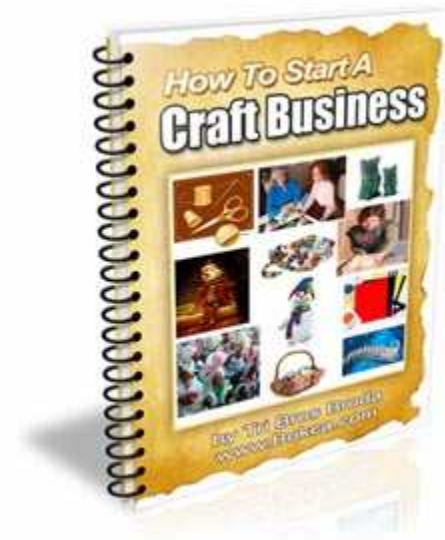


How To Start A Craft Business



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Table of Contents

- How To Start a Hand-Made Crafts Business
- Craft Business Beginner Basics: Top 10 Things
- Is a Handmade Craft Business Right for You?
- Budget Plan For a Seasonal Crafting Business
- Specialize In a Unique Craft Item
- Hand Made Craft Business: Supply and Demand Basics
- Craft Shows Can Determine Your Success
- How To Sell Your Crafts On eBay
- Shipping Your Crafts To Your Buyers
- Price Your Crafts: Increase Your Bottom Line
- Create Attractive Packaging for Your Hand Crafted Items
- Your Hand Made Craft Business: Labor of Love
- Profitable Candle Making Tips
- 5 Places to Market Your Hand Made Crafts
- Success with Your Hand Made Crafts Business
- Marketing Ideas for Kids Crafting Parties
- Sewing & Threading Your Way to Success
- Profitable St. Patrick's Day Crafts
- Research Your Crafting Opportunities: Watch For Scams
- Choosing a Quilting Design that Sells
- Crafty Venues For Hand Made Promotions
- Choose Which Crafts Will Sell: Know Your Audience
- Sell Your Crafts Online: 11 Easy Steps
- Offer Craft Lessons with Your Crafting Business
- Trash to Treasure Crafts that Sell!
- Teach Crafting Classes: Generate Business Exposure
- Easter Crafts To Create & Cash In On
- How To Market Dried Floral Bouquets
- How To Promote Your Needlepoint Crafts
- Top 5 Beaded Craft Items That Sell
- How To Market Your Woodworking Crafts
- Create and Sell Crafting Kits
- Marketing Specialty Soaps and Bath Products
- Keep Your Craft Business Costs Low
- Practice Your Marketing & Sales Techniques at Craft Shows
- How To Market Hand-Made Christmas Crafts
- Try a Craft-Only Garage Sale
- How To Sell Crafts From Your Home

- Donating Crafts to Nonprofits Can Help Your Business
- Start a Hand Made Knitted Crafts Business
- Using Mail Order For Hand Made Crafts
- Make Money With Your Craft Business
- Selling Crafts: What Makes a Profit?
- Rules of Setting up a Home Craft Business
- How To Find Your Craft Business Target Audience
- Network Your Craft Business in the Community
- How To Market Your Scrap Booking Crafts
- How To Market Yourself Online
- Self-Promotion and Increasing Crafting Opportunities
- Marketing Your Crafts Thru Friends and Family

How to Start a Hand-Made Crafts Business

Starting your own craft business is a huge step to take; it can even be a little bit daunting. One of the biggest hurdles for any new business is actually getting the ball rolling and knowing where and how to start. Below are ten steps to help you on your way to starting the dream business you've always wanted.

1) Concepts:

The idea stage to starting your business is a very important step as it is where all of your ideas come into play. Before you start delving into any steady fast plans ask yourself some questions like:

- What sort of crafts do I want to create and sell?
- Will they be jewellery, statues, kits or something else?
- Has my craft been done before, if so how can I make it something people want to buy?
- Will my products be something another would like to buy?
- What type of people will be my primary target, adult, children, teenagers or all of them?
- Will you be willing to take bulk and consignment orders?
- Stabilizing these ideas will help know what sort of market you want to get into, and will help you know who to target to sell your items.

2) Where and How:

Where you have your business is important because with each way you will have different set of circumstances and customers. Do you want to have your business at home, in a shop, studio, on the internet or do you want to sell your crafts through a craft show? If you choose to work through craft shows, will you have the ability to travel regularly? If you decide to work through a shop or your home you will have to consider if the place is easy for you customers to find and for you to work in. Another thing you need to take into account is what sort of layout and display you want and need.

3) Finances:

Once you have worked out what sort of business you want to run and where, you will have to figure out if you have the finances to support it.

- Will you have to keep your current job to fund your business until it takes off or do you have the funds already?
- Will you need to borrow?

- Have you taken your living expenses into account or any unexpected costs?
- How much will it cost for the initial materials and production?
- Getting an idea of your financial situation will help you in the planning of your business immensely.

4) Registrations, Licenses and Legal:

The next step in the process of starting your own business is to register your business name and getting all the licenses and permits necessary. There will be different types of permits and regulations depending on what type of business you are running. Ask your local business registration office as they will be able to advise you on what you need.

5) Insurances:

If you are running your business through your home or a shop make sure you get all the necessary insurances to cover you. The three main types are:

- Business insurance, to cover any accidents and injuries.
- Public risk insurance, to protect yourself against claims of negligence.
- Income protection insurance, to protect your income if you cannot work for some reason.
- Another insurance you should take into account is health insurance, if you are no longer working for someone else.

6) Taxes:

Before you start your business seek advice on taxes that you need to pay or what products and services is tax deductible. An accountant will be able to help you make a friendly tax strategy and inform you on information that you may not be aware of.

7) Business Plan:

Having a good business plan will help you and your business growth immensely. It will help you outline your goals for your business and what you want it to become. A business plan will also help you keep your business on track and how you wish to operate it now and in the future.

8) Marketing:

Marketing is necessity for any business so having a marketing strategy is a must. Consider how you want to get the word out on your business. This can be done in numerous ways like:

- Advertising through the paper, television, the internet and in magazines.
- Flyers and pamphlets that host regular product updates, shows, demonstrations or specials.

- A newsletter, offline or online, that has information about your up and coming products and projects, fact sheets that the readers can learn from.
- Or through everyday things like your letter heads, envelopes, stickers on your car or t-shirts.

9) Production and Materials:

Consider how much time you it takes to make your crafts that you want to sell. Setting up a partnership with a local company where you can get your materials from, when you need them is something you should look into doing. Ask yourself how much time you will need to complete orders and if there is anyway that you make your crafts quickly without losing quality. Organizing your production times and having materials on hand will help you keep everything on time and running smoothly.

10) Selling:

The fun part! Once you have products ready to sell consider their overall costs and take everything into account like labor and materials before adding a profit. Taking this all into account will make sure you are making money not losing it. Having the ability to take all types of payment is always handy as different customers will want to pay by different ways. Always have a friendly and helpful attitude when selling your products to a potential buyer.

These are just some steps to help you on your way to starting your own craft business. As you go there will more steps that you will need to take and learn to aid in the growth and success of your craft business.

Craft Business Beginner Basics: Top 10 Things

Before Opening a Craft Business,

1. Don't Do it For the Money

It is important that you don't go into the craft business for the wrong reasons. If you are hoping to make a quick buck, then you've chosen the wrong industry! It usually takes months to see a return on your investment and years to start to see major profits from your hand made craft (if you ever do see major profits). Crafters do this because it is their passion, not because they expect to make a lot of money from selling their products. That's not to say that there isn't money to be made – it just takes a lot of time and perseverance on your part.

2. You Need to Start Small

When starting your new craft business, you should try to borrow very little or no money at all from lending institutions. Having to meet monthly loan payments can under tons of financial stress to your new business. Try to rely on your own savings for purchasing initial supplies and then try selling your products at local shows and to family and friends so you do not have huge operating costs right off the bat.

3. You Have to Do Your Research

To have a successful craft business you need to be prepared and take the time to research your product and your market. You have to know what kinds of crafts you are going to produce and what supplies you'll need. Because this is a business, you need to try and keep costs low and you want to spend as little as possible on your craft supplies. You might have to shop around a bit before you find the cheapest supplies.

Next you need to figure out your market. What kinds of crafts are popular right now? Who is buying there? Where are they buying them? It is important to figure out who makes up your target market and what the best way to connect with them is.

4. You Have to Find Your Niche

Making a splash in the crafting industry usually means setting yourself a part with a really unique craft that still has wide appeal. As a hobby turned business crafter, you face more competition now than ever before. Having a really original and unique product will put you ahead of the pack.

5. You Will Have to Market and Sell Your Product Yourself

It may sound obvious, but many excellent crafters aren't the best sales people. Remember that when you start out, you are most likely going to be selling your craft yourself at local shows. You have to make sure that you are comfortable talking to people about your craft and make those much needed sales.

6. You'll need a Strong Support System

When you first start out, you'll really need to rely on your family and friends. They will probably be your first customers and an excellent way of spreading word about your new project. When you start showing your products at local craft shows they will also be able to help with manning your booth and with setting up and tearing down your display.

7. Find the Little and Personal Touches that will Make All the Difference

Most people enjoy going to crafts shows because they have a chance to meet the artisans face to face and learn the story behind the craft. This gives the purchase a much greater meaning. That personal touch makes all the difference. Little touches like gift bags or gift wrapping also have a positive impact on your customers and they'll be more likely to be repeat buyers if they are impressed with your professionalism.

8. The Industry is Fickle at the Best of Times and Often Seasonal

There will be rough patches. The crafting industry is fickle even at the best of times. The amount of sales you make is also often seasonal because there are more people looking for unique crafts around the holidays. You need to prepare your stock for these surges in demand, but you also need to be prepared financially for any lulls.

9. Other Crafters are Your Best Friends but They Can Also Be Your Worst Enemies

Other crafters are your best resources. They can give you lots of tips and help you out of a difficult situation. Meeting other crafters and learning from their expertise can be really beneficial. They are also your competition. There is only so much money that people are willing to spend on home made crafts so you need to set yourself apart from other crafters and try to steer clear of those crafters who are eager to copy your ideas for their own gain.

10. It Takes Time

Remember: good things come to those who wait. Don't get discouraged if your new home made craft business is not a success right away. It takes time to establish your reputation and your customer base.

Is a Handmade Craft Business Right for You?

Starting your own business in anything or in handmade crafts in particular, takes a lot of time and commitment to start. **When deciding whether to start a handmade craft business, there are several different perspectives to look at** to determine whether you will be making the right step. By taking these different things into consideration, you will know what to do before investing your time and money in your own career.

1. The personality. Running a handmade craft business means working from home. It also means managing inventory, order sheets, taxes, etc. You not only have to be organized, but also be able to commit and invest without knowing the outcomes of what your craft will be. Often times, beginning a business will include perseverance, chances, and different types of management skills. Discipline is also required to finish projects and to carry out with setting up craft shows and online businesses.

2. Business skills. It is important to consider whether you have the right business skills for a craft business. Marketing, finding the right customers and going to the right places for business are all vital factors for success. At the same time, organization and filling out the right paperwork is important to be able to do.

3. The Business Plan. This not only includes writing a business plan, but also carrying through with everything on this plan and being able to finish the tasks at hand. This also often times means doing research on potential target markets that are available for you.

4. Effects on the Family. Because of handmade crafts being your own business, as well as it being in the home, there will be a change in family pace. This is partly because of hours you may need to commit, as well as finding spaces in your home that will not interfere with the family. It may often be hard to separate work from home, depending on what the business is demanding. Unless there is undivided support from the family, it will be hard to commit and invest into a handmade craft business.

5. Finding the Right Space. Because handmade craft businesses are often in the home, there needs to be sufficient space that you can call a work area. Things that need to be considered deal with how much of an area you need, how this will interact with the family, and how to remain organized in your own home. It also involves being able to separate the business from the home when need.

6. Time Commitments. Time commitments will change for you internally as well as from an outward perspective. There will be many times where you will be required to work long hours to prepare for a craft show or to meet the demands of certain customers. At the same time, those around will see that you are home all day, and may begin to demand more from you socially or for support. Knowing the limits of your timing is important before starting.

7. Benefits. All of the things that a full time job at a business offers will not be available to you with your own business. Insurance, benefits, paid time off, sick days, etc. become non-existent with the craft business. If these different parts of a job and stability are important to you, it may be hard to invest in starting your own handmade craft business.

8. Social contacts. The regular work area is an easy way to find friend and acquaintances to talk to. Often times, owning your own business will have long periods where networks and socialization is absent. If you are in need of being more social on a consistent basis, it can make the craft business difficult.

9. Crafting as more than a hobby. If you decide to do handmade crafts, it means making the same product more than once, as well as moving it from a hobby to a job. If crafting is not something that you can see yourself doing for four to eight hours a day, it may not be the right avenue to take.

10. Investing. It is common knowledge that it takes about four to six months for a business to begin to profit. At the very beginning, investments for making the products, etc. will have to be made. It's important to not be risky with the investments that have to be made in the beginning. Because of this, sometimes the best way to invest is by using your craft business as a part time job on the side. If you decide to invest with money or with time at the beginning, it is important to know that you can do at least one before committing.

If you decide to start a handmade craft business, and desire to do so, there can be many benefits over a longer period of time. However, as in all businesses, there are downsides and problems that may occur. It is important to recognize the different features of a handmade craft business before beginning.

Budget Plan for a Seasonal Crafting Business

Budgeting for your seasonal craft income can be tricky when you first start, but it is profitable for your business's well being. Working out both short and long term financial budgeting for your business can let you know when you are on track. It will help keep you in control of your business finances and change things when they need to be. Here we will go through some tips on what and how to budget for your financial plan for the next year or so.

What you budget:

When it comes to budgeting you should consider not only your income and expenses but also a balance summary so you can get a clearer picture of your business. Getting a complete summary of your craft business will help if you need to buy unexpected equipment or if you would like to add new products in the future. Another thing you will need to budget is your cash flow; it will help show you how purchases and expenses affect your money. Estimating your cash flow can be done through both your income and balance statements.

How you budget:

When you first start up your craft business, you will have to budget by **estimating your sales and expenses** making sure to include even the tiniest of items. It does sound a bit daunting to make a budget for something when you don't know the exact outcome, because it is a new business but you can adjust as you go.

While you are in this start up phase you should **do your financial budget once a month for the first year** so you have a more detailed summary for future years. From the beginning of this first year you need to establish your money level for each category. The exact amount is important as this will distinguish and calculate your profits, as well as your operating expenses, receivable accounts and your inventory levels you need. To find out the total of what you have sold you will need to calculate how much it costs to produce the item, it's usually done through percentages.

The next thing you will need to work out is your operating expenses, payable and receivable accounts and your inventory levels. You can work out your operating expenses by taking all of your expenses into account such as insurance, marketing, advertising, materials and other related fees and working them out with the current

business taxes. You can work out accounts payable and receivable as well as your inventory by taking the amount of days into account.

You should write down all of your findings on your balance sheet so you can work out the rest of your assets and liabilities. To work them out you should also do them by categories.

You continue to **repeat this process every month for at least the first year** of your craft business's life to create a consistent and accurate budget. When you increase your plan into a seasonal one you will notice that your budget and cash flow will start to vary with different seasons. If your business is one that takes in higher amounts of sales through the period leading up to and through the Christmas months, you should consider adjusting your plan. You can do this easily; the method of working out your budget is as follows: income budget, balance sheet then cash flow. This is because you need to know your net income before preparing anything else because of profit numbers and retained earnings.

There are many ways you can making your financial budgeting easier. There are many software programs on the market that was created for this reason. Some of the top selling ones are Win fast and Quicken.

If you have any problems or concerns when you are trying to work out your budget you should seek advice from a certified public accountant. It is advisable to let them help you through it for the first few times so you know that you understand the whole budgeting process. Once you get a hang of recording an affective financial seasonal budget you will gain many benefits. You will know that you will always be on top of your craft business and know where your financial levels are always and can change them if need be.

Specialize In a Unique Craft Item

These days there are more people than ever trying to make their living as crafters. Whereas a few years ago, there might have been one or two people selling polymer jewelry at a local craft show, now there are probably at least five or six or even more than that. **With so many people producing the same kinds of crafts it is often difficult to make your products stand out.** The best way to distinguish your self as a crafter is to specialize in a unique craft item.

Already you're thinking; how I can specialize in a unique craft item when I can't even think of one unique craft item! It can be daunting at first to try and come up with an original idea. It is a process that takes some time, a bit of research, lots of experimentation and a little bit of luck.

First of all, give yourself time. **Don't expect that original idea to come to you right off the bat.** If you expect immediate success, you'll probably end up very disappointed. You

should begin to brainstorm ideas, but it might take you a bit of time to hit on just the right one. Just don't get discouraged – a good idea is worth waiting for.

To help in this process, **do a bit of market research**. Attend local stores and browse in local gift stores. You will be able to see what kinds of products are out there and what sort of things are selling. You don't want to copy though – remember that you are trying to come up with a unique product that will appeal to the same kinds of buyers. Copying another crafter will not set you apart as an individual and will do nothing to help establish your reputation.

Another way of researching your market is to **talk to family and friends**. They can give you a good idea of the kinds of crafts they are currently buying and what area they think is lacking.

Next comes the fun part! **Once you know what field you want to work in you can start experimenting with different materials and techniques**. You don't need to invent an entirely new craft field; you just need to fine a unique product within a field that is already popular and selling well. Consider the polymer clay example we discussed above. The majority of people started off making and selling jewelry. Then came little animal figurines and magnets and now there are all sorts of different things done with polymer clay including lampshades and mosaic tiles. How did that come about? People started experimenting with the clay and new techniques like stamping and painting and the result was the creation of a really diverse range of products. It just someone to try stamping the clay or transferring pictures to re-invent that particular type of crafting. **Figure out what category of craft you want to work in and then try making it new!**

This applies to any sort of craft product there is - so factor in some chance in terms of its popularity. Whether you want to consider it luck or savvy marketing, sometimes a new product will just take off. Often success comes with marketing or selling your craft in the right place and reaching the right customers, but sometimes it is hard to explain why something sells and why something doesn't. If you do enough market research and price your craft within a reasonable cost range, you should have no problem selling your new product. It may not be an overnight success, but you should be able to make back your investment with a bit of persistence. The most important thing is to establish yourself as someone who does something a bit different than all of the other crafters in your area. Your reputation will stick and people will begin coming to you when looking for something a little out of the ordinary.

If you do come up with a truly original idea, you may want to consider **copyrighting your idea**. You may not have heard this, but craft designs do fall under copyright protection. All you need to do is register your copyright after your work is created. It's as simple as that!

Hand Made Craft Business: Supply and Demand Basics

Like any other business, hand made crafts consist of being able to make certain products according to what the customers want and need. However, because it is hand made crafts, and your own home based business, **knowing the meaning of supply and demand on how to meet it is essential for reaching your financial and business related goals.** Supply and demand means knowing what customers want and need, and being able to reproduce your items for them. Here are five things to look for when finding what the demand of customers will be and how to supply them with the right hand made craft.

1. Know the Trends/Customer Need and Want. Often times this means creating your own products, and knowing which ones that your customers like. If you have your own niche and style for products, then you can create a large inventory to make last a long time. You can not only find trends through observing and keeping track of what your customers buy, but also through things such as organizations that are consistently networking and providing information through a variety of sources about the crafting business. As in all businesses, trends are usually short lasting. Because of this, your niche should be your focus, and trends should be there to simply compliment those items.

2. Have Plenty of Extra Inventory. There are several ways that you can determine how much inventory you need to have. When taking orders at home or over the internet, it is easier to meet the needs of a customer. If you are going to a craft show, you should always have extra available. You can talk to those in charge of the craft show or others who have sold their items the year before. Beyond this, make sure that you have an idea of what your best sellers may be, according to what other customers or you like. If it is a certain time of the year, always make sure to stock up on items that are popular for the season. While this will fluctuate from year to year, over time you will be able to see what the needs from customers are.

3. Stay ahead. No matter what niche, always keep an extra supply of whatever may or may not sell. This makes it easier to meet the needs of customers, and will offer faster turn around time when needed. By having extra crafts available, it will make you look more professional as well. It is best to not be in a bind when you have potential customers asking you for an item that is becoming fairly popular.

4. Record what You Sell. The easiest way to catch on to what inventory will be needed most is by keeping track of what you are selling. You can do this not only by keeping records of online products, but also different records for craft shows that you have gone to and what was popular that year. Because customer demand often grows through networking and word of mouth from other customers, it is likely that the crafts that sold the best the year before will also be a strong sale the next year.

5. Do Your Research. If you are starting out in the crafting business and are unsure of what the supply and demand will be from customers, then find other places that will. There are plenty of organizations who will help you with placing how much you may need. There are also several other individuals who are willing to provide information. If you still are curious about what your estimates should be, there are places to go online, in

magazines and newspapers, etc. that will be able to give you information on various aspects of the business of hand made crafts.

No matter what your types of craft, what niche you decide to use, and where you decide to sell your crafts, **the most important thing is to be prepared with extra inventory of your products in order to reach the demand of customers.** If you look into trends and know your most popular items, you will always be able to walk away from a sale successful and looking professional because of your preparations.

Craft Shows Can Determine Your Success

One of the most successful ways to sell hand made crafts is through the use of local and regional craft shows that are in your area. **Craft shows will not only boost your business, but will also allow a place where you can find networks for future business.** Because of the nature of hand made crafts, most that are in the crafting business use the craft shows as a major way to sell their product.

Because of the wide variety of craft shows that are available, **there is a certain amount of research and preparation that you can take in order to ensure that you will be successful.** The first thing is to find the craft shows that will fit with the types of things that you are making. If, for example, your crafts center on Christmas gifts and items, it would most likely not be logical to rent a booth or space at a summer festival. You can find the right craft show by networking with other crafters or looking for magazines and online publications that will host events and are looking for crafters. There are not only local and regional shows available, but also international and national events that you can take part in when looking for the right place to sell your craft.

The second thing to keep in mind for a craft show is to **make sure that there is enough of what you are selling.** Often times, someone will buy a craft from you, which will then begin to move around the space where you are selling. Others see the craft and want the same thing. It is best to come with plenty of stock. This always makes happier customers and will help you to look more professional.

When setting up your booth at a craft show you should find a way to make your booth and the product stand out. This is simply by decorating your area, and making your products look professional, while organizing them in ways that are catchy to the customer. Another way to stand out is through the actual craft that you are selling. By having unique colors and style, you will be differentiated from the rest of the crowd.

In the booth that is set up for your hand made crafts, **you should also carry business cards and more information about the business that you are in.** This is not only to look more professional, but also to gain more potential customers. Sometimes, a customer will want to revisit your craft outside of the craft show. If you are prepared, even if the sales are not outstanding at the particular show, you are building networks

with potential customers and target markets with all who stop to look at the product you are selling.

One technique that is **important to keep in mind and will also help you to stand out is when you are able to tell the customers about the craft, how you make it, why it is unique, etc.** This strategy will help to build on the uniqueness of your product as well as making you seem like a true crafter who really enjoys the craft that is being made. This is often times, appealing to the customer.

Craft shows have been rated to be the best way to sell crafts. The nature of hand made crafts is different than most businesses. Customers like to see the craft in person, feel the material that you use, and understand the different parts of the craft. This gives them a good sense of the quality that is in the handmade craft. It is also important because they often times like to get to know the crafter, as it can be a part of the product that they are buying.

Most customers, even if they shop online, will often use craft shows to find exactly the right fit for the item that they need. There are several factors to this type of market and why this is successful. Because of this, if you are making hand made crafts, it is always important to be prepared with enough inventories, go to the right craft shows, and make sure to make the booth you have to stand out. This will guarantee you the success that you need to begin or continue in the hand made craft business.

How to Sell Your Crafts On eBay

Selling on eBay has become a popular phenomenon. Many times I've heard people mention that they bought their latest gadget from no other then eBay. **For the craft lover who doesn't know where to begin marketing their crafts, eBay would be a good start.** It is the best way to get the broadest audience's attention. eBay goes beyond your backyard and reaches people all over the world. With their advanced search engine, it allows someone who may be looking for a particular item to go straight to what their looking for.

For those who have heard of eBay but not actually gone searching, this is how it works. For a first time seller, you must create an eBay account which includes your name, address and credit card number (secure site). Once you've filled in the online forms, you will have your own seller account which will list your auctions. Each time you want to check your sales, you must log in with a screen name and password. When selling an item, you will go through a series of pages describing your item for sale. To top it off, you will upload a picture onto the auction site for others to view your craft. When listing a craft, you will be charged an initial fee which is a set amount for the listed price. For example: If you list a craft for .99 cent, your initial fee will be .25 cent. If you list an item from \$1.00-9.99, your initial fee will be .35 cent and so on. Once your item has sold, you will also be charged a "final value fee." This is calculated by a percentage

of what your craft actually sold for. If someone likes your craft they will put a bid on it. If someone else comes along and wants the same craft, they will put a higher bid on it. At the end of the auction which is generally seven days, the highest bidder wins.

eBay also offers eBay stores, which allow you to sell many items in an online store.

When listing an item, you usually list a BIN (Buy it Now) price. There is no auction involved. In your online store, you can list prices as well as pictures of the item. This is a good route to go if you plan on selling multiple items of different colors, shapes or use.

Be sure to list pictures. People love to see pictures of the items they're bidding on. You even have the option of placing multiple pictures on your auction site. Try to get different angles when taking pictures. Get close-ups of any detailed work. When taking the picture, be sure to get it in the right lighting and best background. Appearance sells!

When listing a price at auction, it's best to start low. This will attract more buyers to your item. If someone is interested in your craft and they want to watch it to see the bids being placed on it, they can put it in their "watch." You will know how many people are taking interest in your item because the number of watches shows up beside the item in your account.

When listing your craft, be sure to give plenty of detail. If there is a default in the craft, make sure you explain that in the description. Also describe the color and the size of the item. If you sell it in various colors, explain this to the potential buyer. Some people are looking for a certain color and you want to be open to them. If they like your item, they might come back for more in the future.

eBay isn't for everyone. Sales are made by pay pal, cashiers check or even person checks, whatever you're willing to accept. And the only communication that generally transpires between the seller and buyers is through email.

The most important thing to remember when getting started is to **be honest about the item, and explain the craft in detail.** People want to know all there is about an item that they may purchase. Explain the texture if you're selling something that is wearable. Let them know about the special detail you've put into a painting. And if your expertise is pottery, elaborate on the special colors used for the craft.

Shipping Your Crafts to Your Buyers

It doesn't matter if you run your business offline, online or both you still come up against **shipping dilemmas** from time to time, but there is always a way to prevent it and increase your shipping times. Here we will look at some ways you can prevent yourself from shipping problems and get your products into the hands of your buyers quickly, efficiently and without hassle.

Before you sell:

Sometimes things can go wrong before you even get to the post office, and can result in some very unhappy customers. Here are some ways to prevent it happening to you.

The first thing you should do is **make sure you always have the item in stock** so when a person does want to buy your item it is ready. This will save the shopper the inconvenience of having to wait for the item, if they were not aware of the delay in shipping before they committed to buy.

If there is a delay in shipping, always tell your customer before hand, especially if the buyer is overseas.

If the item is an order, give your customer an idea when the item will be finished. Once you have finished creating the item, send it to your customer the fastest way possible and through a reliable source.

Always give your customers a rough estimate of how long it will take for the item to reach them.

Preparation and shipping:

This is where most things go wrong with shipping as many times packages tend to get lost, are sent to the wrong address or become broken and damaged while they are in transit. Here are some ways to prevent these sorts of things when it comes to shipping your items.

Always take a second look at a customers shipping information to make sure it is written down correctly. When you go to ship the item to your buyer make sure that it is always on hand and ready to go.

If the item is **breakable or fragile** take all the necessary actions to ensure that it won't be broken or damaged while in transit like adding extra packing and attaching warning labels.

With all items, no matter how inexpensive they are, take out **postage insurance**. This way if the item gets damaged or lost while in transit you and your customer have cover.

Another thing you should do when you ship your item is use a **tracking service**, you and your customer will be able to keep track of the item while in transit with the number that is supplied.

Using a courier:

Many craft business owners tend to use a courier more often than a normal postage service as it is a **safe and reliable**, especially when most of the crafts are valuable or

fragile. Using a courier will set both your mind and your customer's mind at ease. Here are some ideas when and why you should use a courier, if you aren't already.

You should use a courier **when the item is too big** to send through the postal company.

Also use a courier if the item that you are sending is **expensive, very fragile or too awkward** to send any other way.

A courier is able to take your shipment almost anywhere in the world and deliver it safely to your customer's door.

You are able to track where your item is in transit.

If you do not usually use a courier, use it as an option for your buyers as some prefer to use this service instead of a postage service.

Once your item is in the hands of your customer:

Always try and **get feedback** from your customer once they have received the item they bought as this can aid you in future shipping arrangements with other customers. You should ask for feedback on shipping times, packaging, and the shipping method and ask if they have anything they would suggest making the whole process faster and efficient.

The whole process of shipping your craft items to your customers is very important, from start to finish, before hand and beyond. Always take the best care when packing and shipping your items and receive feedback from your customers so you can better the time and the way you ship to all your future products to your buyer.

Price Your Crafts: Increase Your Bottom Line

Deciding on how to price your crafts is an important factor when beginning your crafting business. **The price of your crafts will increase or decrease the amount of customers who will buy your crafts.** The price can be determined through several different factors, including your own calculations, as well as the environment in which you are selling them and how this relates to other craft businesses as well as customers. Here are **five ways to help you determine the prices** that you can offer when determining how to price your crafts.

1. Do the math. The first step to this is estimating the amount of time you spend making the craft, first by hour, then by week. Decide how much you would like to make per week from your labor. If you want to be specific, you can add in factors such as what you need to make a living comfortably. The next step is to add in the total cost of supplies that you use. Add this to how many products you are making per week. Divide the number of

products produced in a week by the total cost for labor. This will determine how much you should sell each product for.

2. Research Your Craft. It is always good to find out what other similar products and craft businesses are charging for their products. Because they are hand-crafted, however, you should be able to go either a little above their price, or may decide to go a little under and offer your customers a discount. If you have a craft that you can not find anywhere else to compare to, then find an average of similar products to average out your costs with.

3. Find Inexpensive Craft Supplies. If you have determined your pricing and it is above what you would like to sell your crafts for, there are ways to cut costs for what you are making. One way to do so is by changing the supplies that you are using. Discount stores often offer the same brands and quality of supplies at a lower price. You may also want to look into places that are going out-of-business. They usually have large sales for you to stock up your supplies with. You can also use wholesalers or can browse through the internet for those wanting to sell craft supplies at a discounted rate.

4. Make sure you are listed as a business. By considering yourself a small business, you can apply for a tax ID that will cut taxes off of your supplies. You can apply for a tax ID through the government website. You can then either save your receipts for tax time or see if certain places will take the tax ID and automatically cut off the price.

5. Know your target market. It's good to determine how much the customer will be willing to pay in relation to how much labor time and craft supply costs are going to cost you. If your target market is centered more on families or lower income families, it might be important to lower your prices and your craft supply costs. If you are selling certain items at a certain time of year, it is also important to determine the discounts and sales that you are willing to offer, such as during Christmas time.

It is always important to **remember not to undermine your costs** because you want it to sell. Remember that you are putting the labor and supplies into the craft. You should always at least make a little more than your money back. It is also important to not over price your crafts because they are hand made or because there are not as many available. This will turn customers away. Despite what you know about the product and the value that is in it, customers are usually looking for a good deal.

By doing the proper calculations and by knowing what resources are available to you, it is easy to determine the amount that you should be selling your crafts for. By using the right math and knowing what to look for, you can find the right pricing for your crafts and let customers believe that they are finding a good deal for what they are getting.

Create Attractive Packaging for Your Hand Crafted Items

Part of the attractiveness of making your own crafts will be in the material that you choose to send it in. **This is the first impression that the customer will have of your product**, making it essential to have the right packaging to give or send the craft in. One of the options in packaging, if you decide not to buy the packaging, is to make your own packages that are unique to your crafting business and items.

There are several different options that you can use when creating your own packaging for hand crafted items. The first thing to consider is what type of packaging you will be using. This can be a box, bag, or any other creative item that will hold whatever it is that you are selling. Many times, you can cut or design a box to reflect your business. It is easy to find boxes and containers that are in different shapes with different cuts. You can also take your own regular box or cardboard and design it with putting the slots into different places to fold into a different shape. If you are shipping the box, you can also use different types of cardboard or plastic to send the craft in. As well as these different packages being folded, they can easily be designed with your own made stamps or designs. If you decide to use a bag, you can create your own using white bags and different types of stenciling, paints, etc. You can also have these custom designed by a company.

The labels that you are using for your packaging can be creative, with a logo or some type of picture to represent the item they are getting or your craft business. One of the ways that you can decorate your package labeling is by using silk screen printing. This is a common form of decoration. This usually will put one to two different colors on your design and package. If you would like more colors, then printing your logo or information with a hot stamp can be considered. This will also leave a shine and somewhat gold design on the package. You can also custom label just about any type of packaging that you are using with either your own techniques or through the help of other businesses. If you have the right tools on your computer, you can design and create your own logos, etc. on a regular application and print it through special paper, then attach it as a label on your package.

You can also decorate the protective paper that you are wrapping the craft in. You can make a custom label with this or make your own paper by simply getting regular tissue or wrapping paper and decorating it with cheaper items such as stamps, your logo, etc. It is possible to do this with any part of the packaging that you are sending an item in.

Another option to look into is packaging the craft with an inner box or container, as well as an outer box. With this, possibilities are endless. You can put your craft in a can, bottle, jar, pottery, seashell, basket, or anything that will hold the craft and be reflective of what it is. Smaller purses or bags that are sewn, etc. can also be used to provide an extra something that the customer gets with their purchased craft. These containers not only are creative, but can be decorated with your logo, or any other type of paints, to add onto the craft. You can also decorate it by putting a certain cloth around the box, bag, jar or whatever you decide to use. This will make the container look more professional.

If you do not want to make your packaging completely from scratch, there are several places that make custom packaging for you to use when sending something to customers. These places can also simply provide ideas for your packaging needs.

While there are endless possibilities with decorating and making your own packaging, it is important to keep in mind that the packaging should look professional and be a part of your business. One way to help in deciding what to do with the packaging is by making sure that it is a reflection of the craft and the business that you are a part of.

Create Attractive Packaging for Your Hand Crafted Items

If you began your own hand made craft business, then odds are you started it because you enjoyed crafting and hoped to make some money from your hobby. **To survive in the craft business you absolutely have to love what you do.** If you started your business just to make money and not because you loved your craft, then you won't have the dedication and staying power to make it in the craft industry. A person's passion for crafting shows in the end product as well as in all the little touches.

But perhaps you did start your business out of love for the crafting. Since then though you've lost some of that original spark and you're finding it difficult to muster the same enthusiasm about your home made products. This can be a disheartening experience and you may reach the point where you consider giving up your new business because the enjoyment just isn't there anymore. How can you keep that original joy in crafting alive when you make the switch from hobby to business?

Start Small

It's important to start small when launching your new hand made craft business. Try out your crafts at local craft shows or through family and friends. You should borrow little or no money to get your business started. Monthly loan payments can cripple a small start-up craft business – an industry that is fickle at even the best of times. Not depending on your new craft business for all your financial income will take some of the pressure off and allow you to just enjoy the process of crafting and selling.

Manage Your Time

With any small business, people have difficulty keeping traditional working hours. When starting your new craft business you will most likely not be working 9-5 at it. Odds are you'll keep your main job and just devote time to your new start-up in the evenings and on weekends so you have enough money to make a go of it. You need to be realistic in terms of what you can accomplish. If there are four local craft show that you want to participate in all within a two week span of each other, are you really going to have enough time to create enough stock for all of the shows? You have to figure out how much you can produce and stick to that. Running yourself ragged is one of the quickest

ways to lose the enjoyment of crafting. Remember you also need to keep a life-work balance. Even though you enjoy crafting, you can't do it 24-7. You need to make time to relax and see family and friends.

Experiment

Some times it is important to away from the business end of things and concentrates on the crafting itself. Experiment with new techniques and materials. This process can refresh you and you might even come up with some really unique new products for your next craft sale.

Talk to Others

It is really important to have a support system in place when starting a new venture like this. Family and friends can be a huge help with your new hand made craft business, but a lot of time they lack experience and expertise in the industry itself. It is important to develop your own kind of crafters' network – other crafters who you can turn to and learn from. The best way to meet other crafters is at local craft shows. You can also join or start a local crafters' group or guild. This can be a monthly group that meets to share stories and learn from one another. This group could also develop into a means for all of the members to market and sell their crafts. Many craft guilds hold yearly sales where all of the members showcase their work. You can start small by hosting a craft show in one of your members' home or renting a community center or church basement if everyone contributes a bit. Feeling part of crafters' community will make all the difference when things get rough.

As with any new start-up, starting your hand made craft business will be difficult and at times frustrating. **The most important thing is to keep your passion alive however you can so it truly is a labor of love!**

Profitable Candle Making Tips

Do you enjoy making candles, and always seem to receive positive comments from friends and family? If you think you have a flair for making eye-catching candles, you may want to consider a candle business. But before you begin to market your candles, make sure you follow these five tips for profitable candle making.

1) Calculate your costs

Before you begin to think of pricing, calculate the exact cost of each candle you make. This can be tricky since you probably plan to buy your supplies in bulk. To calculate the cost per candle, work out the cost per ounce of each of your ingredients. For instance, you'll want to know how much you are paying for paraffin wax, acid, color, scent, and any other ingredients you may use to make your candles. Measure how many ounces of

each ingredient you use in each candle, and then multiply that number by the cost per ounce. This should give you a good idea of how much it costs you to make one basic candle. If your candles are accompanied by any type of accessory, such as ribbons, bows, natural accents, or containers, don't forget to add the cost of these to the total cost of each candle. You should also add the approximate cost of the wick. As a general rule, you should price your candles 3 or 4 times the price of production. If you plan to sell your candles wholesale, pricing should be set at roughly 2 times the cost of production.

2) Buy your supplies in bulk

It's always a good idea to purchase your basic supplies, like wax and jars, in bulk. Contact your supplier and see if they are willing to provide any further discounts. Most shipping companies also provide a sizeable discount if you order more than 200 pounds in supplies. Also, if you use a wide variety of candle fragrances, consider limiting the number of fragrances you use until you become better established. Producing such a variety of candles can make it difficult to turn a profit.

3) Approach local shops with your candles

One of the best ways to become profitable through candle making is to get your line of candles carried at local shops. Approach a local store that carries a good selection of candles and ask to make an appointment with the store manager. Be professional and courteous—some people aren't as open to sales pitches as others, so make certain you don't come on too strong. If you aren't able to secure an appointment with the store manager, or if the store personnel seem busy or unapproachable, be very polite and offer to return at another time. It's a good idea to leave materials that they can review at their leisure. Be prepared with brochures, samples, and business cards. Follow up at another date to see if they've had a chance to review your products.

If you find a store that seems open to your products, offer to provide them with a few candle samples that they can leave burning on the front counter. This provides you with good exposure and free market testing. Also, if customers express interest in your sample, there's a good chance that the store will consider carrying your candles.

4) Specialize in a popular 'theme'

If country-themed candles are popular where you live, by all means, specialize in creating your own special brand of country-themed candles. Natural candles that incorporate the use of leaves, twigs, dried flowers and fruit, are also very popular. And, of course, you will want to consider seasonal and holiday-themed candles. Find out what sells best in your area and base your candle creations on this information.

5) Never underestimate the power of smell

Make sure your potential customers can smell your candles! Many people work hard on creating beautiful, long-lasting candles, but package their candles in a way that makes

them impossible to smell before purchase. Most people, whether they realize they're doing it or not, sniff candles before buying them. If your candles have distinct fragrances, make certain the packaging allows customers to enjoy them. Otherwise, all your hard work to create sweet and memorable fragrances may not be readily evident to potential customers.

5 Places to Market Your Hand Made Crafts

You've decided to start your own craft business. You've got a great product and lots of enthusiasm, but no clue of how and where to sell your product. If you have no business background, then it can be intimidating to start talking about markets and sales pitches and your target customer. In reality, marketing your hand made crafts is easier than you could ever imagine. Here's a quick overview of some of the best places to market your craft products.

Family and Friends

It sounds too obvious, right? In fact, your family and friends can be one of the most important tools in getting your new craft business off the ground. Your family and friends will probably be more than happy to buy your products, but also help you sell them. You will talk to your family and friends about your crafts and they in turn will tell their family and friends and it will continue to grow from there. Word of mouth is really important in the crafting industry.

Many businesses allow crafters to come in during the holiday season. Maybe one of your friends or relatives works for a company that does this. It is usually through personal connections like this that crafters end up at the businesses.

If you don't have enough money for a table at a local craft show, you can host one at your own home. If you know other crafters, you can include their items as well – for free or for a small fee. You can invite family, friends and neighbors. This is an excellent way to start selling your products with minimal cost to you.

When you do decide to do a local craft show, ask for help from your family and friends. While it is important that you spend a lot of time at your booth so you have a chance to interact with your customers, family and friends can offer a lot of support by taking turns manning the booth and helping with the set-up and tear-down of your display.

Local Craft Shows

Before you start traveling all around with your crafts, you should try displaying your products in a few local shows. With a crafting business, you should try to start small and gain as much experience and exposure in your local community as possible. These local

shows also give you a can to work out all of the kinks in your display and sales pitch before investing all your money in traveling to out of area craft shows.

Crafters' Marketplaces and Local Gift Stores

Many gift stores will accept crafts from local artisans on consignment. This is a great way to get your craft products out into the community. Often times these sorts of displays will lead to greater exposure and custom orders. It is a good way of reaching people who do not attend craft shows. Many communities also have crafters' marketplaces where you can rent space on a monthly basis to display your crafts. The concept is similar to a craft show – you just don't have to be there to sell the products. The store looks after all of the selling for you. You do need to ensure that your stock remains high enough and that you have an attractive display that will help your crafts stand out from all of the others.

Magazines and other Publications

You can consider advertising your new business in a magazine or a newsletter. Even better, you could try to have yourself featured in an article in your local paper or a craft magazine. This way your potential customers will learn more about you and the back-story of your craft. With crafts, a lot of customers like to know the process and story behind its creation, so this is an excellent way to connect with them and generate more interest in your new business venture.

Online

Just a few years ago, there were very few crafters online. Now, you can have a website devoted to marketing and selling your products. A website that displays your products and provides some background on you and your craft can be a really effective marketing tool. You can also sell your products directly online. This will allow you to sell your products to people all over the world with minimal advertising costs to you. Just think of the exposure!

Success with Your Hand Made Crafts Business

If you have a love for making hand made crafts, there are several ways to become successful at what you do through creating your own business. However, when beginning this business, the first steps that should be taken will be what ensures either your achievement of the business, or its failure.

The first thing that you should keep in mind when you decide to start selling your hand made crafts is to **make sure that you enjoy what you are doing**. If making craft items seems tedious to you, then it is probably not a good way to try to make an extra income. Even if it is only a part time hobby that you are doing, if you begin to prepare and find a

niche, the business will eventually grow and find new customers. Always be prepared for what you are getting into.

The second thing that you should do when starting with your hand made crafts is to **find a certain niche**. This will draw new customers to you, as well as allow older customers to return. The niche can include anything from what types of crafts you make, to the materials and colors that you use for your craft. It also includes finding the right type of people who will naturally be drawn to your craft. This part of the sale usually requires some research and understanding of different demographic factors, such as age of those who will be interested in your product. By understanding the market in which you will be selling your crafts to, there will be more room for your success, with less energy spent in order to find the right crafts and how they fit with the right target market. **This is the most essential thing** to set up before you start your business, and to continue setting up as you progress and grow with your craft sales.

One thing that you will want to do when starting a craft business is to **write a business plan**. This will allow you to see where the problems with the business will be so that you can find the solutions to before you invest too much time and money into it. Writing a business plan should cover everything from naming your business, the amount of finances and investments needed, time spent on making and selling your craft, to how you will begin to advertise your product and to whom you will be selling it to. It also includes finding how your niche will fit in, as well as the customers' needs and wants in relation to the craft and finances. There are several ways to find the proper information and guidelines that can help you to understand the different parts of a business plan and how to be successful with this planning in the selling of your crafts.

The next step that you can take is setting yourself up as a business. This means filling out the paperwork and making your self look professional. You can begin to do this by filling out tax forms that states that you are a craft business. This will cover you legally for anything that you sell. There are often times different types of paperwork that you will have to fill out, depending on the approach that you are taking for your craft business. The next set up is creating things for advertising and marketing, such as a website, brochures and business cards. The more professional you look from the beginning, the more likely you will be able to find the customers that you need.

Once you have done the preparation work, and have begun to invest time into your craft business, **then you can find ways to sell your work**. This includes everything from tagging onto a wholesaler or gallery, building a website, and renting a booth or space at the craft shows that are offered in your locality at different times of the year. Depending on the niche you have decided to take, and your target market, you can sell your crafts at any of the places that you have found will be successful for you.

By following simple steps and using guidelines for your hand made craft business, you can be ensured success. The most essential aspect of starting a hand craft business is planning and preparing to make the rest of the business fall into place and becoming a simple way of making a profit.

Marketing Ideas for Kids Crafting Parties

Are you a whiz at organizing fun and original kids craft parties? Do your parties tend to leave people talking for days? If you enjoy putting together crafting parties for kids, you might want to consider making a business of it. Kid's parties are some of the most common type of celebrations, and there is never a shortage of potential customers. Moreover, today's parents are often so busy that they would likely appreciate some help in planning memorable celebrations. Here are five ideas to help you market your burgeoning crafting party business.

1. Talk to other moms. If you're a mother, talking to other mothers probably comes naturally in the course of your everyday life. Whether you're at soccer practice or ballet rehearsal, don't be shy about talking to other mothers. Most people will express genuine interest when you mention that you have a business that specializes in creating crafting parties for kids. Tell them about some of the most memorable theme parties you have created. Emphasize how unique craft parties are in comparison to conventional birthday celebrations.

It's a good idea to be prepared for this type of encounter. You might consider carrying a portfolio with you so you can show potential customers pictures of the type of parties you have organized. Of course, you should have business cards that you carry with you at all times, as well. In this same vein, come up with a unique name for your craft party business—something that will prompt people to inquire more about it.

2. Host your own 'open house' kids craft party. Organize a craft party to launch your new business. This allows people to know what you are up to, and creates word of mouth. If you're a mom, throw a craft party for your kids and have them invite their friends. If parents demonstrate interest in how you've organized the party, mention that you actually operate a business that specializes in such parties. Chances are children who attend the party will want to have a craft party of their own in the near future.

If you don't have children of your own, consider hosting a party for children at your local community center. Or plan a party for the children of friends or family.

3. Purchase or create a small and inexpensive party favor, and attach your business card to it. Pass out these party favors at craft parties, local carnivals and fair, or any place you might find potential customers. Making your business card more memorable increases your chances of getting contacted by potential clients. You might even consider printing up inexpensive notepads or calendars with your business' name and contact information.

4. Offer to host a charity event. One of the best ways to market your new craft party business is to offer to host a party for a local charity. Not only will you be doing well for

a cause you care about, the party can allow you to develop your leadership skills, and show off your party planning skills. You will also be in a position to meet lots of new people and make contacts.

5. Work with local party supplies and craft businesses. If you're in the party planning business, you will likely be working closely with local crafts and party supplies stores. Get to know store personnel well. Remember that party supplies stores are party central—parents who are beginning to plan their children's parties will make these businesses their first stop. Get permission to put up colorful, eye-catching flyers that showcase pictures of your crafts parties. Even if they decide not to hire a party planner for this party, they might contact you next time a celebration comes around. If possible, get permission from store management to leave party favors that have your business' name and contact information on it.

Also, if the idea of teaching intrigues you, you may want to consider speaking to your local craft or party supply store about teaching a class about organizing kids crafts parties. Not only is this a good way to strengthen your portfolio and resume, but is also an excellent way to make contact with a pool of potential clients. Teaching is a great way to spotlight your business.

Sewing & Threading Your Way to Success

Being a professional dressmaker is a very hands-on craft. You work with your hands on a daily business, creating wearable masterpieces out of nothing but fabric and thread. Professional dressmakers, like other artisans, often focus on the art of their craft, to the detriment of their business. **If you enjoy sewing and are considering making a business of it**, read these five basic tips to avoid the pitfalls of the business, and to thread your way to success.

1. Never be afraid to talk with the experts. Sure, you know all there is about sewing. When it comes to your work, you don't need to rely on the advice of experts. You know how to sew and are able to create exquisite creations that put a smile on your customer's faces. But knowing your craft well doesn't necessarily make you an expert at everything else that affects your business. Don't be afraid to consult with advisors, financial planners, insurance agents, lawyers, loan officers, accountants, or any other type of advisor. In fact, experts recommend that all small businesses meet with, at the very least, an accountant once a year for tax planning.

If all these experts sound costly to you, you're right. Hiring a marketing consultant, for instance, would probably cost you thousands. Fortunately, with a bit of research you can find many low-cost options for expert financial and small business advice. Many local colleges and universities offer such services, as well as certain government agencies. Although it's definitely not the most enjoyable aspect of running a small business, seeking professional advice is one of the most responsible things you can do. And

remember: it's always better to seek advice when everything is relatively OK, rather than when you are in desperate need for it.

2. Make a list of your expenses. The reason most businesses fail is simple: a lack of funding. Avoid this pitfall by making a list of your projected expenses for one year. Include the cost of raw materials, sewing equipment, overhead costs, advertising, accounting, and any other expenses. Remember that your estimate will probably fall short of the real number. Be honest with yourself about whether you are currently able to handle the cost of launching your business.

3. Don't under price! One of the most common mistakes dressmakers make is under pricing their work. So how would you avoid this common error? First, calculate the total cost of producing your work. Calculate the cost of raw materials, overhead, labor, and labor. At what price can you make a comfortable profit? Make a decision about the lowest price that you can accept. Don't go below this number! It is very tempting to do this—many dressmakers often fall below this number in the urge to sell. Remember that under pricing is detrimental for your business. If you find yourself consistently under pricing, expect your business to go into the red soon enough.

When pricing, keep in mind that you also have to consider your competitor's price. Do research. If your competitors seem to be selling lower, try to pinpoint exactly where they are cutting corners. If you're client's mention your competitor's pricing, be prepared to demonstrate how your work is priced a bit higher because you haven't cut any corners in production.

4. Keep an open line of communication between you and your customers. Learning to communicate well with your customers is one of the most important things you can do to establish a good business. Dressmaking is often fraught with stress and personal emotions. Try to diffuse any potential conflict by keeping the line of communication between you and your clients open at all times. Ask for feedback on a regular basis. Ask lots of questions and listen carefully to what your customers say.

Before beginning a project, talk to your client and learn their expectations. Even if they don't contact you, make a serious effort to keep them informed at all stages of production. Finally, follow up after the project has been completed to make sure that the client's expectations have been met and that everything has been delivered.

Just because you finish a project and never hear any complaints from your client, don't assume that they are satisfied. Very satisfied customers are some of the most vocal—they will often contact you to say thanks, or to do more business with you. Customers who aren't satisfied, however, will rarely make contact. They will just make sure never to do business with you again, and spread bad word of mouth. Try to avoid this type of situation by having a clear sense of how a customer feels about your work at all times.

5. Don't take on more than you can handle. Another common mistake made by dressmakers is to accept too many new projects. This mistake can seriously jeopardize

your burgeoning business. Taking on too many projects not only places an enormous amount of stress on you, but also makes it more likely that you will have unsatisfied customers. Keep your expectations realistic. The idea of making more money is very tempting, but the stress you put on yourself and your clients is not worth it. Limit yourself to what you know you can handle.

Profitable St. Patrick's Day Crafts

St. Patrick's Day is a fun day and big business for everyone specially crafts people. There is always a big demand for various St. Patrick's Day items like decorations, clothing, gifts and craft projects for children. Here we will go through some of the products that in demand and some that will always remain popular for you to create and sell.

Decorations:

It wouldn't be St. Patrick's Day if there weren't any decorations to brighten the day up and to get people into the spirit of celebration. New, fun and eye catching decorations are always in demand. St. Patrick's Day decorations are a great place to start when creating craft for the day. Some of the most popular decorations to craft and sell for St. Patrick's Day are:

- Clover leaf and leprechaun streamers, trees, balloons, cut outs, confetti and figurines.
- Clover and leprechaun napkins, plates, and dishes.
- Four leaf clovers, leprechaun, rainbows and pots of gold displays, wall decals and stickers.
- Happy St. Patrick's Day signs.
- Making table cloths, mats, chair coverings.
- Leprechaun party hats.
- Irish and celebration flags.

Gifts:

Cards and gifts are necessary for craft workers to get their artistic claws into when it comes to St. Patrick's Day. People are always looking for new, creative and unique items to give to loved ones on the day. Providing such a service can be quite profitable. Some popular craft item's ideas are:

- Hand painting glasses with leprechauns or four leaf clovers.
- Unique cards with something new to say, new designs and artwork.
- Making St. Patrick's Day wind chimes, magnets, badges and pins.
- Making funny and detailed figurines of leprechauns and clover leaves.
- Jewelry featuring four leaf clovers for good luck.

- Clover and pot of gold gift and storage boxes.
- Irish Flags and patches.
- Making leprechaun dolls and puppets.
- Making candles, soaps and other related gift items.

Clothing:

There is nothing like getting into the St. Patrick's Day spirit by dressing up. Creating clothing and costumes for the day can be fun and very creative. You can make anything from the simple to the completely outrageous and it will still sell. Below are some ideas for creating and making clothing:

- Hats, paper, material or plastic ones and of all sizes.
- Embroidering or painting t-shirts and ties with leprechauns, four leaf clovers or with a saying that captures the spirit of the day.
- Knitting jumpers.
- Creating costumes for children and adults alike in good old leprechaun style.
- Making patches that able to be sewn on to clothing.

Craft Kits for Children:

Parents and schools are always looking for St. Patrick's Day crafting kits suitable for children. Kids love making and creating things and there are plenty of ideas you can choose from, or you can think of one up on your own. Below are a couple of ideas that you could use to make your own crafting kits for kids.

- Paper and beaded leprechaun masks, hats, shoes, ears or even how to make a whole costume out of paper.
- Leprechaun and clover finger puppets and toys.
- Kits for making their own badges.
- Leprechaun, four leaf clovers, rainbows and pots of gold cut outs, book marks, decorations and boxes.
- Easy and fun gifts they can make for others.
- Making cookies, cakes, soaps, bath bombs and other easy related crafts.

All of these St. Patrick's Day ideas for crafts people easy to create with the right tools, thought and imagination. It is a great way for you to make a profit on the day. It is also a fantastic way to help get yourself and others into the whole spirit and celebration of the day. There are many things that are in demand on St. Patrick's Day for just about anything you can think of and for almost every type of crafting business there is. The best ways to create something that you know will sell for sure is to come up with a unique plan and make it. Or you could always put a new twist on an excessively used item that will spark buyer's interests. All you need is a little imagination and a place to sell and you are on your way to making a tidy little pot of gold yourself on St. Patrick's Day.

Research Your Crafting Opportunities: Watch for Scams

No matter where you turn or where you look there is always a scam going on. Business opportunities are one of the most abundant of all scams. **One of the biggest types of work opportunity that is going around is craft making scams.** Many people fall into this type of scam because they want to work at home and spend more time with their families. Learn how to notice and avoid falling victim to such scammers.

Work at home assembly and craft scams are abundant, even though they usually sound real and completely legit.

Here is how they work:

These types of scams usually are advertised through window ads, bulletin boards, local magazines and papers and widely on the internet. They claim that they need workers to fulfill a part or full time position in creating craft or assembling items such as envelopes, dolls, toys, clothing, cards and other related items, stating that they will pay you top dollar per each item. **These scam companies usually work in one of two ways.**

The first one is that they will send you all the materials and instructions you need to create or assemble the items they ask.

The second of these types of scams is when they ask you to pay for the materials, which can usually go into the hundreds of dollars. After they have received your payment they will send you the materials and the instructions you need. Most of the times the materials you receive or there lack of, will be shoddy and usually impossible to make anything decent from.

In both versions of this scam, once you have finished making the products you will send them back to the company and wait for a check in the mail. **Most times you will not receive a check but instead a letter stating that your craftsmanship did not pass their quality checking test and therefore they can not sell the items.**

In the first scam they will sell your items, the ones that weren't good enough to sell, and make a tidy profit on them.

In the second scam, they are not interested in selling your items in the first place, hence the shoddy materials. Their only interest is in getting your payment for the materials.

Scams such as these, you can usually smell a mile away. **Here are some things to look for and do to make sure that you don't fall victim to them.**

Beware of any business opportunities that ask for lots of money up front, even if it is refundable.

The above also applies for opportunities that state that you can make a lot of money and start your business for free.

Don't go with companies that say you can make a lot of money in a very short period of time.

If something sounds too good to be true, then more often than not they probably are.

If you do think a company is legit but want to make sure, do a little bit of research. Check with your state to see if they are registered. Check on the internet to see what others who have worked for them say.

If you have crafts that you want to sell, **there are plenty of ways that you can sell it yourself.**

Talk to local craft outlets and see if they would like to buy your crafts from you or will display them in their store.

Set up a stall at the markets or a craft show and sell them yourself.

Start your own business from home and do all the set up yourself.

Taking steps to do it yourself is the best way to starting your own home business. This way you will know that everything is legit and that the money is going in your pocket. If you don't have the resources to start your own home business and want to use a business opportunity to help get you started, there are a lot of legit ones out there. Sometimes they are hard to find beneath all the scams, but they are out there. While looking for such a business opportunity take all the precautions, keep an eye out and know all of the latest scams to keep yourself from falling victim to them.

Choosing a Quilting Design that Sells

Quilting is a huge hobby industry right now. While in the past, many quilted purely for pleasure and only gave their quilts to family members, people are now seeing lots of business opportunities. With advances in technology, it is easier than ever to sell your quilts for profit.

But making a quilt, especially making a full size quilt is a big investment of time and money. You have to buy the fabrics and spend a great deal of time designing, sewing and quilting. You want to be sure that there will be a market for the quilts you design. Here are a few simple suggestions of things to keep in mind when trying to decide on a quilt decide you hope will sell.

1. Size Matters

When just starting out on your homemade quilt business, you might want to start with smaller quilts. You can start out trying to create lap quilts and wall hangings. See how those sell and what your most popular color and patterns are – this will make it easier to know what kinds of full quilts to design when you take that next step.

2. Tradition

Though there are always new and exciting techniques and patterns to try out, a lot of your customers will be looking for traditional types of quilts. They are purchasing something that will hopefully stay in the family for generations so they will be looking for a quilt that is timeless. Your customer will probably not be as excited by these new trends as you are, but you should try any new items you feel comfortable with. The majority of customers are looking for a family heirloom, not the latest quilting craze. Log cabin and double wedding rings are two of the most classic patterns and will appeal to a really wide range of customers. It's important to try new things and not lose your passion for designing, but it might be best to try some of these new designs on smaller pieces – just until you see how your customers respond.

3. Stick to Safe Colors

Many of the same things apply to your color selection. You want to try and select fabrics that will appeal to a lot of different customers. Not everyone is going to like the same things, but there will probably be very few customers interested in a quilt of hot pink and fluorescent yellow. You also need to try and keep your personal preference out of it. The colors you like may not appeal to a lot of your customers.

It is important to know about current interior design trends, but you do not want to base all of your selections on the “in” color of the moment. It can change so quickly and as was discussed earlier, your customer is looking for something that will last many years and through a dozen interior re-designs.

Softer colors or “safer” colors are best when designing quilts with no specific buyer in mind.

4. Research

It is good to get as many different viewpoints as you can. Be sure to talk to family and friends when you have a new design or color scheme in mind. They can often bring a different perspective to the mix. Also be sure that you are in touch with your customers. Talk to as many customers as you can at local craft shows and see what kind of designs and colors they like.

5. Diversify

Making large quilts is quite an investment of time and money and the result is that your price point is quite high – not in terms of the work put in to them, but in terms of what the average craft show customer is willing to spend in one weekend. Try to diversify your products. There are lots of things that you can make applying the techniques and methods of large quilting products. Consider creating placements and table clothes for your next craft show. This can be an excellent way of using up all of those bits of material you gather over time and these smaller, less expensive products will appeal to a broader range of customers.

Wherever you sell or market your quilts, be sure to specify that you will do customer orders depending on size and the customer's time frame. Your customers will appreciate knowing that they can customize their own quilt design and colors – if they're willing to wait a bit for that personal touch!

Crafty Venues for Hand Made Promotions

You are the creator of lovely and impressive hand made crafts that always draw their share of glances. So you've decided that you want to start selling your hand made crafts and launch your own business, but you aren't sure where to start. Here's a list of six crafty venues to promote your craft business:

1. Get started with home parties. By far the easiest way to get your feet wet is by hosting a home party to promote your hand made craft business. Start by inviting close friends, family members, and co-workers who are supportive and have previously expressed an interest in your craft. You might want to consider putting on a demonstration, if this is feasible. Most people enjoy watching craftspeople at work, and this is no exception.

A home party is a good way to unofficially announce that you are in business. Enlist the help of your guests by asking them to spread the word about your new endeavor to anyone who might be interested. Create or purchase unique party favors, and attach your business cards to them.

2. Craft or Street Fairs. Another great starting point to launch your hand made craft business is by renting a booth at a local craft or street fair. Craft fairs generally receive a lot of street traffic, and are a great meeting point for individuals who like and appreciate handcrafted gifts and items. Have business cards printed up and give them out during the fair.

If you are just starting out, you may want to avoid the craft fairs that are aimed at more established businesses, as their booth rental fees can be quite high. Instead, focus on smaller fairs where you'll receive an equal share of attention, and where fees are generally more manageable.

3. Nonprofit agencies or local charities. Consider donating some of your crafts to your favorite nonprofit agency or local charity. This allows you to meet new people and make important contacts while doing something positive for your community. Donating your crafts can also boost your confidence in your work. Knowing that someone is enjoying your craft can add a whole new dimension to your business.

4. Set up your website and online store. These days, almost all well-established craftspeople sell their wares online. Setting up your own website is easier than ever. Provide potential customers with descriptions and large, clear pictures of your crafts. Be certain that your website is updated frequently.

The internet is also important in connecting with other members of the arts and crafts community. The internet has been instrumental in perpetuating a vibrant community of craftspeople. Websites dedicated to crafts and the business of crafts are innumerable, with busy bulletin boards and e-mail newsletters always going in full force. Become familiar with these valuable internet resources, and learn to use them to your advantage.

5. Brick and mortar retail stores. If you're serious about promoting your hand made crafts business, consider visiting a retail crafts store that carries items similar to your own. Make an appointment to meet with the store manager. Discuss your burgeoning business, and ask if the store would be willing to help you by carrying your products.

If the store personnel seem hesitant, try to reach a compromise. Ask them to carry your product for a limited run, just to see how customers react to your work. Even if the store decides not to carry your crafts, you will have received invaluable feedback on your work. Always be courteous and professional when dealing with store personnel—you're craft business depends on these kinds of professional relationships.

6. Open your own retail store. Yes, this is a big step, but if you're serious about your craft business, and you seem to be steadily growing, you may come to point where you will consider opening up your very own retail store. Remember that a large percentage of small businesses fail in their first year. You'll want to consider this decision very carefully, and make sure there's a market for the type of crafts you produce. Selling your home made crafts on a part-time basis is one thing, but running your own store full-time is quite another.

Choose Which Crafts Will Sell: Know Your Audience

It's happened to many a self-employed entrepreneur – even to big corporations. You come up with a fantastic new product idea. You mass-produce it, certain that demand will be high and that it will simply fly off the shelves. **But when it comes time to sell it, no one is buying.** Businesses have been lost over mistakes like this. How could they have got it so wrong?

It is a situation that can happen to anyone, and as a crafter who has decided to sell your products, you face the same challenges as any other business. The success of your hand made craft business really depends on knowing your audience and reaching them with your products.

Here are five things to keep in mind when deciding what crafts you are going to produce.

1. Research Current Trends

The craft industry, like other industries, has its current fads and trends. When thinking about the long term, you don't want to develop a product that fits into a specific trend or faze, because odds are that product will not be popular for the long haul. That being said, you do still want to know what people are buying. You want to keep on top of new techniques and products being used in your crafting field. You want to have the flexibility to create some products that fit with what people are buying, without just giving in to a current craze.

2. Research Your Target Audience

Right from the start, you might have a clear idea of who will buy your product. If you don't, you need to try and figure out who your craft will appeal to. What gender and age are your main buyers? What kinds of crafts do they buy now? What price range do those purchases fall in to? Once you know your audience, you need to decide where they buy their crafts. You need to know what areas they live in and what shows or stores they buy crafts at. It is no good having a clear picture of your ideal buyer and then selling your crafts places that he or she does not go to. You need to figure out the best way (and the best place) to reach your target buyers.

3. Find Your Niche

Having a really unique product will set you apart from other crafters in your area. Often people who buy crafts are looking for something new and different for their homes or for gifts for family and friends. They buy crafts because they want to find something really unique and know that it is one of a kind. This is what your customers want so be sure to give it to them. Don't copy crafts and techniques that ten other crafters in your area are using. You need to work on developing a reputation for unique and one of a kind products.

4. Seasonal Suitability

Work in the craft industry is often seasonal. November and December are often really busy months, when customers are trying to find gifts for the holidays. Be prepared for this and try to manage your time so you have enough products to meet demand. It is also good to have a seasonal product that will appeal to your customers. For example, many people are looking for interesting little knick knacks that can send in place of the standard holiday greeting card. Designing little ornaments that capture the spirit of the season will

really pay off. Similarly, it would be silly to have a lot of holiday ornaments for sale at a show in April when holiday gift giving is the last thing on your customers' minds. Try for a diverse range of products that are not always season specific in you are showing your work at craft shows year round.

5. Price, Price, Price!

Nothing will kill your hand made craft business quicker than overpriced products. Customers are often willing to pay more for something that is hand made, but there is a limit. When pricing your product, you must be realistic. For example, a product that is priced below \$20 will probably sell better than something that is priced at \$22. Why? It may seem very little to you, but in your customer's mind that \$2 difference crosses some kind of line. While it is understandable to want to be paid decently for your work, you won't make any money at all if your price point is too high for your customers' tastes.

Sell Your Crafts Online: 11 Easy Steps

One way to consistently advertise your crafts and business is to build and promote your own website. Websites are becoming a more popular way to conduct business and allow exposure for sales and knowledge. Here are ten steps that you can follow when building your own website.

1. Concentrate on how your website looks. This is one of the most important factors when building and maintaining your website. When one is browsing through the internet for crafts, they want to see the crafts, and not a lot of description. Having links for different areas on your web will help in getting the customer what they need. Having the front page to draw in the attention of the person browsing through your site is also important. If you are unsure of how to use the several different types of software available for your own website, you can always hire a web developer who can design and establish your site just the way you want it.

2. Find the best host or domain to put your site on. This may mean paying a yearly fee for a domain and professional hosting rather than building your own website using this name. This is usually best for more complex websites. There are also several places that offer free web pages and can help you to design a basic and simple site. These are best if you do not need a complex site. If you have your own domain name, you are often seen as more professional with your business.

3. Keywords and Phrases. With the descriptions that are offered on your site, make sure to use the keywords that will draw your target market to your site. This will allow those that are using search engines through the web to be directly linked to you and your crafts.

4. Creating a Gallery. This is going to bring in the most traffic to your website. Your gallery should be professional looking and have several different types of crafts that you offer.

5. Payment Methods. Always offer more than one payment method. In the design of your website, it is best to offer an option to pay online and have a shopping cart available. There are several different places where you can transfer money safely and securely online. If the person interested in your crafts does not want to use this method, it is best to offer varieties of exchanging information for payment.

6. Craft Directories and classifieds. There are several places on the web that have places to advertise your website as part of their directory. These are often at a low fee, and some can be found for free.

7. Online Journaling and networking. Connecting with others on the web is an important way to build relationships and networks. Journaling on certain sites will create a personal relationship with other craft oriented people, and may allow room to direct potential customers to your site. The more you get in touch with others that are on the web and seem to be interested in crafts, the more traffic you will have coming towards your website.

8. Building Links. Beyond the journaling and networks that you are building on the internet, you can also build links to your website. This means that you can go to web rings or other places on the web and place your website on that link to direct traffic. You can also provide links to other websites that are selling other types of crafts. These are often referred to as cross links and may include online craft malls, galleries, etc.

9. Building outside Networks. If you are visible in your community as someone who does crafts, than it is possible for you to easily build a network which can bring traffic to your site. Updates, promotions and newsletters can be sent via e-mail to these members, as well as a way to direct them to the updates on your site.

10. Build Your Rankings. There are several options to see what your rankings are on the internet. You can use software or developed online sites to help build and support your website. Through this, you can alter whatever is needed in order to ensure more success for your site.

11. Continue to Update Your Site. Even when your website is completely built, it is never finished. Adding promotions, drawing more of your target market to your site, as well as continuing to network over the internet all need to maintain consistently to help to sell your crafts.

Building a website and promoting your crafts through them is a worthwhile way to improve your business. Through following these tips, as well as understanding the internet market, you will be able to be successful in selling your crafts online.

Offer Craft Lessons with Your Crafting Business

Maybe you were lucky enough to find a way to make money out of your passion for crafts, and even launched your own crafting business. **But now you find yourself wondering how to make extra money from your crafts.** One of the best and easiest ways to supplement your crafting business is by offering craft lessons.

How can you start your own crafting classes? A good way to begin supplementing your crafting business is by organizing small home parties where you can invite friends, family members, and co-workers. This is a wonderful way to ease into teaching. If you're a little nervous about the idea of teaching, remember that a home party is basically just a small gathering of friends. Focus on your love for your craft have confidence in your skills, and the rest will follow.

At your home party, ensure that your guests have a memorable experience by making the lesson as pleasurable as possible. Prepare well, provide light refreshments, and send your guests off with a completed craft, or if this is not possible, some sort of sample or party favor. You can bet that if your guests have a good time and enjoyed the experience of crafting with you, they will tell their friends, and positive word of mouth will begin to spread.

If you feel comfortable teaching at a professional level, you may want to seek out your local community college. Many community colleges offer non-credit crafts classes that are always in need of instructors. Teaching part-time is an excellent way to supplement your income. Be aware that to get this type of teaching position you will have to demonstrate significant knowledge and experience in your field. If you are a novice in your craft area, the chances of getting hired for this type of position is slim.

Teaching at a local college is not only a good way to make extra money, it also allows for an excellent opportunity to network and make contacts. When telling your students about your expertise and background, mention your crafting business. This type of exposure is invaluable because you are targeting a room full of individuals who have a deep interest in your craft.

Teaching at the college level will also force you to become better at your craft. This is a benefit of teaching that is invaluable. You will undoubtedly improve at your craft in the process of teaching. Teaching at a local community college may also serve to boost your crafting business by designating you with the unofficial title of 'expert' of your craft. Where do people often go to seek expert advice on a very specialized topic? Most people will seek out colleges, of course. People who are interested in the type of craft you specialize in may begin to seek you out because of your status as a professional college instructor.

Another way to supplement your crafting business by offering craft lessons is to visit your local crafts store or hobby shop. As a professional craftsperson, you are probably already very familiar with these types of businesses. If you haven't done so already, introduce yourself to the store management. Explain that you operate your own crafting business. Be well prepared with professional business cards and, if possible, a portfolio or a sample of your work. The more professional your presentation is, the better your chances of landing an opportunity to teach.

If the store does not offer a class or workshop on your area of expertise, offer to design a workshop. Many of the workshops featured at local hobby shops are run by volunteers. If you are truly interested in using teaching as a valuable networking tool for your crafting business, you should be willing to volunteer your time. Most of these classes are run on a short-term basis (most only meeting once or twice), so you won't necessarily have to spend a great deal of time teaching these workshops. Remember to be prepared with business cards and your portfolio during these workshops.

Trash to Treasure Crafts that Sell!

When it comes to crafts, do you tend to gravitate toward the unique, the different, and the most eye-catching? Making crafts is not only a fun and creative endeavor; it can also be quite lucrative. If you're interested in making and selling crafts, but are worried about production costs, worry no more. Here are ten 'trash to treasure' crafts that are not too costly to produce, and that are sure to sell.

Use old greeting cards to make charming keepsake boxes. Everyone has access to greeting cards, and even if you decide to buy new greeting cards for this project, the expense is minimal. Choose two greeting cards with designs that complement each other nicely. For instance, two greeting cards with flower designs would work well together. Cut one greeting card in half at the fold. Use the part of the card with the design on it to make the box. Use a ruler to make sure your folds are equal lengths. Fold up the sides of the card to form it into a box, and glue the walls into place. Use the second greeting card to form a lid for the greeting card box.

Make a 'vignette lantern' using old glass jars. This craft works especially well if you design your lanterns around seasonal or holiday themes. Using old glass jelly or mason jars, create a 'scene' inside the jar. For instance, if you want to sell your craft around the Christmas holiday season, create a holiday scene inside the jar with Christmas trees, lights, a Santa, etc.

Create a cool CD clock! This project is very eye-catching and easy to do. Most everyone has old CDs that they have no use for. Why not convert them into working clocks that you can sell? Find an old CD you no longer need and paint it. Use markers and paint to create an original design. Write the clock numbers around the sides of the CD. Use a regular clock as a guide for spacing your numbers. Use the clock works on an old clock

and, using a large washer (available at hardware stores), attach the clock works to the back of the CD.

Create an eye-catching fork wind chime. Using a hammer, flatten down the prongs on three or four old forks. Bang the tips so they straighten all the way. Attach the forks to either a piece of wire or strong string. You can drill holes on the handles of the fork and attach them securely to the piece of wire. Attach the wire and forks to another structure. This can be whatever you want—you can fashion another piece of wire into an attractive design and attach the forks to it. The forks will create lovely music in the wind!

Make colorful ornaments out of old light bulbs. Using acrylic paints, design colorful designs on a burnt out light bulb. You can also use a hot glue gun to attach fabric or other accessories to the light bulb. Popular motifs you can try are Santa Claus, Reindeer, or Angel designs. After you're done decorating your light bulb ornament, use your hot glue gun to attach a loop to the top of your ornament for hanging.

Sell handmade pine cone bird feeders. Not only is this project easy and inexpensive to do, but another perk is that it allows you to clean up your yard! Cut pieces of twine or yarn and wrap them around each pine cone so that you will be able to hang the pine cone securely. Mix part butter and part peanut butter in a bowl and smear it all over a pine cone. Then pour bird seed into a dish and roll the pine cone in the bird seed until it is covered. Place the pine cone in the freezer until it is set (usually takes about an hour). Now it is ready to hang.

Create fun yard art from thrift shop treasures. This project allows you to really stretch your imagination to create wonderful yard art creations. Search out thrift shops to find old chairs, tables, baker's racks—just about anything—to create planters and yard decorations. With a new coat of paint and a little imagination, you'll be able to create one of a kind yard art.

Make fun rag dolls out of old jeans. You can fashion dolls out of old blue jeans. Use old soft sweaters to make clothes for the doll, yarn for the hair, and hot glue buttons for the eyes. You can make a whole series of these dolls and sell them at crafts fairs.

Create beautiful folk art aluminum flowers. Find unusual aluminum beer or soda bottles. With a pair of utility scissors, cut the soda cans open. Cut out a rectangular piece of aluminum and smoothen it down. Use a marker to draw a flower design on the piece of aluminum. Cut out your flower, using steel wool to soften out any rough, jagged spots. Use an awl to curl petal edges, and punch out holes if your design calls for it. Attach a metal rod to your aluminum flower to act as a stem. You can create a lovely bouquet, if you wish!

Make and sell truly unique art mailboxes. You can purchase used metal mailboxes very inexpensively at thrift stores, and then decorate them to make a profit. You can also personalize these mailboxes for your clients!

Teach Crafting Classes: Generate Business Exposure

There are several marketing techniques available for building your crafting business. These include building websites, going to craft fairs, and finding the right potential market for your type of craft. Also there is the possibility of creating crafting classes. This will help others appreciate your crafts.

The first thing to keep in mind when deciding to do a crafting class is the market that you want to reach. If your crafts are directed more towards children, it would be best to give your class as a program at a school. If it is for families or older people, it is best to find a local area that will allow you to conduct the class. Libraries, nursing homes, public venues, etc. are all good places to offer your class. When deciding on your crafting class, finding the right place and the right audience to conduct it for will help with your success for business exposure.

One place that can be considered for offering the class is at a craft or trade show. Many different workshops are usually available during the shows. If you decide to teach a class in this area, then you should also have a booth. The class will then expose your different types of items, which many will go to see after the class is over.

The second thing to keep in mind when conducting a craft class is the topic that you want to speak about. Many times, a crafting class will include how to make things. While this will provide for a stronger attraction towards the class, as well as allow you the room to be a master in your craft, you should also keep in mind that giving too many insights into your craft will not help you to sell your own items. With this in mind, it is best to offer the class with either a smaller item or one that is not as important for you to sell as others. At the same time, you want to make sure that everyone leaves the class feeling like they have learned part of your craft.

Teaching craft classes can also help with your business exposure by building your credentials. If you are beginning your business, or do not have a paid position, teaching the class on a volunteer basis will give you leverage later on if someone is looking for a craft teacher for a class or even a workshop.

When you go in to teach your class, come prepared with several items in order to better teach your class. The more information you provide about your craft business, the more likely people will be to look into what you have to offer. First, you should have all of the items available that you will be teaching with. Allowing the workshop or class to run smoothly will help you to build credentials among the others that are attending the class. The second thing to provide is either a portfolio of your crafts, or to bring in some of the items that you sell. This will allow the people attending the class to understand more of the crafts that you make, and will peak their interest in your craft.

If your class is advertised, it will also peak interest in who you are and what you are doing. This can help with local exposure to your crafts, as it is a way to advertise your name in association with your business. You can do things such as advertise in the newspaper or in local listings to let people know what you can offer.

Another concept to keep in mind is offering more than one class or workshop. This will help to get your name into the public more than one time and will help to build your reputation as a craft business. If the class is only one session, then you might want to consider offering a second part or a completely different workshop soon after the first one is over. This builds a network for your business as well as for the class and selling your crafts.

These techniques, the way that you choose to conduct your class, and deciding the right places for your class are all low budget ways to offer exposure for your craft business. Teaching classes and workshops are used not only to offer knowledge to the community, but also to help in building your credentials for your business of craft making.

Easter Crafts to Create & Cash In On

Easter is such a great time of year for everyone and is a time for craft workers to delve into their creative basket and sell their Easter items. **There are many things craft workers can do to make Easter a profitable time of year for their business.** Here we will go through some great craft kits for Easter you can make and sell specially for the little ones and the not so little ones.

Chocolates and candy:

Children love making things that they can eat and being Easter it is the ideal time for such a project. If you are making chocolate and candy craft cook kits for children, there are plenty of recipes to choose from. All you need to do is include the right amount of ingredients, molds to make it a bit more and enjoyable and the instructions. Some of the food ideas you can make into a do it yourself craft kits for children are:

Chocolate: Make sure you offer them in different varieties of chocolate and various other candy that is compatible, to make it something fun and different.

Toffees: Offer one that is both a hard and soft. A good thing to include in a toffee kit is food coloring, especially for the hard toffee kit.

Biscuits, cakes and slices: make them fun and easy to make, like choc chip cookies.

Make sure when you are creating these kits to put an expiry date on them and have a list of all necessary ingredients that aren't included in the kit.

Costumes and Jewelry:

Another thing children love making is items that they can wear and play with to let their imagination go wild. With Easter there are a few things that you can make into craft kits for children to make in terms of costumes and jewelry. It will give those hours of fun.

Bunny ears, tails and feet: these parts can be sold separately or all together and can be made out of felt, cardboard or some other child friendly material. Make sure most the difficult items are already cut and include extra pieces in case they get broken or lost.

Necklaces and bracelets: these kits can contain all sorts of beads, ribbons and bits and pieces related to Easter. Lettered beads are a great for a child to create personal Easter messages on their jewelry. Again this kit should include extra pieces.

Fun Items:

There are hundreds more ideas that you can turn into children's craft kits that can spend hours of fun creating. Some of them include.

Bookmarks: With bookmarks you can pre-cut them or make them into a stencil in the shape of an Easter egg or a rabbit to be cut. Use durable materials that will hold and include items like googly eyes and pipe cleaners to give it a fun effect.

Baskets: Baskets are something fun for children to make as they can add their own style to it. A good idea for baskets is to create them in a shape of an egg or a rabbit's head. These can easily be made out of cardboard.

Easter chicks: these craft kit children will just love. When making the kit provide many fun things like pom-poms, googly eyes and pipe cleaners. Make sure you add extra parts and easy to understand instructions.

Easter magnets: these would go along the same lines as making a bookmark. Have the materials to be sturdy and of an interesting shape like a rabbit or an egg.

Easter bunny puppets: this can be made out of a variety of materials like cardboard, felt, pipe cleaners and pom-poms. Children will love this idea and will give them hours of fun while and after they have made them. With the kit include many colors and many shapes and variations. Again for materials make tricky parts pre-cut and include easy understanding instructions.

There are so many different crafting kits that you can create for fun activities for kids to do while celebrating Easter. The ideas above are easy to create into a kit and are cheap to assemble or you could always come up with your own. They will give children hours of fun and you an extra bit of cash to enjoy over the holiday.

How to Market Dried Floral Bouquets

Flowers have always been big business but the age old art of flower drying and making them into works of eye catching bouquets is becoming hugely popular in business today. Many people have spent years perfecting the art as a hobby but when it comes to selling dried floral bouquets it can become a bit daunting on how to get the word out. So here, we will go through five marketing ideas of how to do it yourself and without hassle.

1) Internet Marketing:

Internet marketing can be easy, free and as simple as adding a signature to all your outgoing emails and posts. To do this all you need to do is to write a short message about your business, its name, phone number, email address, website and a little information about your bouquets. Remember to keep your signature short and easy to read.

Another thing you could do is write articles that people will gain information from and can link to or from or add in their newsletter with a link to your business.

Consider starting a newsletter yourself, is another great idea when marketing online, include information, products and specials that the reader will gain something from.

Make your website search engine friendly by using keyword rich articles and information on your products.

2) Flyers, Pamphlets and Brochures:

Yes, most companies and businesses do this and for good reason, it brings in potential customers and sales. When you create your flyers, pamphlets or brochures make it eye catching, enticing and something that the reader will enjoy. Write as though you are talking to your reader in person and include descriptions of your products, like what type of flowers you use and so forth. Give the reader a reason why your product will benefit them and make them interested in learning more.

Buddy up with another company that will compliment yours, like a local wedding company. This is a great marketing strategy for both you as you will save money on mailing costs and target twice the readers. This buddy strategy works by sending with your flyers and pamphlets their business card/flyers and in turn they will do the same for you.

3) Use The Things Around You:

Marketing your business by using the things around you or on you can be greatly beneficial and you usually only need to pay the one set up cost. Think about putting your logo sticker on your car windows or doors.

Get a t-shirt printed with your business logo and phone number and wear it as a uniform, out shopping, or wherever you may be.

Making sure you have all your paper work and envelopes printed with a letterhead and business information and have business cards always on hand.

All these things are easy to do and will be noticed wherever you go even when you are not working, really it is marketing that works for you all day, every day.

4) Special Offers and Information:

Giving special offers can boost your business dramatically. Send them to clients who have bought off you before or send them out with your pamphlets to entice newcomers. Give specials to people who buy in bulk for a wedding or other event or even create a customer rewards program. When creating a special make sure you include an expiry date.

Another thing you could do is give out free information on how you make your products like giving demonstrations on how to arrange a bouquet or how to dry flowers. This sort of information is something a customer can take away with them or entice them to buy the product from you, knowing how much time and energy go into it.

5) Advertising:

Advertising has to be one of the most valuable marketing strategies a person can take. Before you delve into buying and placing ads find an appropriate place for it that with your target customer in mind.

You could buy ads on the internet on floral, wedding websites or wherever your target buyer is likely to go.

Placing ads in trade and specialty magazines is another great way to reach a wide amount of readers and potential buyers who are or will be interested in your product.

When creating an ad, make it eye catching with pictures of your bouquets and valuable contact information or a website where they can look at more of your arrangements. Just remember not to make it too busy and make sure all information is easy and simple to read.

The above is just some ideas where you can start your marketing campaign there are many more options you can choose from. Remember enticing potential customers to buy from you is the most important aspect of marketing, being noticed is just the starting point.

How to Promote Your Needlepoint Crafts

1. Local Craft Shows

The best way to get out there and meet your customers is at local craft shows. This gives you a chance to sell your products, but even if you don't see a lot, you can gain a lot of exposure. Be sure to talk to everyone who stops at your booth. A warm smile and some pleasant words will make a good impression on potential customers and they will be much more likely to examine your products and even buy something. You also want to have plenty of business cards and flyers on hand. Even if someone does not see a product they want to buy that day, they will often hold on to the card and call you when they have a special gift they need to purchase for someone. You'd be amazed how long some people hold on to business cards.

If there isn't a craft show in your area or the fee is too much for you, then you can consider hosting a craft show in your own home. If you have enough space, you can rent out space to other local crafters. This will cover all the money you spend on marketing and refreshments for your customers and the only work you'll have is a bit of set-up and clean-up. This show may even develop in an annual or semi-annual sale that your customers come to expect over time.

2. Demonstrations

The majority of people who buy hand made crafts do so because they are interested in the uniqueness of the objects and the story that is behind the craft. Most are fascinated by the artistic process and enjoy witnessing it whenever they get the chance. That's why demonstrations are a fabulous way to promote your needlepoint crafts. Set-up a demonstration anywhere you are able to rent a booth, such as the local malls, community centers or even libraries. Try to figure out what kind of places people in your target market frequent and go there as well. You can also approach groups in your area and offer to demonstrate your craft at one of their monthly meetings. You can also bring products to sell at these demonstrations if you clear that with the location ahead of time. If people see the work that goes in to creating these products, they are much more likely to make a purchase.

3. Online

Many crafters are still hesitant about taking advantage of internet technology to promote their products. Don't be one of them! The internet offers you a way to reach more customers than you can even imagine. People from all around the world can stumble across your website and see all of the fantastic products you have on offer.

With the web building tools and programs available today, it is easier than ever to create your first website. You could start off with a website that just gives a general introduction to your products and you as the artisan. You could describe your needlepoint process from design to the finishing touches and even include photos of that process so those

browsing your site will feel more connected to your artistic process. You can also take your website a step further. If you (or someone close to you) have the internet savvy, you can set up sales right over the internet. You can keep record of your stock and have an online order forms for customers to fill out.

When starting out with your website, you'll need to make sure that you have good product shots of your needlework projects. The only drawback to online craft selling is that customers do not get to see the actual projects before the sale goes through. It is sometimes hard to capture the detailed work that goes into a needlework project in a photograph, so you need to be sure that your product photos are of super quality and you might even consider have a picture of the whole project and then a few close-up shots so the work you have put into each piece is clear.

You can also join online craft communities. This is an excellent way to get to know crafters and network with them. These kinds of connections can be very useful in the long run.

Top 5 Beaded Craft Items That Sell

If you enjoy making crafts and you haven't tried beading yet, you ought to give it a try. There are numerous beading crafts out there to engage in. **People of all ages are getting involved.** You can start simple by creating something like a basic bracelet, or you can be more sophisticated and perform lamp shade work. Whatever you try, have fun at it! There are many sizes and colors of beads to choose from. When choosing a craft, be sure you choose the right beads to go along with it; smaller beads for detailed work and larger beads for simple ideas. Children will even enjoy this pastime.

Here are several beading crafts that are favorites for the bead craft lover.

Jewelry - Jewelry is probably, by far, the most popular beading craft that people perform. Because the limit is the sky with jewelry, all ages can participate. For children, there are necklaces that are made with the large plastic beads. Using the bigger beads makes it easier for children to handle. Necklaces, bracelets and even tiaras are a favorite for kids. Rather than using wire, children would benefit from using elastic string for their jewelry. This way it can grow with them. There are various children's websites on the internet that even give instructions to print out that can be followed. For the older crafter, there are earrings, pins and chain bracelets/necklaces to create. You can create your own design, or once again, you can print instructions off the internet to create a particular pattern.

Ornament Covers - When researching this topic, I was surprised to come across this topic. Ornament covers are a way to add color and style to what otherwise is a plain colored ornament ball. The ornament cover is made from either one color or various colors and thread. Once again, you are trying to create a type of pattern to accent the

ornament. It can be a little tricky trying to picture the finished project. You can do something simple or you can go profession. It's all up to you.

Victorian Beaded Lampshades - This is one of the most time consuming beading projects there is. It takes a lot of patience and attention to detail. After purchasing a lampshade you must place a trim around the edges. This is what the fringe will hang from. If you want to match your furniture, be sure to pick colors that coordinate. You will then sow the beads through the loop and then proceed to hang your fringe. First buy various beads and then make a pattern from them. Once you've decided what pattern you like and how many beads it will take for each fringe, go back to the store and purchase the amount needed. Buy a few extras incase your loose or break any.

Beaded bags - Next time, when choosing a matching purse for your outfit, remember your options just got larger. You can make purses in all shapes and sizes. They can range from fruit shaped, butterflies and even cartoon characters. If this interests you, you might want to check for classes at your nearby crafts store. You can even specialize in antique purses. The antique purses can be made to match a particular outfit. They are done similar to the lampshade beading work when adding the fringe along the bottom of the purse. A lot of purses that are done in beadwork are accented with sparkled sequence as well. Your own unique style will make the purse just right for you.

Flowers - Another unique design that people are picking up are French Beaded Flowers. The name "French Beaded" describes a particular technique that is being used, and not necessarily the fact that the flower is French. It is done by wrapping wire that has been beaded around a center point of beads. You can use any type of bead. If you're familiar with bead size, generally an 11/0 is used. Although it's up to you as to what style you want to get across while making your flowers. Flowering making from beads has been around since the 1500's when the Europeans practiced this hobby. You can even find these flowers in museums around the world or maybe even a private collection.

How to Market Your Woodworking Crafts

As a woodworker, you face some unique challenges in marketing your products. Here's five ways to go about getting your hand made wood crafts the attention they deserve.

1. Local Shows and Stores

Starting small at local shows is a good way for any craftsperson to get started with their new business. It gives you a chance to see how popular your products are and interact with your customers directly. You can hear right from them the types of crafts they are looking for and in what price range. It is important to start small and locally, especially if many of your woodworking crafts are large and require a lot of effort to transport. There is no sense transporting all your products to an out of town show if they are not what customers are looking for or if they are over-priced.

You can also talk to local craft stores and see if they will carry your crafts on consignment. You will need to pay them a percentage of every sale, but there is no money required up front for the space and display. You may not sell a lot right off the bat, but this will be fantastic exposure for your woodworking crafts.

With local shows and stores, you want to make sure that you have lots of cards and flyers promoting your business. Even if a customer does not buy something from you at that particular show, they will pick up a card and contact you in future if they are looking for woodworking crafts. You'll be amazed at how long customers hold on to business cards.

2. Network

When just starting out, family and friends can be one of your best resources. Not only can they lend a helping hand at crafts shows, they will probably be some of your first and best customers. They can also help in spreading the news about your new venture. You tell your friends and they tell their friends and it just goes on from there. Never estimate the power of word of mouth in the crafting industry.

3. Magazines and Other Publications

Standard advertising is often not the most effective means of promoting your crafting business. It is better to pick specialized publications if you are planning on running an ad. It would be even better to try and have yourself featured in a magazine or local newspaper – you'll get the same publicity as an ad, but without paying a cent for it!

4. Demonstration

Serious craft buyers are usually interested in the story and the artist behind the craft. That is all part of the buying appeal for them. They want to feel that they are purchasing a one of a kind product and that they have a connection with the person who has created it. Be sure that you make that extra effort to communicate with your customers at local craft sales.

You might also consider demonstrating your craft at local sales or arranging a demonstration at a local store or community centre. This will give your customers a chance to see you working with their own eyes. You'd be amazed at how fascinating people find these kinds of demonstrations. Seeing a project through from conception to finished project will make people feel more connected to the work and they will be much more likely to make a purchase.

It might not be possible for you to show the entire process, especially as a woodworker, but some kind of demonstration will make all the difference when marketing your products.

5. Internet

Even the most computer illiterate crafters can find ways to market their products online these days. With web design programmers and free home pages or personal journals, crafters can take advantage of all these technological advances and go global with their products. You can have a website that gives an overview of your history as a crafter and also shows products samples. You can go further than this too. What about selling your products online? You'll reach an entirely new client base and it will be well worth any sort of set-up aggravation.

As you can see, there are many different ways to market your new woodworking business. Try whenever possible for the personal touch – it will make your customers feel really connected to your products and keep them coming back year after year after year.

Create and Sell Crafting Kits

Everyone likes to bring out their crafty side every once in a while and usually the first thing they look for is a craft kit. **Craft kits are an easy and a fun way for a person to do craft**, they have all the materials they need and the instructions to help them create work of their own. Crafting kits can be for people of any age and crafting experience, which is why so many people are getting in on the business. How do you make your craft business stand above the rest?

First you have to start with the right craft kit. You need to do this because there are so many crafting kits out there offering so many different projects. Before you delve into selling your craft kit, ask yourself some questions like:

- Who is my kit for, children, teenagers, adults or all of them?
- Does my craft kit offer something different than the rest on the market?
- If it is the same is there a new twist that I can put on my kit to make it sell better?
- Is there a way to make my crafting kit more enticing and fun?
- Are my instructions easy to understand and follow?
- Is the project kit itself easy to make?

Once you have created your craft kit you need to put a price it before you can sell it. **All prices** need to be taken into account like materials, labour and other initial costs before you can add a profit to the item. Most craft workers recommend that you multiply the production costs by three or four, for example if it cost you \$5 to make a craft kit you should sell it for \$15 or \$20. Many people also recommend children craft kits stay under the \$10 mark. In the end, what you price your craft kit is up to you and how much you want to make and sell.

Now that the pricing is out of the way you need to start selling your kits, there is a number of ways you can do this:

Craft shows are always a great place to start, though they take a lot of time in traveling and expenses. Craft shows are a great way to get your products to the consumers interact with them and answer any questions they may ask. You can also do live demonstrations on your craft kit to show potential buyers how they work.

Go to the markets, or other places where you think your target consumer is and set up a stall. It is again a great way to interact with your customers and you can also do live demonstrations. It gives your customer the chance to get more information about the products and you the chance to answer any questions they may have.

Launch your business on the web; you can reach millions of people and potential buyers with the right marketing strategies. By making your website interactive with users you can do video tutorials for people who buy your products, to help take it through them step by step.

If you don't want to launch a store or website straight away until you are sure people want your products, **you could go through craft store outlets**. Many craft stores are happy to take new merchandise and will even let you do in store demonstrations as it boosts business for both them and you. If you are looking to have your business online you could consider going through auctions websites like EBay. On EBay you can run a mini shop stall and sell your products to a wide range of shoppers for a small fee.

Some things you should take into account when you launch your craft kit:

- Always take twice as much stock then you think you will sell.
- Be prepared if someone asks for bulk orders, it is common in the craft business as many people use them for workshops and child activities.
- Ask people for comments or their opinions on your craft kit and if anything, what you could do to better the kit.
- Don't forget to make a marketing strategy as they can help boost your business once you have it up and running. Give out flyers, press releases, go through radio stations, magazines and other related advertising revenues to help get you started.

Having your own craft business takes a lot of work to get started but once you get the ball rolling you will be on your way to being a successful business owner.

Marketing Specialty Soaps and Bath Products

Bath products are on the rise. You can get them in all shapes, sizes and fragrances. They range from bath crystals, bath oils, bath milk and of course specialty soaps. Their common goal is to make us feel relaxed and our skin soft and smooth.

If you're in the business of selling bath products or are thinking about selling bath products, below are **five easy ideas to help promote your product**:

1) Start an online store - The amount of online buying has been on the increase in recent years. People are able to purchase goods from the comfort of their own home. This is especially helpful for the elderly or overly busy person. Gifts, in particular are popular items to purchase online. When starting an online store, be sure to choose a professional web designer that allows you to view some of his work. You will want to look at a few up and running websites to see if he has the style that you're looking for. First impressions are lasting impressions. This is why it's important to choose the right web designer. Before creating the website, check out other web pages that sell similar items to get some ideas for a theme. You want it to look professional as well as creative. Depending on your personality or specialty bath items, you may want it to look bubbly and fun or more sophisticated and romantic. Either way, a good design makes a great promoter.

2) Describe the product in detail - Whether you're selling online, through a catalogue or by flyer, it may be hard to convey the fragrance and detailed appearance of the product to the potential buyer. Sometimes it's the fragrance that traps the buyer, so with this taken away, you must be sure to describe it in a desirable way. If it smells like chocolate, you compare it to hot fudge Sunday. If it smells like a flower, compare it to fresh picked wild flowers. Be sure to include high quality pictures that give attention to details. People love to see pictures. If there is something special about the soap such as the carving or packaging, be sure to get a detailed picture of it.

3) Have a home party - There are several successful businesses that sell items from make-up to home décor and it's all because of home parties. Women love to have an excuse to get together, so throwing a home party would be a great idea to market your bath products. This may be the most successful way due to the sensitive nature of the products. People can see up close what they're buying. Be sure to have at least one sample of your products displayed. This way, they can smell and even hold the product. It would be a great plus if they could even take some samples home to try out. This way, if they like the product, they can order more.

4) Try a hobby or craft show - Craft shows are very popular, especially in the south. You can check with your local Chambers of Commerce to see when the shows are held and what is expected. You will have to fill out an application and send photos of your item. Apply quickly because they fill up fast. The cost of shows can be pretty pricey as much as \$150. If you don't have a lot of your product, this may not be the best route to take. You will have to create a booth that is enticing to spectators. Remember, this is a craft/hobby show and there will be lots to see. Therefore, you want to stand out. Proudly display your bath products. Place a basket of samples out that people can take home. It doesn't have to be anything big or costly to you. Something like small bath oils or carved soap is sufficient. Be creative and attach a business card to the samples. This way they can contact you easily. (Tip: Don't work alone at a show. There is a lot of work involved in setting up and taking down. You will also need to take breaks. It's best to have a partner to help)

5) Consignment/Specialty Stores - Lastly, you can try local stores that specialize in knick knacks and miscellaneous items. Consignment stores generally get a percentage of what sells and you can reclaim what doesn't. You need to draw up an agreement between yourself and the owner. Specialty store on the other hand may buy in bulk for a discounted price. Either way, have plenty in stock.

Promoting items, especially specialty items can be tiresome. It's not the most fun part of the job, but if the right steps are taken, it can be a successful business.

Keep Your Craft Business Costs Low

When starting out in the craft business, you need to keep one thing in mind: this is a business, not a hobby.

Obviously, you started your hand made craft business because you loved crafting and hoped that you can turn your hobby into a successful business. Making that transition from hobby to business can be difficult though. **You need to remember that you are a business and that like every business you have a bottom line.** Your goal is produce your project for as little money as possible so you can maximize your profits. Here are a few suggestions on how to keep your costs low.

Supplies can be one of your biggest expenses. In order to keep your costs as low as possible you need to spend as little on supplies as possible. Start that by doing your research. It will take some time, but research different suppliers will make all the difference in the long run. You need to shop around to make sure you are getting the best deal possible. You might even consider checking your local discount stores. Often these large chain stores have very reasonable priced craft supplies. If possible, you should consider buying wholesale. This will involve obtaining a Retail Tax number, but if you are serious about your home made craft business then you should apply for one anyway. You can also buy your supplies in larger quantities.

With the cost of gas and hotels, one of your other biggest expenses will be out of area craft shows. To start, just try selling your crafts at local shows. This will give you a chance to see how popular your products really are and how much stock you might need for a two day show or a week long show. Once you're ready for an out of town show, do a bit a research. Considering the show fee and your gas and hotel costs, will you really earn enough money to make it worth your while? What kinds of hotels are in the area? Have the show organizers arranged any kind of discount with local hotels? Can you carpool with another crafter in your area to reduce costs? Is it possible to combine two out of area shows on one trip rather than heading out twice in one month?

Marketing your craft doesn't have to cost a lot of money. You can start by spreading word about your new venture through family and friends. You'll be surprised how many sales and orders you get just through word of mouth. You can try to have your work

featured in an article in your local paper. This way you are marketing your product without having to pay for advertising space in the paper.

There are also ways to sell your craft without spending a lot of money of table or space rentals. Many gift stores accept products from local crafters on consignment. You may have to pay them a fairly large percentage, but you will not have to pay the store any money right up front. You can also think about holding a craft sale in your own home, rather than renting a table somewhere else. If you know a lot of other crafters, you can all hold a sale together, charging them a smaller fee that other shows might. You will have a lot more control and also keep your costs really low.

You must also know where to draw the line in terms of freebies for friends and family member. Whereas you were happy to complete projects for free or just for the cost of supplies when you're crafting was just your hobby, you need to establish different rules now that you run a business. It may difficult at first, but it will make things much easier for you down the line.

Finally, it is important to **establish a realistic price point for your products.** You'll probably never make enough to even charge minimum wage for the time you put in to making a craft, so don't try to set your prices that way. You want to make a decent profit, but you also want to be able to sell your crafts and no one will be buying if your prices are too high.

Remember it takes time to see a real return on your investment. As long as you can cover your costs, you're off to a good start, and the rest will come with time.

Practice Your Marketing & Sales Techniques at Craft Shows

When beginning your craft business, it is often times hard to anticipate how sales will go and what you need to do in order to reach your target market with your crafts. Because of this, it is best to try a few different types of craft marketing things that will help you to expand and grow with your business later on. **One of the most popular ways to expand your crafting business is through craft shows. Because of this, it is best to practice selling your things at craft shows.** Craft shows also require learning the different parts and rules that will be used for a short amount of time. There are several ways to do this and continue to look professional with the beginning of your business. When first beginning, it is important to learn how to speak to others about your craft, as well as learn about what things you need to be prepared with during the show.

The first technique that you can use with your practice shows is to find local shows that are smaller. You can find events and craft shows that are local that will be easy to participate in without having to have too much inventory or experience. It is best to be able to find the shows that you are somewhat familiar with, so that you are able to predict what type of crowd will be there, how much inventory to bring, and where your target

market will be. When you are able to find one of these shows, it will become easier for you to practice your selling techniques, as well as become more familiar with new pricings that you may have and the niches that seem to sell best for you. With smaller shows, you don't have to have as wide as an inventory, and you can practice the best selling techniques for your certain products. Eventually, these will become second nature. By starting smaller, you can prepare for bigger craft shows and know exactly what to expect and how to respond to customers as a professional business.

Another part of the practice that you can begin in is always being prepared when you go to craft shows. Over time, you will be able to create your own kit of what you need and don't need when attending certain shows. A 'first aid kit' for your booth, crafts and table space is always something to build on. This may include tools, tape, extra parts for crafts, and repair things for your booth. Becoming organized is something that you should have in mind from the very beginning, but will learn over time. Most craft fairs have places just in case you need help with your booth. As you go along and practice with smaller craft shows that are closer to home, you can begin to build a list of things that are essential to bring so that you can prevent things from falling apart or your booth not looking its best.

Learning the rules is another part of a craft show to constantly be aware of and to continue learning from. Craft shows usually all have similar rules in relation to your booth and what you can and can not do at the show. Over time, these will become easier to remember, but it is always good to start out on the right foot and begin following the rules right away. Over time, the rules will also become second nature and easier to follow.

Craft shows can often be stressful by nature. The days are usually long, often times you will have to travel to another area, and you will be caught having to give information out to different customers and trying to find their needs. It is always best to start small and to practice what works best for you. By learning through trial and error of your marketing technique at craft shows, you can become an expert at marketing and selling your products. You will also be able to learn how to avoid or work with the problems that may arise while you are at a craft show. **As time goes on, these techniques will become like second nature to you in selling your hand made craft.**

How to Market Hand-Made Christmas Crafts

With the annual Christmas season hot for sales, many customers are look for unique gifts that will be just right for their family and friends. The following are ten ways to make a profit off of your hand made Christmas crafted items.

1. Find Christmas shows in your area. One of the easiest ways to sell Christmas crafts is by finding the craft shows or fairs that take place. These are especially popular around the Christmas season, as many are looking for crafted gifts. There should be several local,

regional and national shows available where you can easily rent a space or booth and set up your crafted items.

2. Sell online. There are several websites that will allow you to list your Christmas items on their site. This will allow a network to move to your specific items and browse what you have available. If you decide to sell through another website, it is much like renting a booth at a craft fair. You should have all of your information available, as well as pictures of the crafts that you are selling.

3. Sell at Craft Malls. These are a third way to sell Christmas items. Shows, fairs and festivals are usually offered in craft malls during this time of the year and are an easy way to set up for a short time to sell.

4. Organize your website. If you have already established a place online to sell your crafts, change it for the holiday season. This not only means adding graphics and designs, but also pointing out special items and discounts for this particular time of the year.

5. Know What to Sell. While many will be looking for a craft that is simply unusual, it is also good to keep stock of crafts that are for Christmas only. This not only means specialized crafts for the holiday season, but also knowing what the interests will be of those that will want to buy your crafts during this particular time of the year. It's also important to keep in mind the amount of money that one will want to spend on your items. Because of the time of year, this is often different than other times of the season.

6. Keep in Touch. If you already have customers from previous years, it is always good to send them a holiday card before the season is over. This will remind them that you are available with crafts if they are in need of a last minute item. It also keeps good relations and networks open for other times of the year.

7. Offer discounts. Whether you decide to work on increasing sales over a website, or if you are going to a craft show, remember to offer customers deals on your Christmas items. You will be more likely to sell more than if you offer you're regular around the year prices. Everyone is looking for the bargains and special deals that are offered at this time of year.

8. Look at the Predictions. Every year after Thanksgiving, several sites and news programs will predict what the sales and the largest markets will be for this year. While these are only estimates, it is best to keep them in mind when you are working on selling and producing your crafts. It can help to not only determine which market will be attracted to your sales, but will also help to determine what discounts will work best when selling your crafts.

9. Make sure you are prepared. It is hard to tell what you will be selling at any of the craft shows or online places. Because of this, make sure that you have plenty of Christmas inventory. Often times, one person will see your craft that was bought by another, and you will end up selling more of one product than expected. Be sure to be

over prepared with what you think will and won't sell. If you have done Christmas crafts in the past, it is also important to sell some of the same things, as well as new items.

10. Create an Environment. Whether you are at a craft show or online, make sure to draw attention to your booth and your Christmas items by decoration or by the way you organize your display. This always helps to sell your Christmas items.

Making sure you are successful when selling your crafts for the holiday season will mean being prepared and offering the right types of products and sales. It also means going to the right place and being aware of what customers will be looking for. With this in mind, it is possible to have a successful Christmas season.

Try a Craft-Only Garage Sale

The holiday season is the most popular time of the year to sell you crafts. It's cold outside, the shopping season is in full gear, and people are in the mood to buy and enjoy handcrafted items. Holding a craft-only garage sale is one of the easiest ways to attract a large number of interested customers. If you plan to organize one of these sales, however, be prepared for the work it will entail.

Not you're Average Garage Sale

A craft-only garage sale is a wonderful idea because it allows potential customers to meet in one place specifically designated for showcasing the work of local craftspeople. You'll want to advertise your craft sale like you would a regular garage sale. Put up very nice, colorful flyers around your neighborhood two weeks before the date of the sale. The appearance of your flyers is important. You'll want to convey the fact that your sale is not the normal garage sale. Don't use the standard red and black 'yard sale' signs. Make professional-looking signs that emphasize the variety of items that will be available for sale. Make it clear that you will be selling new items, suitable for holiday gift-giving.

Target Other Craftspeople and Enthusiasts

Of course, you'll want to market your craft-only garage sale to other crafts enthusiasts. Visit your local hobby shop and crafts stores and put up flyers. Stand outside the door and hand out flyers, if you really want to get the word out. You might also consider visiting local crafts workshops and classes to inform students about the upcoming craft sale. Even easier, e-mail local crafts instructors and ask politely if they would be willing to make an announcement in class regarding the sale. If possible, deliver copies of your flyers to the instructor so he or she can pass them out in class.

Another easy way to reach your target audience is to advertise at craft fairs and shows. Again, pass out fliers and put up signs. People at craft sales are already in the mood to shop for crafts, so don't be shy about marketing your show at these types of fairs.

Participate in, or Consider Putting Together an Arts and Crafts Fair

One of the easiest ways to ensure a steady stream of customers is by organizing an arts and crafts fair at a community meeting point. If you are a member of a local church or community organization, check to see if any arts and crafts shows are held on a regular basis. These types of shows are especially common during the holiday season, when people become particularly interested in handcrafted objects and crafts.

If you're local school, church, or community center doesn't have hold any type of arts and crafts fair, offer to organize one. Be prepared, however, to commit and follow through with the amount of work this type of project entails. You'll need to recruit other craftspeople to display their work, and make sure the venue is available for the date you need it. Perhaps you'll also want to secure food or snack vendors.

One of the greatest benefits of holding your craft only sale at a community meeting point like a church or school is that the foot traffic is generally greater than it would be at a garage sale. Another nice benefit is that your event is easier to advertise. If, for instance, your craft-only sale is being held at a local church, you can ask that the sale is mentioned in the weekly announcements and published in the weekly newsletter. Holding your craft-only sale at a local school event also allows you to reach a much larger segment of the community.

Use Your Established Contact Base

If you are an experienced craftsman who already sells your crafts on a regular basis, market your upcoming craft only garage sale to those names on your list of contacts. If you have a website or newsletter, these are great places to advertise the upcoming sale. Most likely, these contacts already have more than a casual interest in your work and crafts in general, and will be interested in the event. You may even consider sending personalized invitations to your best customers.

How to Sell Crafts from Your Home

Selling crafts isn't like selling something that every body can use. It's a specialty item. Only certain people will buy them. Therefore you need to know how to reach the right audience.

The first most important tip is to do something you love. If you have a passion for what you're doing, then you will do a better job at it. When starting up a craft business, it has to be for the love it and not just for making money. Loving what you're doing will give you endurance to endure even through drought times.

Coming up with a business plan is essential. Before starting a craft selling business, you must come up with a business plan. A business plan may sound intimidating at first, but it's a good idea to lay one out. A business plan can consist of deciding how much money you want to spend on supplies, how much money you plan to sell your crafts for, how much time you can spend in your business and how big you want your business to be. When selling your crafts close to home, you may want to start small. This way you can see what kind of demand there is for your type of craft.

Once you've perfected your craft making abilities, try throwing a home party. This is the route a lot of home décor business travel. It's less expense than renting a booth or having a store. This is a good way to market your items. Start by making a lot of your items and displaying them in your living room or special room you have set aside for your crafts. Make sure the atmosphere is relaxed and inviting. Offer beverages and snacks. People will feel more relaxed and want to observe what you have to offer if they feel comfortable. You might want to offer prizes or a free giveaway of one of your items to the person who brings the most people or buys the most stuff. This is a good motivator. There are a few ways you can market your items once guests have arrived. You can have an introduction and tell them who you are and what you are about. Let them know why you got started in the craft making business. There's a story behind every great idea. Then you can proceed to explain the craft items and allow them to look around at the displays. The good thing about displays is people can see what they're getting. Unlike magazines, they don't have to look at a picture and hope it looks like how it is explained. Although more than likely, someone may want to order more from you later. At the end of the party, ask for volunteers who may want to hold a party in their home. They may have a group of people that have not been exposed to your crafts yet.

The next tip is to offer business cards. A business card is probably the simplest way to market your items. When designing your card, make sure the picture on the card matches the theme of your business. I can't tell you how many times I've picked up a business card and couldn't tell what they were selling because there was no picture or the title just wasn't clear enough. Make sure it's obvious. Also, make sure you have plenty on hand. It's the best way for people to contact you in the future. Putting an email address on it is also convenient.

Another idea for the more dedicated, would be to have a small craft store in your house. Of course you would have to check with the city and make sure zoning allows this. You could have certain days picked out and advertise in the paper. People will get familiar with your times, and come regularly to check out new items. If you choose to go this way, you will probably have to write a proposed plan for the zoning board. Getting approval from your neighbors may help in their decision as well. Selling crafts from home is low maintenance and gives you the freedom of staying home as well. Mothers with small children may find this the most convenient way to go. Be sure to have an OPEN and CLOSED sign if your craft room has a separate door from the house. Don't feel rude if someone comes knocking after closing time and you send them away.

Donating Crafts to Nonprofits Can Help Your Business

Are you an experienced craftsperson who is looking to increase your public presence? Consider donating some of your crafts to a local nonprofit agency or local charity. Not only will this allow you to network and make important contacts, you'll also be making a difference where it really counts and strengthening your bonds to the community. Here are five easy ways to get involved:

1. Find a cause you have a passion for. Simply stated, passion cannot be faked. You must choose a nonprofit charity that you really care about, and for which you would be willing to work for with no thought of compensation. Perhaps you've always been touched by hospital-bound children stricken by illness. You happen to specialize in creating charming, old-fashioned rag dolls. Why not donate some of your best work to spread a bit of joy?

In this scenario, you would want to seek out a nonprofit organization or charity that works with young hospital patients. Speak to the outreach director or volunteer coordinator of the agency you're interested in. Tell them the ways you would like to help, and listen to their suggestions. They should be able to tell you about their current situation and needs. Hopefully, there will be a match, and you can begin to work together. Whatever you do, you should always check with the nonprofit agency before you simply start donating your crafts.

2. Offer to spearhead a charity event. If you specialize in kid's craft parties, offer to hold a craft party for a local nonprofit agency. Be aware that this sort of undertaking will demand a lot of your time and energy. You may work with the nonprofit agency to coordinate the event.

Strive to make this collaboration as smooth and pleasant as possible. Remember that the event you organize will be a show of your leadership and organization skills. You'll want to make a good impression as you connect with potential clients, and re-connect with previous customers. Most importantly, remember that the true goal of the event is to make a small difference in the lives of others.

3. Organize a charity crafts fair. Another way increase your public presence by donating your crafts is by organizing a charity craft fair. Consider setting up the crafts fair in conjunction with the nonprofit agency of your choice. Or you can hold the crafts fair on your own, and then donate the proceeds to a local charity.

Start by recruiting other experienced craftspeople for the fair. Advertise the event widely. Consider contacting your local media to raise awareness about the fair. Ask your local newspapers or television station to help advertise the event. The more exposure the crafts fair gets the more proceeds you'll be able to donate. And, your crafts and the work of your fellow craftspeople will gain much deserved exposure.

4. Hold a charity craft auction as part of a larger event. If the idea of organizing an entire crafts fair sounds a bit overwhelming to you, then consider holding a charity craft auction as part of a larger event. Find a group of interested and experienced craftspeople and put together a catalog of sale items, with all proceeds going to the nonprofit agency of your choice. You and your fellow craftspeople should donate some of your best work to ensure a successful auction.

If your crafts sell well at the charity auction, you can expect your reputation as a crafts person to grow. Selling your work in this type of atmosphere demonstrates that your work has value, and that it can make a difference in the life of someone who needs a change.

5. Donate your crafts for use. If you create crafts that can be put to good use by individuals less fortunate than you, by all means work with the appropriate nonprofit agency to donate your work. For instance, nonprofit groups such as Wrap Them in Love and Knit for Kids provide needy individuals with warm quilts and much-needed sweaters.

If you specialize in such crafts, donating your work is a wonderful way to make a big difference in the life of someone who needs help. You'll gain experience in working with nonprofit agencies, make valuable contacts, gain resume experience, and gain confidence in your work.

Start a Hand Made Knitted Crafts Business

Hand made knitted crafts is often a popular product among several different types of people. They offer a quality and texture that is attractive to most. Hand made items are also often more attractive to several different types of people. If you know how to knit, making hand made knitted crafts for a business can often become profitable. Among hand made knitting, are several options which you can choose from in order to make your crafts business more successful.

The first step to starting your own knitting business is deciding which types of products you are going to knit. These can be hats, scarves, or sweaters, or you can provide smaller items for decoration for certain customers. Some ideas include baby items, gifts, office accessories, jewelry, home decoration, houseplants, kitchen and bathroom accessories, or even auto accessories. It is also possible to make your own product that is unique to the market. You also have the option of custom making certain items for customers on their request. You can divide this by color, what they are wanting, the size that they would like, or any ideas that they would like to have knitted for themselves or as a gift. This often times will provide you with more clients.

One thing to consider when beginning your knitting crafts business is **how unique you want your crafts or your clothing to be.** This will help to draw a certain market to your knitted items. Because of the number of people that knit and sell their items, you want to

make sure that your designs or colors are uniquely yours. One way that you can differ from other knitting places is by the type of material that you decide to use when making your items. There are several popular types of material, especially for clothing that will help you to market better. Certain types of wool, chenille, etc. are some of the options to consider. This may also include the type of knitting stitches that you can use for the product that you are making. It is usually important to not limit yourself to one knitted item or style, as customers will want to have several different options and ideas available to them.

For those interested in different aspects of the knitting business, **you can make knitting design kits to sell to others.** Patterns can also be custom made and sold to others who knit. You can also offer classes on knitting in order to help your knitting business, or for another aspect of knitting.

Another thing to keep in mind with a knitted crafts business is **how much you are going to charge for custom made designs or for your regular inventory.** Things that need to be considered with this is how much material you are using, how much time it takes you to make one item, and how much profit you want to make off of it. You can also compare with other knitting stores to find the right price.

If you are going to make custom made knitted items, **it is also good to give an estimated time as to how long it will take you to finish what they are requesting.** If they request it be made in a shorter amount of time, you can change the price according to how much extra effort you will have to put into finishing it on time.

Once you know the items and details that you want to use for your knitting business, you can then start marketing either through the internet, local newspapers or phonebooks, or through networking to friends and other potential customers. There is also the option of going to craft and trade shows in order to sell your products and to market your knitting business. Other things to look into are discount yarn stores, different types of knitting patterns that you can use, and ways to offer special items to customers.

With the options available, it is easy to start your own knitting craft business. You will be able to provide customers with your own unique styles, as well as be able to expand and change your business in knitting as you choose. Many are finding ways to profit from their own home business with the knitting trade.

Using Mail Order for Hand Made Crafts

Mail order is a popular way to send several different types of items to a customer. Because of this, it is a potential way for you to market and sell your crafts. In order to do so, you should know some basics of what you will need in order to get mail order to work properly. This advice can be used in both internet mail order materials or in sending out catalogs to certain customers who are interested in buying.

When organizing mail order for your crafts in your home, there are several different things that you need to set up. One of the first organizational tools that will help you is a data system that will help with inventory and accounting. This way, you can keep track of the mail that you send out, and what comes back in and with how many orders. This will help not only in inventory, but also in keeping track to see if mail order is efficient for selling your crafts. You will also need to set up a way to take credit cards and checks over the mail and through the internet. It is best not to send your crafts out until the money that is being sent to you is cleared. Order entry and processing is another one of the tools to organize before you start mail order so that you can remain organized in your hand made crafts.

Consider who you are going to distribute to when setting up your mail order business. One way to do this is to begin a network of contacts. If people who have bought your crafts would like to be set on a mailing list, then you can send them things through the mail by their request. Another way to do this is by having potential buyers sign up on a website that you may to request a catalog to mail order. It is also possible to set up a website and have customers order through filling out all of their information online.

If you decide to make a mail order catalog, or if you are using mail order on a website, it should contain several different elements. First, it should catch the customer's eye. This means detailed descriptions as well as pictures of your crafts that look professional. Next, is to be specific as well as brief about what you are offering. Letting the customer know what materials you are using, the size of the craft, etc. will help to let them know what they will be receiving. You should also include a brief description of who you are and how long you have been making crafts. Many times, reviews on your craft products can be included as well. This will help in making you look professional, and will give customers a way of respecting and trusting you and your product.

Another aspect of mail-order is including your information. A fax, e-mail or address of where to send their order for the crafts should be supplied. You should decide about whether you will have a minimum order requirement, or not. You should also decide what the shipping order costs will be, and how they will be shipped. One way to do this is to measure how large the packages will be and do an estimated weight cost. Then, you can look into places such as UPS, FedEx, or regular mail for some options. It is always best to let the customer know which way they will be receiving their order by.

You should also supply an order form in the catalog when you send it out or on the website. This, as well as a different list of all of the crafts that you offer with the prices on another side can help a customer decide what they need through mail order. If needed, there are often times software that can provide a guideline for creating a unique look and help put in the information that is needed for the development of your catalog.

Whether you are setting up mail order on the internet, or sending out catalogs directly to past and potential customers, it is best to have a layout of how the mail ordering will work and be beneficial to you, as well as ways to provide customers with the best service and options possible.

Make Money with Your Craft Business

If you're a crafter who has recently switched from doing your hobby for pleasure to doing it for business, then you might be having some adjustment issues. Though you're still creating the same kinds of products, **you have to treat every decision as a business one** and remember that your goal now is to make money from doing something you love.

When starting a craft business, **it is important that you love your product** and the type of craft that you're working on. If you hope to make your living in the craft industry, you have to be really passionate about the work you're doing, because it can often take a lot of time and dedication to see a return on your investment. If you don't love what you do, you probably won't be able to make the commitment that the craft industry demands.

Even though you may perceive yourself different than other entrepreneurs, **the challenges you face when starting up your craft business are the same.** Should you start small or try to go national with your craft? Should you borrow money to help get your business off the ground? Where should you sell and market your products? What is your target market? These are the kinds of things any new business owner needs to consider, and so do you!

When starting a craft business, **you should think small.** Try going to some local craft shows to see if your product is as popular as you expect it to be. You can also market your products to family and friends who in turn will tell their family and friends. You'll get some great feedback and you'll quickly discover that word of mouth is an important tool in getting your craft business off the ground.

Most people do not go into the craft business to make a lot of money; they work in the field because they love what they do. It's their passion, not a guarantee of financial security. You cannot expect to make a lot of money from your craft business and it will take a lot of time to start seeing a major increase in your profits. You could start by working on your craft business in your spare time or wait until you have saved enough money to have some financial backing. You may be lucky and experience success right off the bat, but for most crafters it takes time to build up enough experience and a good reputation.

As with any business you need to **keep your costs long and your profits high, and you also want to have as little debt as possible.** When you are just starting out, it is probably not the best idea to secure a loan. The craft business has a lot of high points and low points, but your monthly bank payments are due every single month and if a craft sale

doesn't go as well as expected, you might be struggling to pay back that money. This can put a lot of stress on you and your new business. If you can avoid borrowing money to start-up your craft business, then that's what you should try to do.

You also need to consider **how you're going to market your product** and where you will sell it. For crafters just starting out, local craft shows are a good option – as are local crafters' marketplaces where you can rent a small space and display your products, but the store looks after the selling so you don't have to be there all the time. Craft shows are often a good way to contact with your customers. You can find out more about what your customers are looking for and how to improve your product. A lot of customers will want to know more about your product from you, the crafter, and that personal touch can make all the difference when selling your product. You can also check out your competition and learn lots of handy tips from crafters that have been around for quite some time.

The most important thing is to remember why you started your business in the first place. Crafters are lucky in that they have the chance to do something they really love as a career. Keep your passion for your work alive and it will start to pay off with a little bit of time and some hard work.

Selling Crafts: What Makes a Profit?

Many who are involved in a home business of any sort know that trends and popularity changes quickly, which causes the profits to strive or to fail. The focus of your marketing plan and your crafts does not necessarily have to be with a certain item or items. **What makes something profitable is not necessarily what you are selling.** Rather, it depends on how you market it and how you decide to sell the product or craft.

One way to focus on your crafts with what sells is by **custom making crafts**. You can offer certain items, but then allow the customer to create their own version of it. This allows you more room to use your own creativity, and lets the customer have a say in the item that they are paying for. Custom crafts and products are a popular way to know what you should be selling. You can charge slightly more for custom making a craft. As long as you set your prices and your guidelines for timing, etc. this is an easy way to make things that will sell.

Another way to sell certain crafts and products is by **focusing on a theme or a certain time of year**. For instance, during a season such as Christmas, themes and styles that has to do with Christmas will be able to sell easier. If you want to sell your crafts more at another time of year, you can easily tap into different holidays around that time, or make your own theme to attract attention to your products.

Another thing to look into when trying to figure out what is going to sell is to **understand who you are trying to sell to**. If you have crafts, but they are in the wrong market, or the wrong types of people are in the area, you will most likely not sell

anything. It is best to see where your product or craft fits into. By creating a certain market for yourself, you can sell almost anything that you make.

In the business of crafts and arts, **you don't want to be selling the same things that others are selling.** Then, you will be competing with prices and whoever markets to more people. If you can create things that are completely unique to your business, you will be able to sell much more than you would have expected without having to be involved in the larger market. The profits are not in creating what others have created, but in making what you like to make, then finding a market that is receptive to that certain craft. Most consumers are interested in finding things that are unique in the market.

Another thing to keep in mind when finding the things that sell is to **make sure that you are ensuring the best quality of craft or product to your consumer.** This means advertising the product as hand-made, with the best material that can be used. Letting the larger market know how much time is put into your product, as well as making it a high-quality product will allow you the possibility of offering higher prices as well as attract more business.

Another way to sell something profitably is to **make sure that it is of practical use.** By creating a need for the customer, as well as a desire for them to have your product, it will be easier for you to make a product that has demand to it. The first thing that a customer usually looks at when determining whether to buy something or not, is whether they have a use or a need for it. The next step that they will question is whether they actually want the product. Whether the need is for decoration in the home, or for a more practical use, this will help to sell whatever your item is. A product will sell if you create both the need and the desire for the customer.

By keeping these several different techniques and ideas in mind, one will be able to sell whatever it is that they like to make. If, in creating their product or craft, they find a need in it, or like what the product becomes, then they will be able to profit off of it for other people.

Rules of Setting up a Home Craft Business

Starting your own home business is a giant step for anyone to take and it's not something for everyone. When starting your home business there are many different details that you need to take into account and take care of before you delve into such a commitment. Below are some things that you should follow when starting your very own business in your home.

1. Know Your Financial Situation

This would have to be one of the most important rules to follow whilst setting up your business. You need to take into account everything, from your current living expenses to all the set up and preparation costs involved in your business.

Ask yourself these questions and any others that come to mind concerning your finances:

- How you are going to finance your business while it is in the early stages?
- Is the money coming from your pocket or are you borrowing it from someone?
- Will you have to continue with your job until you business starts paying for yourself?
- Are you going to have enough money if something goes wrong with the set up and you have to take another avenue or take steps to correct the problem?
- Will you have enough money for any unforeseen expenses?

Before you take any farther steps into setting up your home business, make sure you have the funds to cover everything you will need to and then some.

2. Registration, Insurance and Legal

Once you know you have the funds to finance your business, the next step you need to take is getting all the necessary registrations, licenses, insurances and other legal matters taken care of. Make sure you have all appropriate zoning permits and insurance to cover you if anything goes wrong at your home, like client injuries. Your typical home insurance usually doesn't cover business related accidents. There are three types of insurance you should take out, these are:

- **Business insurance**, in case clients get hurt while on your property.
- **Public risk insurance**, so you will be covered against negligence.
- **Income protection insurance** is another you should take out. This insurance will cover you for disability and other related factors if you can not work.

Other insurances that you should consider taking out are health insurances, especially if you have left your job.

3. Taxes and Accounting Advice

Seek this advice before starting your business so you can find the best and tax friendly plan for your business. Your accountant will be able to tell you what you can claim on your taxes from your business income, and other related information that you may not be aware of.

4. The Home Business Front

Once you have followed all the rules and regulations to legally set up your business in your home, next you have to think about space. Find a room, garage, shed, or wherever you want to set up your office that you will be comfortable working in. Make sure that

the area you choose is designated for your business and only your business. Having a space solely for business will help you keep everything work related in one place and orderly. It will also aid you in keeping work and home time separated. Another thing to take into account when choosing an office space in your home is your clients. Will the space be big enough and comfortable enough to accommodate them?

5. Office Hours

Last but definitely not least you have to work out your work hours. Making a set time when you start work and when you will finish is a necessity need, especially when you have a family to look after as well. Organize your time wisely. You will want to set a time for lunch and other needed breaks. If you have a set time it will help you coordinate everything better. Once you have set your working times make sure you don't skimp on them but make sure that you leave yourself enough time to enjoy and spend quality time with your family. Working at home means you have to have good discipline but don't overwork yourself.

There are many rules that you should follow when you start your very own business at home, these are just the main ones. Working at home is a lot of hard work to start off but it should also be an enjoyable time as well, after all it is your dream.

How to Find Your Craft Business Target Audience

When finding a way to promote your crafts, it is important to find a target audience and niche that will be interested in your materials. This will eliminate time and energy when trying to find the right places to go.

The first thing to look at when deciding who will be interested in your crafts is **which audience to focus on and how to keep the new customers that are coming to your site**. This is one of the most important factors which will help with the success of your crafting business. By finding a specific topic and market that will be drawn to your particular type of craft, you will be successful both in the online market as well as through craft shows. Following are the top five ways in which you can find your target audience.

Market research - This means figuring out which customers would be most drawn to your crafts. It also means finding which other crafts are similar to yours, either on the web or in craft shows. These will be the competitors which you will have to differ from in order to succeed. Market research also means finding the different attributes of the group of people who would become your target audience. It is important to understand what their needs will be and how your craft will fit into this. Another part to this market research is making sure that your target audience is big enough to sustain the income you will make through your crafts, but not too large, as you will not be able to keep up with the supply and demand of the craft.

Advertising - Many times, money and time can be wasted on trying to find the right place to advertise, either on the web or in person. Search engines and providing links to certain websites can help to direct your niche market to your website. Providing keywords and phrases will catch the attention of your niche market and allow them to move into your website for more information. Once you have defined who will be attracted to your crafts, you can cater to their needs through using the web. If you are advertising in person, you can use the same techniques of providing your unique style with your crafts or putting parts of the defined target market into the different advertising techniques.

Offer something different - Most consumers and potential target market customers can find basic goods and crafts from larger businesses for cheaper, or from other websites. When doing your market research and when advertising to your potential customers, make sure that you provide something that is unique and not offered anywhere else on the web or in your community. This will not only build your potential market, but will allow you room to not have to be competitive with a larger market. Through providing unique crafts and offers, you will be able to not only attract different people, but will also be able to offer the prices that you want to sell your crafts at, instead of what others are selling theirs at. This is often times as simple as adding one different product or using a different material in your craft to make it unique.

Define The Target Market by Demographics - There are several things to look at when finding those who would be interested in your craft. The first is the age that would be attracted to buying what you have to offer. The second is the gender which will be attracted to your product. Education, income, marital status, ethnicity, and family definitions should all be taken into consideration. You should also look into their lifestyle, social class, and activities and interests. By defining all of these different areas, you will be able to determine what part of your craft will work best with it's uniqueness and where these types of people are most likely to look if on the internet or in your community. By defining your ideal customer, you will be able to build your craft business easily.

Costs and Providing Information - The information that you provide after knowing all of the different factors of your niche market and potential customers is what will cause your craft business to either fail or succeed. The more you let people know about your craft product, the better of a chance you will have at selling things. The cost is also important information to keep in mind. This will partly have to do with your target market, but it will also depend on finding the right balance for not advertising your craft as a cheap product, while keeping it cheap enough to not turn customers away. One way in which defining your product cost can help is by also giving information about the product so that you can sell it for the proper value.

No matter what type of craft you are selling, it is always important to research and know the different factors that should be included when selling your craft. This will ensure success from your online business or through your local craft selling areas.

Network Your Craft Business in the Community

Making crafts can be a lot of fun. But there are some other areas that have to be covered if you plan on networking your item to people in your community. **Explore your options when attempting to network.** If you don't know where to begin, try reading plenty of books on the subject or talk to friends who may know a bit more about the subject.

When starting out, create a mailer to be sent out to people in the community. This can consist of a flyer, short glossy magazine or news article. Whatever you feel is best. You can have them sent out as a free mailer, or you may want to go with an opt-in mailing. This is where your customers sign up for a free mailer about your item. This is the best way to avoid wasting paper and stamps. But you may ask, "How do I get the addresses?" There are several avenues you can take.

- 1) Anytime someone makes a purchase, ask if they would like to be added to the free mailer. If they're impressed with your crafts, more than likely you'll list will be pretty long,
- 2) When attending a local craft show, have a clip board with pen that people can sign up for. They may not buy something right then, but if they're interested in your craft, they will sign up. Collect Name, address, city, state and zip code. You can even make room for an email address. On average, a mailer should be sent out twice a year. If you do send too much information, too often, it may end up in the trash.

Placing flyers around your community is also a good networking tool. Check with local businesses to see if it's ok to post a flyer in the window. You might want to stick with businesses that sell craft supplies, clothing or anything that can be connected with your item. When creating your flyer, put lots of color to catch people's attention. You can input pictures on the flyers as well as an average price.

Contact your Chamber of Commerce. They help promote businesses by having meetings and items displays. This is a good way to introduce your self to the community. You can also find out what's happening in your community such as local craft show days and times.

Stop by your local consignment store or boutique. These are great ways to get your craft out there. Generally, they will receive a percentage of the sales. Of course, this will be discussed before hand. When approaching the business owner, dress professional. Bring a sample of your item in with a list of prices. Also expect to sell in large quantities and for a discounted price. Store owners generally don't pay full price for bulk items. Come prepared to give a price to the owner, but make sure you're making a profit from it as well. If the store owner isn't sold on your product, ask if it would be ok to leave business card or flyers behind with a sample of your work. If potential buyers take an

interest and ask about the craft enough times, the owner may see the want for it and will be contacting you.

If you're not one to get out there and start marketing your item, **you can even hire a sales representative.** They generally collect a percentage of what they sell. They can do it the old fashion way and walk door to door telling people of your product or they can visit local businesses and display your product. Make sure they are educated on your item. People make ask questions to the sales representative and you don't want them to reply with a blank stare.

Try your local church. Churches have many functions throughout the year. Some even hold small craft shows for the community. Word of mouth is also a great way to network in your church. Churches are small communities that once the word is out, it travels fast.

If you're selling an item that is wearable, wear it! Things like hair bows should be displayed in your daughter's hair. If they're unique, people will begin asking about them. If your selling handmade clothes, try making a holiday pattern and wear them before the season starts and see how many people want to know where you got it.

Whatever route you take, get out there. Even avenues you wouldn't think to explore, try it. You never know, you might just make a sale.

How to Market Your Scrap Booking Crafts

Scrap booking is one of the most popular crafts among hobbyists, and the scrap booking craze is catching on with more people every day. The New Jersey-based Hobby Industry Association finds that at least 20% of all hobbyists consider themselves to be scrap booking enthusiasts, and new scrap booking kits are making the hobby accessible to more people all the time. With the popularity of scrap booking, marketing your scrap booking crafts is easier than ever before. So where are the best places to market your unique scrap booking-related craft?

1) Scrap booking classes are a great way to connect with scrapbook enthusiasts

As the popularity of scrap booking rises, scrap booking classes are becoming more popular with hobbyists and craft enthusiasts. In fact, scrap booking classes are beginning to pop up all over the country in a variety of venues. These classes are commonly taught at local community centers, churches, small businesses, and local community colleges. Locate a local scrap booking class and contact the instructor. Tell the instructor that you are very interested in scrap booking, and that you have created a scrapbook-related craft that you think scrap booking students would be interested in. If the instructor seems open enough, ask for permission to conduct a short presentation at one of the class meetings, or just to pass out flyers regarding your craft.

2) Craft and hobby stores provide an easy venue to sell your crafts

Another good place to market your scrap booking crafts is at a local hobby or crafts store. Craft stores often provide customers with bulletin boards where hobbyists can put up announcements for classes or products that they are selling. Make up eye-catching flyers and post them. Be sure that your flyers provide potential customers with clear descriptions and a good picture of your crafts. Better yet, speak to store personnel and ask for permission to leave a sample of your work on display. This may not always be possible, but the potential rewards are certainly worth a try.

3) Teach, or take, a scrap booking class!

What better way to make strong contacts with other scrap booking enthusiasts than teaching or taking a scrap booking class? Visit your local crafts or hobby store, local community college, or community education center, and ask about the possibility of teaching a class. Show them samples of your work and be prepared to provide them with information regarding credentials and work experience. Many of these classes are often taught by volunteers, so there's a good chance that if a hobby store has an opening slot and they're interested in your work, they will consider your proposal seriously.

If the idea of teaching a class is not appealing or just doesn't fit into your schedule, consider taking a scrap booking class. These classes are generally taught on a short-term basis, with class meetings rarely going beyond one or two meetings. By taking a scrap booking class, not only will you be able to indulge in your passion for scrap booking, you'll also have the opportunity to make valuable contacts. Talk to the instructor about your product, and ask to present it to the class. If you're part of the class, chances are your instructor will be very open to the idea.

4) Contact a well-established company that specializes in scrap booking

The popularity of scrap booking has resulted in the growth of several large, direct sales scrap booking companies to emerge. Companies like Scrap in a Snap and Creative Memories specialize in the direct sales of scrapbooks and scrap booking accessories, meaning that they don't operate out of a fixed location. These companies hire sales consultant to throw scrap booking parties, teach home classes, and conduct scrap booking workshops.

Try conducting research to find a company that you think can help you market your product. You might even consider becoming a sales consultant for one of these companies. This will allow you to make valuable contacts with potential clients.

5) Become web savvy

One of the easiest and best ways to market your scrap booking crafts is online. Many dedicated scrap booking enthusiasts are very active in online communities. Get involved in these communities—not only will you probably enjoy meeting and learning from other

scrap booking enthusiasts, you will also meet people who might be interested in your scrap booking crafts. If you haven't already, put together a good website where you can sell your scrap booking crafts. Make sure to advertise on web boards, scrap booking e-mail newsletters, and anywhere else you know scrap booking enthusiasts gather.

How to Market Yourself Online

The internet, just like every other aspect of the business, you need to market yourself, your business and your products. **Marketing on the internet is not hard to do and is cost effective as well.** Here we will have a look at what you can do to get your internet marketing up and running so you too can have a good amount of traffic on your business website.

One of the first and most important things you should do is think **who your target buyers are.** You may have already done this in your business plan but if not here are some things you should take into account.

- Who is your product for, is it gender or age specific?
- Is your product for a certain type of person or occupation, like home businesses, executives, and students or stay at home parents?
- Will your target consumer be able to afford your product?

A good way to find out what your target consumer spends on products and services are to get a hold of and have a look at some reports that detail such information like:

- What your target consumer income is.
- How much they spend on services and products.
- How much they can budget for with products like yours.
- How much they spend on the internet.

Once you have worked out who your target consumers are, it will be easier for you to find that group of people through specific marketing routes.

Below are some ways you can market your business effectively online.

Make your website search engine friendly. When a person looks for something on the internet through a search engine, that search engine sends out robot spiders. This robot spider goes through pages to find and index the user's keywords and places a link to those websites that have those keywords on the search page. You achieve this by having rich keyword content related to the products on your website. Have these keywords in your title, headings and all related content that you can fit them in, and construct Meta tags and descriptions. Once done submit your website to all the search engines that you can find, many host this service for free.

Linking to and from other websites will help you boost your search engine ranking as well as bring in more traffic. You can achieve this in a number of ways; the most popular is by joining directories. The best ones to join are the ones that are closest to your category of product and service. Another way you can link to other pages is to set up a link page on your website; it will contain links to websites who also host a link to your website. You could write articles for online newsletters that will give you a link at the end of the article, or have an article on your website that other sites will have interests in linking to.

Use your email to your advantage. When you write emails it is easy to include a signature, this can display your website link and a little of what it is about, but remember to keep it short. Another thing you can do is compile a newsletter of your own. This is easy to do and is a great way to build trust with potential clients. Consider putting in your newsletter things like new products, information that will benefit both your business and your reader and what is coming up in the future like sales. You can get people to sign up to your list by having a 'subscribe to newsletter' form on your website. Remember not to spam. This service is usually free but you can always rent an email list, this is a list of people who agree to receive commercial email and offers.

Other things you can do in marketing your website are banner exchanges, promote in forums, discussion boards or online journaling, and ask visitors to bookmark your website.

You can always step up a notch and **go with advertising**; you can do this a number of ways like buying text ads in newsletters. Newsletter's ads are cheap and can be placed in newsletters that suit your target buyer. Affiliate programs, this works by someone having your link on their site and being paid a commission every time someone clicks on your link and buys a product. Pay per click ad programs, these are run by search engines and you only pay when someone clicks on your link. Listing your product with shopping comparison sites or with auction sites is another option you can take. They work by comparing your product and prices with other products.

The above is just some of the ways you can go about marketing your business website, there are others. Remember getting potential buyers to your website is only half the battle, next you got to them to buy a product.

Self-Promotion and Increasing Crafting Opportunities

There are many that are making crafts and art in their own home, but when the time comes and when many things have been made, it is often difficult to find different areas in which to sell the work. **One way in which to sell your own things is through your own self-promotion.** There are several different ways you can promote yourself and your own work, allowing the opportunities for making and selling your crafts to grow.

One way in which you can self-promote your crafts is through the internet. Because the Web offers graphic and has a textural nature that can have layers added to it, it is easy to represent the crafts that you make. Galleries of work, information on the crafts, and ways to pay online and get the craft mailed to them are all parts of a website which can be included to promote your own craft.

When building a website, there are several things to keep in mind. First, it is important to know how to get traffic to your site. There are several different tools that are used to get you to be in one of the higher rankings on search engines. Including keywords, search phrases, building Meta Tags, and finding where you can rank on the web is an important factor to keep in mind when building your site. Other things that need to be considered are how to manage an online shopping cart so that those interested in your crafts can buy online.

Another way to self-promote your self is by joining online forums and daily journals as well as chat rooms. This will let others know who you are and what kinds of things you do. This is a great way to network and to establish relationships with others for the promotion of your crafts.

If you don't have time to build a website or build a daily journal or chat, there are always several places online that allow you to be a **part of their gallery to sell your things.** For a small fee, you can post some of your crafts on their site and allow others to browse around at your things. This is one alternative to marketing and working on your own self-promotion.

If you are more interested in promoting your crafts in person, there are also several options in expanding your craft opportunities. **Many localities will have art and craft groups** that meet in order to support each other and to network with the selling of arts and crafts. By beginning to network and provide others with some representations of your work, you will be able to build a local network and support system with your crafts.

In local and regional areas, **one is also able to attend craft and art fairs and shows.** There are usually several of these that take place throughout the year, especially closer to the holidays. You will most likely have to pay a small fee for borrowing a table or booth, but can then set up whatever you like and promote yourself and your crafts, as well as sell a good amount of material. There is also the possibility of having your own craft show or open house in your home or a rented studio in order to sell your own things. You can invite the community or friends to sell things that you have been making.

If you decide to network from person to person, **it is usually important to be prepared with your information for those interested.** Business cards as well as brochures can help you to promote your own work and can help others to understand what types of crafts you are interested in. If someone is interested, but can't get your materials at the time, they will have a place to refer to in the future. Product descriptions of your crafts are also an important tool to have on hand when promoting your own work. This will

help any that you are networking with to be able to refer to whatever they were interested in at that time.

There are several possible avenues that you can take when promoting your crafts, from the internet to networking in person. No matter which route you take, promoting your own crafts can always be successful.

Marketing Your Crafts thru Friends and Family

You've always had a knack for creating charming homespun crafts, and now you've created something highly original that always gets a good reaction when you show it off to friends, family, and co-workers. In fact, your friends and family gush about your work, and even encourage you to sell your crafts. In short, you've got a passion for your craft, and it shows.

You want to start selling your crafts, but how do you start? The easiest way to begin is often one of the most overlooked. Start at home! Using your friends and family network as a stepping stone, you can begin to make contacts that will allow you to market your craft to potential buyers.

Put on a Home Show

If you're starting from scratch, a good way to reach out to potential buyers is by putting on a home show. Invite a few close friends and family members, and ask them to bring along another person who has expressed interest in your craft. Organize the show as a very casual, no-pressure event, providing your guests with light refreshments and games.

You might want to prepare a theme for the show. For instance, if you specialize in creating ceramic pumpkin pots, a good idea would be to organize a 'Fall Festival' theme show. You should always try to schedule your home show around a holiday. The most obvious choice is to put on a home show around the Christmas holiday season, where the interest and demand for handmade crafts is always high. But don't feel restricted to market your craft during the winter months. Competition is high around Christmas, so you might do even better by putting on a home show at a less busy time of the year.

Compile a List of Contacts

Your friends, family members, and co-workers are an invaluable source of information on potential clients. If your friend simply adores your hand-crocheted scarves, does she know anyone else with similar taste who might be interested in purchasing one? Does your co-worker's sister happen to collect animal figurines? By all means, don't be shy to ask your family and friend network to help you in compiling a list of contacts. Even if you don't intend to contact the people on your list right away, this is invaluable

information to have in case you ever expand your business and decide you need to market more aggressively.

Sell Your Crafts at Local Events

Do you, or does someone in your family, attend a local church? Are you, or maybe a friend, involved in local community festivals? Church bazaars and other community-sponsored events are great venues to begin marketing your crafts. Ask friends and family members who belong to local organizations, clubs, or churches to see if there might be any upcoming events where you could sell your craft. You'll probably be surprised at the number of local events where your craft would fit right in.

Tap Into the Power of Your Own Personal Sales Force

If you're lucky, your friends and family will be your ultimate support network, your cheerleaders in life, if you will. If they believe in the promise of your product, they will probably be happy to act as your own personal sales force. Enlist friends and family members to take samples of your crafts to work. Make up high-quality flyers for them to take to work and put up on the bulletin board in the worker's lounge. Make sure to include pricing information, and maybe you'll want to include a sales order form for ease of ordering. Remember, it's especially important to complete all transactions as smoothly as possible since you're dealing with your friend's co-workers.

The last thing you want is to make any transaction difficult or uncomfortable for your friend or family member.

Just Like Martha

The most important thing to remember when you're just starting to market your craft is that everyone started out small. When Martha Stewart got started, remember, she worked out of her basement. The best and easiest way to get your feet wet is with the invaluable support and help of your family and friends network. With a good product and a good support system, you can begin to build the foundation for a successful crafts business.

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