

AbaF

Selling your work at an art or craft market

If you are thinking about selling your work at an art or craft market, the first step should be to consider the advantages and disadvantages in participating. This will help you to determine if it is going to meet your needs and expectations.

Following is a list to consider.

Advantages:

- going direct to the client, potential for increased monetary gain as cutting out the middle man i.e. retailer
- directly in touch with clients
- able to gain direct feedback on products
- ability to build database and client profiles
- part of a larger and perhaps well known market brand
- ability to be on the market website at no or minimal cost
- promotion of your brand at little or no cost
- your product promoted to the larger market database.

Disadvantages:

- time consuming to attend markets (you the maker need to attend as you know your product best)
- market fees to participate (anywhere between \$50 to \$700)
- travel time and costs
- freighting costs
- limited display options
- holding enough stock to service markets but no guarantee of sales
- may not run regularly enough
- inclement weather
- possible waiting lists to participate.

Tips on identifying the best market to sell your work

Most importantly you must first clearly identify what it is you are going to sell. This will then help you identify suitable market opportunities.

If you are looking to find the market that will best suit your products, you must get out and do some research. This will involve visiting a variety of markets over a period of time, or perhaps the same market at different times of the year to get a feel for the products represented and clientele visiting. Do not be afraid to ask stall holders questions. Let them know you are considering applying and are keen to get some stallholder feedback. Be mindful to ask when they may have a hit a quiet time, not when they are busy looking after customers. Also check out the websites of each market for general information and application process.

When researching markets you must consider the following:

- Quality of products represented – would you be happy with your work being part of the market mix?
- Professionalism of stall holders
- Variety of products represented – is the mix right for your product, are there already similar products available?

- Professionalism of market organisers – do they provide clear terms and conditions?
- Pricing - where will your products sit within the market? Are your prices too low, medium or high in comparison?
- Visual merchandising of the overall market – do stalls look appealing, tidy and clean?
- Does the market have a well maintained website? If so will your profile as a participant be included?
- Does the market advertise?
- How often does the market run?

There are many different types of markets including:

- *Local community markets*
Fees raise money to be spent on facilities within a local community. For example rotary, church groups, kindergartens or schools.
- *Markets set up by individuals or groups of artists.*
For example: Rose Street market in Melbourne; shirts and skirts market at Abbotsford convent, Melbourne; and Craft Markets Australia held in various Victorian locations including Flemington, Mornington, Werribee, Yarra Glen, Healesville, Red Hill and Lardner Park.
- *Boutique markets*
Some markets cater for a specific group such as kids' products, for example, Mathilda's Market held in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth, Canberra and Hobart. Other boutique markets have a broader theme including stalls with products for adults and children such as Magnolia Square held in Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide; and Finders Keepers held in Sydney and Brisbane; and Bowerbird in Adelaide.

The frequency of a particular market is also something to consider. Some markets may be weekly, fortnightly or monthly. Others may only run two or three times a year and others possibly annually. Some outdoor markets do not run over the winter months due to the weather. You must consider how long it will take you to make stock for a market and how long to replenish stock, especially if you are going to participate on a regular basis.

Terms and conditions for stall holders

Terms and conditions vary from market to market and will be available to read on websites or on request.

These will include:

- types of products accepted at the market for sale
- product description
- fees
- public liability insurance
- photography for advertising on market website and general promotion
- Fair trading policy
- visual merchandising guidelines/expectations
- bump in and bump out times
- trading hours
- layout and stall location and size – some markets will include a trestle table as part of the fee
- stall cancellation policy.

If there is anything you are unsure about seek clarification. Unexpected surprises should be avoided at all costs.

Payment methods

Payment methods are another important thing to consider when preparing for a market. What payment methods are you going to offer your customers? It is worth considering the prices of your products before deciding.

If you are selling smaller low cost items, you may decide that cash is all you want to accept. If so you should be aware of the closest ATM, so if needs be you can let your customers know if they need more cash. Do not forget to bring a float of between \$100 and \$200 in a variety of denominations. Have a receipt book to record sales and a safe place to keep cash. At a market you should keep cash on you at all times.

A mobile eftpos machine may be worth considering if your items are more expensive and indeed if you wish to offer more payment options. Eftpos services can be organised directly with your bank or merchant facility businesses. The latter often offer more competitive rates, as they are not locked into one bank but shop around for the best deal. 1 – 1.5% of the sale price is usual as an eftpos fee, with an additional minimum monthly rental and service fee.

Cheques can be risky and should be avoided.

Packaging, signage and displaying your works for sale

Visual merchandising is a critical aspect of the market experience. In most cases you will have limited space to display your products so you need to plan your display in advance. Think carefully about what props to use to make the most of your space and to provide interest. Adding height to your display can make it stand out from the crowd.

Keep stands uncluttered and clean so visitors can easily see products. Make the prices of items clear, many customers will not ask and prefer to see the cost for themselves upfront

Make sure you have easy access to back up stock. Storage will be limited (it will mostly be under your table), so make sure everything is labelled and in groups so you can find it fast.

There are many varieties of packaging available and it is worth taking the time to consider your options. Choose packaging suitable to your product. If you sell fragile items you will need to make sure that you provide protective packaging. If you sell jewellery you will need to provide suitable boxes or bags. Packaging is an extension of your visual merchandising. It can be a way of further promoting your business, for instance, reusable carry bags with a logo. You can be clever and fun with packaging and this in turn will add interest and provide a talking point with visitors. Eco friendly options are encouraged at many markets.

Responding to customer orders and commissions

In the buzz of interest and enthusiasm in your work you may feel like saying yes to any request! If you are happy to take orders or commissions from market visitors make this decision well before the market.

Establish a set of guidelines for yourself and the client so you both know what you are getting in for. You may decide to ask for a deposit (this is not an unreasonable request) and of course balance on delivery. Having an order form will help in taking all the relevant details of the client, their commission and timeframe, and will avoid any misunderstandings at a later stage. Make clear any delivery charges – courier or post and who will incur this cost, you or the client.

Labelling: size, contents, care instructions or age appropriate

It is essential that your products be appropriately labelled. This may include content, size, care, washing instructions, flammability (mandatory for children's sleepwear) labels for clothing, or other textile products for the home and soft toys. If selling toys for babies, make sure that there are no small parts which could cause a choking hazard and provide appropriate age instructions if necessary.

What are your obligations for accepting returns?

Every time you sell goods and services, you are entering into a contract with the purchaser. The *Trade Practices Act* implies certain promises into all consumer contracts that you make, which are often referred to as statutory rights. Statutory rights are the customer's rights by law and cannot be refused, changed or limited by you the seller.

Statutory conditions for goods include that they:

- be free from defects and meet a basic level of quality and performance, taking into account the price and description
- do what they are supposed to do, i.e. suitable for the specified purpose
- match any description you give or the sample that you show a purchaser

When can a purchaser ask for a refund?

There are a number of reasons where you are legally required to give a refund and these include:

- goods are faulty
- goods do not do what they are supposed to
- goods do not match the sample or description shown
- goods have defects that were not apparent at time of purchase.

However, you are under no obligation to give refunds if the purchaser simply changes their mind, buys the wrong item, uses goods in a way that was not specified and thereby damaging to the goods.

Make sure that you have refund and or return policy in place and make it clear to your clients at the point of sale. For further information on your legal obligations on refunds refer to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) website (www.accc.gov.au) or phone 1300 302 502

Gathering client information

One of the advantages of selling your work at a market is that you deal directly with your clients and can therefore use this opportunity to build your database, get feedback on your products and meet those people who enjoy and support your creative efforts.

Always make sure you have a form to collect information for your mailing list. Collect names, postal and email addresses and ask if they would like to receive regular newsletters. When you make a sale record as much information as possible about the stock you sold and the purchaser. By being friendly and chatting with clients you often gain a lot of useful information. All this information can help you in the ongoing marketing of your work as well as providing vital information for the development of future products.

The information you collect will allow you to find out:

- Who is buying your work?
- Where they live?

- The age group of clients
- What they are buying?
- How much the average customer spends?
- What your most popular product is?
- What your least popular product is?

Remember you want to make attending a market a financial success and a pleasurable experience. Engage with your customers, be happy and smile, don't be pushy but don't ignore customers. Do not talk on the phone when there are people at your stall it is a real turn off for customers. Most importantly know your product and make sure others working with you are familiar with your product as well. Be honest and make your product the best you possibly can.

This Fact Sheet has been developed by Edwina Bolger on behalf of AbaF for the Artist Business Program.

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