

# Sales Help *for* Exhibitors

We want you to be successful when you book one of our events. You have spent a lot of time, energy and money to be a part of our festivals. Make your three days with us the best they can be. Read these fine articles by Marsha Reed-Roe of Craftmaster News and put the ideas into action. You are more than just an artist or crafts-designer, you are responsible for the complete success of your creative business endeavor. Take positive action this weekend in your sales approach and enjoy the rewards of increased sales and happiness.

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## **Dealing With Your Customers**

**By**

**Marsha Roe**

**Editor of Craftmaster News**

Throughout my years (decades??) in the craft industry, I've found how important it is to convey a friendly and helpful attitude toward your customers. It's also important to always carry a smile on your face no matter what happens at a show (this is, if you intend to make sales!). Below I've outlined what I feel are among the most important customer service rules....

### **Dealing with the unhappy customer...**

There are many ways to deal with your customers, but how do you handle that unhappy customer? Are you prepared in advance to handle any problems that may arise? The majority of your customers will not be problems for you to handle, but there are always those few you must deal with in a different way.

For example, what if a customer who has previously bought from you were to come into your booth and be unhappy about something he/she purchased. How will you handle the issue calmly and professionally and keep him/her from making a scene in front of your other customers? Are you prepared with a refund policy or substitute of merchandise? Do you have a guarantee on your merchandise? How do you handle that guarantee?

Remember that happy customers are always a source of more revenue for your business. Word of mouth is the best possible advertising you can have. Studies have shown that unhappy customers will tell twice as many friends negative things about a business as happy customers will tell positive things. Be prepared with your responses for unhappy customers, and strive to quickly change their attitude about you and your product to a positive one.

### **Always be friendly and respectful...**

Always be friendly with your customers. I've learned as many of you have, that craft buyers don't like a salesperson that is too aggressive. Try keeping their attention by simply carrying on normal conversation, rather than being overly pushy and aggressive.

### **Draw the line....**

How about those customers that so conveniently decide to make your booth their social lounge? We've all had those before...they just love to sit and talk and talk...and talk – forgetting that, although it IS Saturday, WE are still working, and have other customers to attend to! Your best bet here is to find a tactful way to exit the conversation, but remember, don't be afraid to let intruders know that you have business to take care of. If you don't, the only person that wins is the intruder...the losers – you and the customer both!

## **Believe in your product...**

Being enthusiastic about your product is the key to success. If the customer knows you are sincere about what you're saying, they're more likely to buy.

## **Body language...**

How do you handle yourself when it comes to body language? Do you sit around with a frown on your face, or are you up and interactive with the customer and your product? Studies show that body language will increase or decrease your sales dramatically. How would you feel if you walked into a booth with the salesperson's arms crossed and a frown on his/her face? Keeping your arms crossed relays the message to your customer, "keep your distance."

I'll quote an example of an exhibitor that I always tell about in my seminars. He was over six feet tall. He stood in the front of his booth with his arms folded. He wondered why no one wanted to come into his booth. First of all, his height was intimidating. Second, the body language signal said "don't come near." When we finally talked to him, we suggested he stand further back in his booth and busy himself with his merchandise. Immediately customers started walking in. They seemed to feel more at ease to look around.

## **What are you doing...**

How about the lady who sits in the front of her booth reading a book? My impression here is that she is not interested in her product or her customers. The customers probably feel like they would be interrupting her if they were to shop there. Because of this most customers will just simply pass her by.

**Among the most impressive booths I've visited are booths that are occupied by crafters who are working on their product.** This is VERY effective for attracting the customer's attention. They often enjoy seeing products "hand-made" right in front of them...I know I do. This is also a great way to initiate a conversation with your customer. For those of you that can do this it is probably the best tool you have.

## **Eye Contact**

Making eye contact with your customers is probably too-often overlooked. Try to catch the eye of all potential customers that come to look around at your merchandise. Greet them with a simple smile and a "how can I help you today." You don't need to continue to stand there and have a lengthy conversation. You're only engaging with your customer to let them know you're there to assist them when they are ready.

## **Final Thought....**

Dealing with your customers is something that takes a lot of practice, you must continually be improving your skills. There are many books and articles written on customer service and body language. Don't be afraid to take time to read and learn from all the sources that are available. Applying the knowledge you learn will make a great difference in you sales effectiveness. I know it has for me!!

# **The Power of "Thank You"**

by

**Marsha Roe**

**Editor of Craftsman News**

Remember when you were little and you were expecting that special gift for Christmas (that special doll, or a new train set)? Remember your Grandma giving you a new outfit instead? Yes, you were very disappointed, but remember your Mom telling you, "Now, what do you say?" and your reply was a prompt, "Thank you, Grandma." Now picture once again the look on your Grandmother's face as she beamed with joy over what she gave you. This gift you received definitely didn't meet your expectations but that "Thank you" you gave went a long way. Just as your parents tried to drum into you how important it was to thank others for gifts, you must also remember to thank your customers for the business they have given you.

## **Key Time To Thank Your Customers**

### **1. Every time a customer does any business with you.**

Customers have choices of whom they chose to do business with. Don't ever think for one minute, no matter how unique your product is, that you are the only one out there. Always thank your customer for choosing to do business with you.

### **2. When they are patient.**

Many times we may be by ourselves at a show and it is impossible to take care of all our customers at once. A simple "Thank You" to the customers for their patience shows you know the value of their time. Thanking them defuses the customer who may have had to wait too long and is none too happy about it.

### **3. When they compliment you or your product.**

Compliments can be embarrassing sometimes, but ignoring the sincere compliment could send a message to your customer that says, "I'm really not that good." Instead, thank the customer for their compliment and tell them you appreciate their business.

### **4. When they give you suggestions or comments about your product.**

Be sure to listen closely. The customer can be your best critic. They can tell you things about your product you aren't even aware of. Thanking the customer for their feedback tells them that you value their opinions.

### **5. When they recommend you to a friend.**

Remember, referrals can be your best source of income. Never forget to thank a customer for sending you new business.

## **6. When they are prepared.**

If a customer is standing in line to check out and already has their check or charge card ready it helps you to service the rest of your customers more efficiently. Thank them for helping you to better serve your customers.

## **7. When they make you smile.**

A smile is one of the greatest gifts someone can give. Thank them for making your day a little brighter.

## **8. When they complain to you.**

Why thank a complainer? A complainer is giving you a great gift. If they tell you they are unhappy they are saying they will give you a second chance. They are also helping you to improve your product or service.

## **Ways To Say Thank You**

**1. Verbal** – Be sure when you say thank you that you truly mean it. "Thank you for shopping at my booth: said too quickly or insincerely doesn't impress a customer. Be sure to look them in the eye when saying thank you. Have your focus on them.

**2. In Writing** – You can send a note along with a special order. Be sure your notes are handwritten. You can even write a special note at the bottom of an invoice.

**With A Gift** – With larger purchases you may want to give a small gift such as a notepad or pen imprinted with your company name, even a discount for a future purchase. Be sure the value of the gift is in balance with the purchases made. Make it a small token of your appreciation. It will help the customer remember you.

## **15 Ideas To Help You Get & Keep Customers**

**by Marsha Roe**

**Editor of Craftsmaster News**

You all know that without customers you wouldn't have a business. The question you should ask yourself is what do you do to attract and keep your customers? A satisfied customer is one who purchases and receives value from the good you offer. Generally, customers have a choice. There are many vendors that may be selling similar products to yours. If the customer doesn't like what you offer or the way you offer it, he can go elsewhere for similar goods. If he does your business suffers. The customer that is satisfied is the one that creates profit for you. Something to remember is that in a 10x10 booth you only have 3 seconds to draw the customers' attention to you. After catching their attention you must do something to keep it there. Here are some ideas for helping to get and keep customers.....

### **1. Always greet your customers when they come into your booth.**

Customers don't like to be ignored, however, there are many customers that prefer to shop without you standing right over the top of them. A friendly greeting makes the customer feel welcome in your booth and relaxes the atmosphere for the customer. If you are busy with other customers, say hello, and let them know that you'll be ready to help them soon.

### **2. SMILE!!!**

Yes, this sounds very basic, but I know I have entered many vendor booths where the vendors have never cracked a smile. This gives the customer an uneasy feeling, and they begin to wonder what the problem is. Don't just smile with your mouth; also be sure to smile with your eyes.

### **3. Watch your personal appearance.**

Customers begin to size us up the minute they enter our booth. You should always be neat and orderly, not only in your personal appearance, but the appearance of your booth also. An untidy booth can be distracting to the customer and send them many unwanted messages. The customer that sees an untidy booth may also think that you don't care how your products are put together.

### **4. Get the customer busy.**

Involve your customer in some way. You can begin by handing them a shopping basket or asking them to fill out your mailing list for future shows. Tell them they are welcome to pick up your products and examine them. You might want to have candy in your booth to entice them over. Offer a product fly, business card or price list.

The important thing is not what they do but getting them involved in your booth.

### **5. Give your customer a compliment.**

Often customers prefer to browse. In this case you need an icebreaker. A compliment always helps to make them feel at home. Compliments should be simple such as, that's a beautiful color on you, your children sure are cute, and etc. You can think ahead for many lines you can use and be prepared to use them. Try to stay away from comments like the weather or how are they feeling. Some of the best things you can use are in anticipation of the customer buying, such as are you buying for yourself or a friend? Tell the customer what other colors your product comes in, offering that you have many sizes available, offering suggestions or comments, offer to do special orders if they don't see what they want, or letting the customer know what is currently popular.

### **6. Listen with more than just your ears.**

Many times we find ourselves distracted when a customer is talking to us. We need to try to maintain eye contact and show we are interested in what they are saying. If a customer asks a question be sure you understand the question before answering.

### **7. Under-promise – Over-deliver.**

If you take special orders always allow yourself more time than expected to get the product to the customer. By doing this you can call the customer when it is completed and tell them the pleasant surprise that their product is ready before they actually are expecting it. This makes the customer feel you really do care about them.

### **8. Explain how your product works.**

Say your product is a collapsible basket; you may need to show the customer how it works. If it is just sitting there by itself they may not understand what it is. You could have two items side by side, one that is flat and the other that is put together in finished product form. If it is a toy you may need to demonstrate it. Don't ever assume your customer knows how to use your product.

### **9. Offer guarantees.**

For instance, if you have clothing that has appliques you may wish to assure your customer that if anything goes wrong they may bring it back and you will fix or replace it.

### **10. Explain the features or benefits.**

Features are a distinct part or quality, the thing that stands out and attracts attention. Examples: automobiles have different types of engines; copy machines may be black & white or color. Benefits are the advantages your customer obtains from your product. Examples: A larger engine in a car will have more pulling power, better pick up and go. The copy machine allows you to be more versatile in putting out newsletters. Another example would be toothpaste that makes your teeth whiter.

### **11. Send discount or come-back coupons to your best customers.**

If a customer has bought a large amount you may wish to give them a punch card and after they have bought so much they can get a free gift or discount on their next purchase. You may wish to offer them a discount if they attend your next show and purchase from you.

### **12. Keep a positive attitude.**

Be enthusiastic about your product and never let it show if you are having a bad day.

### **13. Send new product information.**

Be sure to keep your customers informed on all your new products you introduce.

### **14. Send reminders to customer's friends.**

Let their friends or relatives know what your customers have said they really like for birthdays, anniversaries and special occasions.

### **15. Anticipate your customer's needs.**

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