



# TIPS BOOKLET

Here are some valuable tips that will help you prepare for By Hand.

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# 1. Check List

Use the following list to assist you with bringing the necessary supplies for taking orders at the show in a professional manner.

Business cards - Copies of product brochures and flyers	Sales order forms, tablet with digital order forms and blank contracts
Production schedule	Company letterhead and notepaper
Folders for temporary files	Calendar/Calendar App
Supplies = Ballpoint pens, markers, tape, envelopes, paper clips, stapler	Contact book/App for product inquiries (either have buyers sign-in or have an area for buyer's cards)
Appointment book/App to use for formalizing customer appointments at the booth	

# 2. Catalogue

You need to spend time on developing a catalogue or product information sheet that outlines your wholesale prices.

Depending on the amount of items you have, you might want to combine the price list and the order form together or you may choose a separate catalogue with a separate order form.

Remember that retailers generally need a 100 percent markup. This means that if you also sell at craft shows, make sure you do not sell your products at the same prices, or you will lose credibility.

Special show prices are very effective when they are built in into your prices. Specify any extra charges. Ex: first class or rush orders.

Plan better prices for volume orders.

Decide if you are going to include the shipping and handling costs into your prices. Specify any extra charges. Ex: first class or rush orders.

You must specify and discuss clearly the terms of payments.

Examples:

- Discounts on prepaid orders to encourage fast payment. Ex: 3.5% discount on prepaid orders, 30 days net – to 10 days less 2 %, 2%/month on overdue accounts, 50% up front when it is a new client.
- Will you send your product C.O.D.?
- You must prepare an application for credit. Almost all buyers will be new to you.

Information you should have on an application are:

- General information: Name, Address, City, Province & Postal Code, Telephone, E-mail, Address and Website

- The length of time in business
- Name of Bank with telephone number
- Established suppliers
- Principals of company (Names and positions)
- An agreement of purchasing goods or services, on credit

Example:

1. We will pay within 30 days of the billing date the amount shown on each monthly statement.
2. We acknowledge the right to assess our firm a service charge of 24% per annum (2% per month) on any balance over 30 days past due and we agree to pay said service charge.
3. I consent to a credit investigation

Date and have the document signed by an authorized applicant's signature

### **3. Production Schedule**

Prepare a production schedule:

- You must present yourself as a reliable supplier to the buyers. Be very specific about when you can realistically deliver goods. You must always deliver on time.
- Show the buyer your schedule and place them in on a first-come basis or prioritize by the order size.
- Your decision to take orders for the next 6 months is up to you. The buyers are looking for 4 things:
  - Quality
  - Good Prices
  - Availability
  - Reliability
- You need to know how many items you can produce per month in order to fulfill your orders.
- You must show the buyers when their order will be filled and shipped.

### **4. Exhibit Plan**

Preparing an exhibit plan

Think first about marketing and sales: The moneymaking goal. Think about appearance second.

Start with a written plan. Consider the following elements:

- Statement of goals or objectives. A concrete idea about what you want to accomplish.
- List the products to be displayed. It will help you plan your actual display. You can draw up a preliminary layout showing placement priorities.
- Create a pricing list for each of the products you want to sell.
- Prepare samples of literature, flyers, catalogue, history of product and biographical information of you.

- Prepare business cards, letterhead, sales order and lead forms.
- Set up your personal production schedule.
- Prepare a working schedule if you will be more than two staffing the booth.
- Prepare a schedule of your activities to give to the buyers to let them know where you will be showing next.
- Prepare a cost estimate or budget.
- Make up a work completion schedule.
- State how you will measure your success after the show.

## 5. Exhibit Objectives

### Setting Exhibit Objectives

Your objectives should be specific and relate to what you want to accomplish.

They can include:

- Developing qualified sales leads
- Taking on-the-spot orders
- Developing company image
- Introducing a new product
- Maintaining continuing contact with present clients
- Researching new products

Or you can be more specific:

- To produce \$2,400 worth of orders
- To obtain 20 qualified sales leads
- To learn more about my competitors

A clearly defined set of objectives will help you achieve a successful show. At the end of the show, you can review your objectives in order for you to make a total evaluation of all aspects of the show to determine your performance. This will help you to improve your weak areas for the next show.

## 6. Show Budget

### Preparing a budget

You should consider the following main costs:

1. Cost of your booth space
2. Structure and Graphics
3. Transportation
4. On Site-Services
5. Pre-Show and at-Show Promotion (Cost of postage, advertising, giveaways and prize promotions, new order forms, lead forms, business cards, office supplies...)
6. Personal Expenses (Accommodations, food...)

## 7. Booth Display

On first glance the average buyer will spend approximately 30 seconds assessing your display. You have created a quality gift item and now it is important that you create the best selling environment to grab their attention.

Remember the following tips:

1. Bring a tablet or clipboard. Learn to do most of your sales standing up. Try to go without any chairs. If you are more than two, you can always make an arrangement to meet your prospective buyer for coffee or lunch.
2. Remember your booth is an extension of your business. Try to display your work in a way to make your craft/gift item shine.
3. Decide on your background. (Ex: stand-alone shelves, lattice or a painted backdrop)
4. Consider props. They can add to your booth. (Ex: display photographs, if possible, showing the process and techniques used in making your craft).
5. Build your display at home first. Do not wait until show time to see if it works.
6. Prepare an exhibit structure checklist: packing list, display design, tool box....

An exhibitor's Tool Box should include the following:

(With knowledge of your exhibit and your products, you should edit this list)

- Hammer
- Nails and nail puller
- Pliers and wire cutter
- Scissors
- Staple gun, staples
- Tape measure (25')
- Flat extension cords
- Permanent marking pens
- Cleaning solutions
- Spot Light
- Spare light bulbs
- Extension cords
- Touch-up paint for exhibit colours, small brushes
- Cleaning cloths, spray cleaner & portable vacuum cleaner during set-up
- Spare parts, unique to your own display
- Screw assortment & screwdrivers, regular & Phillips head

If there is any question of whether or not an item should be packed, take it along.

## 8. Selling Techniques

Person-to-person selling is the performance. You will find below a list of do's and don'ts.

- Wear business attire standard for the industry and region.
- Wear older, very comfortable shoes, no slippers.
- Arrive at the booth 15 minutes before start time each day.

- Use the first minute of conversation to “qualify” a true prospect before starting a demonstration or a discussion.
- Ask about buying interest within five minutes. Try to complete contracts as quickly as possible while remaining polite and friendly.
- Speak clearly and slowly. Show floors are noisy.
- Do not carry on conversations with other booth staff members, even during quiet periods. Stay on the alert, at the edge of the aisle, giving attendees an impression of your willingness to help.
- Do not sit, eat or drink in the booth.
- Body language is important. Stand with hands at sides or cupped below the waist. Folding arms across the chest looks defensive. Hands in the pockets imply, “I don’t care.”
- Wear your name badge on the right side, so that it can be seen during hand-shaking introductions.
- Use care in writing down particulars about prospects and what is of interest for follow-up. Don’t depend on memory.
- Remain professional and businesslike.
- Avoid the indiscriminate distribution of sales literature or giveaways, unless a goal is education or overall awareness.

## 9. Pre-Show Publicity and Promotion

Your participation in By Hand can be quite inexpensive. Buyers and sellers have to find each other.

1. Current Customers: A letter of invitation should be mailed or emailed to each, giving reasons to visit you at the show. Special appointments should be offered.
2. New Customer Prospecting: This is the main reason why people exhibit. Visitors come to see what’s new, in both products and companies. There are ways to help them find you, such as news releases or advertising. Sales people should be provided with invitation passes to distribute to new prospective clients, etc.

## 10. Show Operations

Four points should be considered during your daily show operations:

1. Sales orders and leads must be written up and reviewed at the end of each day.
2. A short meeting with your staff to compare notes, share experiences, and pass along information will be invaluable.
3. Revise work schedules if necessary to meet customer appointments.
4. Know who the buyers are. They will be identified on their badges.

## 11. Post-Show Operations

Exhibit Removal: Organize your help in advance during the show. The steps are the reverse of installation. They include:

- Dismantling – placing orders for people to dismantle and pack.
- Rentals – Confirming pickup of any rental items.

- Transportation – Making pre-arrangements for transportation or storage of exhibit crates after the show is a must.

Teardown:

- Organize materials to be packed by shipping crate.
- Make sure that new shipping labels are clear.
- Do not place sales orders inside the crates.
- Prepare a checklist if any display product is damaged so it can be repaired before the next show.

## 12. Office Work

Your first day back in the office should be considered an extension of the show.

- Sales leads and orders must be processed.
- Costs must be tabulated.
- Write up any notes on exhibit damage and order any repairs required.
- Any notes should be written about competitors and seminars.
- Thank you notes should be written for team members, booth staff, and customers. (Try to write the contents of the thank you letters prior to the Show.)
- Mail publicity releases to community newspapers, trade magazines, chambers of commerce, sales reps and other great places for exposure.

## 13. Following Up On Sales Leads

It is very important to follow up in the next week or two. Make telephone calls, send further information, and send samples. Follow-up is essential to realize the full potential of the dollars you spend at a trade show. You probably don't do much follow-up in a craft show where you are selling retail, but in a trade show follow-up is a very much standard operating procedure.

Create a follow up lead form containing the following information:

- Name of Show and Date
- Contact Information: Name, Title, Company, Address, Telephone, Email and Website
- Section to describe the area of interest
- Section to indicate the communication information; First called, when they were called back, type of information sent, the date it was sent, the date if an appointment was set with time and place.

A sample follow-up letter might say things like:

If you missed our booth we're sorry, but if you saw our booth you know it was one of the busiest at the show and we are still offering our show special, and you can still have this discount if you order within the next 30 days. Or it was a pleasure having the opportunity to meet you at the Signatures By Hand Gift Show. Sorry we were not able to spend more time with you discussing our product line but we would still be very pleased to do so at this time. Our show special will still be offered to you at the discounted price if you order within the next

30 days. Try to include a photograph to remind customers of your product.

## **14. Following Up On Sales**

It is far less expensive to retain a customer than it is to find a new one. The initial order is important but the second and third orders are more critical, it means your product is selling.

After you have completed and shipped the order, call to confirm that your customer has received the order and that all is in order.

After a few months contact the customer to see how the product is selling. Many times buyers forget to place orders and this is your opportunity to replenish their stock.

If a particular item or colour, as an example, is not selling, be flexible and consider offering the buyer the chance to exchange slow moving products for fast moving ones.

Remember it is all about customer service.

## **15. Plan for Next Year**

You should now start planning for future shows. If you saw unusual exhibits, creative promotions or interesting activities, make a note. Find out why someone was the hit of the show and see if you can adapt their method for yourself. You can learn from others and try to recreate some of their best ideas to work for you.