of their budgeted amount to spend is used for parking and gate entrance, they have less money to spend with you and the other vendors who are competing for their business.

No Crafter wants to go to a show with poor attendance. The Promoter should provide you with some statistics as to the number of attendees, or good explanations as to why they recorded poor attendance. There are many factors that determine Craft Show Attendance. One such factor is the weather. The Promoter is as concerned as you are about the weather, they will lose money also if weather does not cooperate on the date of the Craft Show or Fair. Very Seldom do they completely cancel the Craft Show and refund your money. This Brings up another point. How long must you give the Promoter notice if you have to cancel your Show to receive a full refund or partial refund?? ASK THEM!!

HUGE MISTAKE NUMBER 3:

PRICING The wrong **Price** for your product could ultimately be the straw that broke the camel's back!! Determining the **Right Price** for you products is crucial to your immediate success and long term success of your Craft Show Business. Unfortunately this is an area of your Craft Show Business where there is little room for error.

One **Pricing Technique** that some crafters use is: they determine the cost to produce and sell their craft(s), and at a minimum double the cost, but most triples or even charge four times the cost of producing their product. You know the consequences if you **over Price** your product! Customers will not buy from you or you do not sell the quantity you

need to sell to have a profitable show. End result is losing money at the Craft Show or Fair.

Does the **Price of your Product** have a relationship to the amount of sales?? Ask yourself this all the time. Keep going over and over this and keep refining the solution. Only you know what it costs to produce your Product, and set **THE RIGHT PRICE**.

The **Right Price** may also be determined by the amount of competition that you may have at this particular Craft Show. Competition doesn't necessarily mean the number of other vendors selling the exact same product as you. But this is one of the factors for establishing your **Price**. Competition could also be the number of vendors selling products in the same category as you are selling, an example of this is: children's toys, Clothing articles, Jewelry, Food Items, outside lawn fixtures, the list can go on and on, hopefully you get the picture.

Most Craft Show Vendors do not display the **PRICE** of their product(s). This is an absolute must to clearly label every item with the **PRICE**, or a very visible sign giving the price. This is one area that will increase your sales. Most customers that have to ask the **PRICE** of a product will walk away and not bother to ask.

When you are helping a customer, and another customer interrupts you to ask what the price is, it is almost certain that you just lost two sales. **JUST PUT THE PRICE ON YOUR PRODUCTS!!**

When a customer has to ask what the price of your product is, it takes away valuable time that you have to answer more pertinent questions about your product(s). You may have only a few minutes or a few seconds to answer a customer's questions about your product(s), one of the questions should not **be about the PRICE!!**

Another mistake Crafters make **about Pricing is they** do not adequately allow or think about **PRICE DISCOUNTS**. We found out that one of our biggest increases in sales came when we offered a **two for deals**. We sold POPGUNS for \$6 each or two for \$10; we really increased the volume of sales by over 50%. Buyers love to save money, and will think of someone else who they could buy your product and give as a gift. We started telling the potential customer what the new price was when they purchased more than a single item. IT works every time!!

Most Crafters make a **HUGE Mistake** about Pricing. Our experience has shown us to not make drastic price changes based upon one craft show or during one weekend. You should raise or lower your prices based upon the comments by a few Customers. Only **lower the Price of your product(s)**, when you feel good about the change. Making the change will be a good business decision for you and your customer.

Determining the **Right Price** for your product(s) is crucial and can mean the difference between leaving the Craft Show or Festival happy and Elated that you sold your products, made some money and your customers were glad they bought from you!!

HUGE MISTAKE NUMBER 4:

PRODUCT DISPLAY and BOOTH APPEARANCE:

This is one of the most neglected areas that we have seen at all the craft shows we attend as a vendor and as an observer. Paying attention to this will increase your sales and also make your experience at the CRAFT SHOW a lot more enjoyable. Your **booth appearance** should say to your customers "COME IN", "YOU ARE WELCOME HERE", "YOU ARE BUYING FROM A PROFESSIONAL"

First Impressions are everything: and I mean everything. You only have a few seconds between the time a potential customer see's your booth to the time they decide to stop and look further. You're **Booth Appearance** helps them quickly decide to stop and visit your Booth. A potential customer makes a direct correlation between your **Booth Appearance** and THE QUALITY OF YOUR PRODUCT. Your Booth Appearance sends a message to your potential customer. Naturally you want to send the message that is very appealing to the customer.

Most Crafters Take Great Pride in their Product(s), they should take and display the same Pride in the way their **Booth Appears** to the customer!!

TRUE STORY: We were doing very good selling POPGUNS, but one Craft Show we wanted to attend, wanted a sample of our product(s) and a picture of our Booth. This particular show also awards prizes for the Best Three Booths, and their Theme for that year's show was "Life in The 1800's" We didn't want to be embarrassed at our really **BLAND APPEARING BOOTH** so being Crafters we decides to display our POPGUNS inside and on the outside of a covered wagon. I can tell you that I did not have a Covered Wagon Laying around. We made one, not an exact replicate of a real Covered Wagon. We built a Box about 3 feet wide and 6 feet long. We used PVC pipe to make the Cover Bow frame. The Fabric was a New White painter's tarp. We attached the Bow Frames to the wagon Bed, stretched the Tarp over them and presto we had a resemblance of a covered wagon!! But no wheels!! I went to a couple flea markets, and found some old rusty Hay Rake Wheels and attached them to the wooden bed of the covered wagon.

It looked great. We painted the box a Gray color, and attached a couple wooden Barrels on the side, and made some old boxes out of old Grey Cedar Fencing Boards. We displayed the POPGUNS in the Barrels, and in the old boxes, and used the bed of the wagon for storage of more POPGUNS. We also took a couple of Hay Bales for Chairs and to add to the décor.

We won First Prize, which was your Booth Fee of \$500, not too shabby!! But the most rewarding thing was we sold 1756 POPGUNS, and we were sorry that we didn't have more product, we sold out before the show ended on Sunday.

WE learned from this experience: that Your CRAFT SHOW BOOTH APPEARANCE has a huge impact on your sales.

Do not be afraid to ask other successful crafters at a show you are attending, to give you their opinion on how to improve your **booth appearance**. I can assure you other vendors will look at your booth, and if you are getting a lot of traffic, they will be asking for your opinion.

Always be on the lookout for a way to improve your **BOOTH APPEARANCE!**

HUGE MISTAKE NUMBER 5:

Customer Service:

Vendors need to be Friendly! Most Craft Show Vendors are shy, and have trouble interacting with the customer. Customers like to feel good about you and your product(s). One of the ways that the customer gets to know that they are buying the product they want is by talking to you. So as a Craft Show Vendor, **TALK to** your potential customer.

THE BIGGEST CONVERSATION STARTER is saying HELLO to people that stop by to look at your crafts. After this greeting then start offering information about your Craft(s).

Customers also like to buy from a Vendor who looks them in the EYE. Eye Contact is very important,

Eye Contact makes your customers feel Welcome in your booth, and feel good about buying from you.

A HUGE CUSTOMER SERVICE MISTAKE I have seen Craft Show Vendors doing is totally ignoring a customer until they literally shake them to answer a question they have about their craft. Looking mad that they are there, and sitting behind a table or in the corner of their booth reading a book, or eating a huge Hamburger or Hot Dog with food running out the side of their mouth. This is a complete turn off for a potential customer!!

I went to a craft show recently and a vendor was actually playing a game on their I-Phone, and not responding to customers. I am sure they went home that night and said this was a bad Craft Show, when all the time it was their **LACK OF CUSTOMER SERVICE** that made it a bad craft show for them.

If you are a vendor at a Craft Show or Fair and you do not sell your product(s) as you had envisioned when you started, you need to do a fair personal assessment! Ask yourself **WHY** my craft(s) didn't sell?

HOW can I get my craft(s) to sell better? Am I the limiting factor?? Are my problems caused by me??

ANOTHER HUGE CUSTOMER SERVICE MISTAKE that Crafters make is they do not have the correct change to give a customer after they make a sale. Most customers will walk away if you cannot give them change, or say I will **"come back later"** and we all know this is what customers say knowing good well they won't be back!!

SOLUTION: Have enough change to complete the sale. We like to have enough change to make for 2 \$100 dollar bills, if the first two customers present \$100 Bills.

You can always go get change when no one is in your booth.

Make it easy for the customer to purchase your products. Have a Credit Card machine available inside your booth and make it easy for them. When we started accepting "PLASTIC" our sales increased by 50%.

ANOTHER HUGE CUSTOMER SERVICE MISTAKE that 90 percent of Vendors make is they simply fail to capture their customers and potential customers contact information.

SOLUTION: Have a container, a basket, small box, fishbowl anything so your customers and lookers can drop in their contact information. Most customers or lookers do not have a business card to drop in the container, so have small contact forms available, with plenty of pens and pencils, so they can easily leave **their primary e-mail address** at a minimum, or more information if they feel comfortable leaving with you.

Offer a free door Prize to one or two lucky customers or future customer who leaves their contact Info.

FOLLOW UP, FOLLOW UP, FOLLOW UP

Sent them a simple Thank-you for stopping by, to maybe a newsletter article, or send them your show schedule, and then next year if you go back to that show, send them a invitation to stop by your booth.

What you are doing is building a Customer Relationship with your customers, and potential customers.

FACT: The Craft Show Business is entirely centered on the relationship you build with the Customers. Everything you do should enhance and strengthen the relationship with Customers and Future Customers.

A CRAFT SHOW BUSINESS is very rewarding and profitable. There are **HUGE MISTAKES** that Vendors make.

Craft Show Money Makers is committed to helping Craft Show Vendors Make the most from their endeavors as a Craft Vendors.

Look For more informative Articles, Tips and Information that we have found out over the past 23 Years.

Thank you:

Paula Fullingim

www.craftshowmoneymakers.com

e-mail: info@craftshowmoneymakers.com

Disclaimer: The information presented here in this Free Guide is for helping Craft Show Vendors become more aware of some critical areas of their business. Craft Show Money Makers assumes no responsibility of the results, either positive or negative, from viewers of this Free Guide as presented.

