

Selling Your Craft Over The Competition

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If you are planning to head to several craft shows to sell your items, there is a good chance that somewhere along the line you are going to run into someone who sells a similar craft to yours. I know, with all of the possible craft ideas out there, it seems like a long shot to actually run into somebody who has the idea as you.

But, it does happen. People have caught on to the same fad as you, or they have seen something in a magazine or in a craft store that they thought they could make a little different or better – and then you both end up at the same craft show, selling the same sort of item.

You are both going to get people through your booths, and you need to capitalize on the initial sales when people get there. You don't want them going to the competition to get the same piece, when they can get a better one at yours... right?

So, what do you have to do to convert the traffic in your booth into sales, before your competition does? Here are a few ideas:

Sell the quality – You might want to take some time to wander over to the competition's booth and see just what they have to offer. Maybe they aren't using a certain piece, or constructing the craft a certain way. If so, you can sell your product in a way that doesn't bring down the others product, but builds yours up.

Your booth set up - If you make your booth easy to navigate, inviting and put people in the mood to shop, your sales will soar. Make sure the booth is neat and tidy and people know where to find things. Some booths frustrate you from the moment you walk into them, and the only thing you can think about is getting out as soon as possible. Make your booth better than that.

Merchandising – Hand in hand with your booth set up, should be the way the product is displayed. If you have hand knitted sweaters, then you probably want to model one of the sweaters yourself, and have a couple of mannequins modeling them as well. Create the environment you would find your craft in, and your customers will be able to visualize themselves owning it and using it for that purpose.

Offer all forms of payment – or at least as many as you can. You should definitely take major credit cards, cash and even checks (with identification). You will really set your booth apart if you set yourself up to accept debit cards for point of sale purchase. You never want to lose a sale because you aren't able to accept someone's form of payment.

Customer service – Be prepared to answer whatever questions the customer might have, and don't be afraid to strike up a conversation with them. Ask them if they craft themselves. Ask them what they like or don't like about your craft. People always enjoy buying products from people they like. With that said, let them shop, too. Don't be too peppy or overbearing.

Price – This is the last measure you should take when you are at a craft show, competing with other booths. While you

want to make sure your price is competitive with the other booths, it doesn't have to be lower. Only if you notice a steady decline in sales should you even think of lowering your price. It is a last resort method to help you save some sales from going elsewhere.

You don't need to let cash out of your booth if you pay careful attention to what your competition is doing, and then do it better. If you follow a few of the suggestions that I have put together above, there is no doubt you have a greater chance of selling your craft at a craft show than your competition.

Natalie Goyette is the best selling author of Craft Show Success. Her e-book shows you how you can finally make money at craft shows. <http://www.craftshowsuccess.com>.