

## A Second Career at Craft Shows

Baby boomers are a very creative people. But so often the demands of career and raising a family leaves little time for creativity in your middle age years. But as more baby boomers complete their years of service in their careers and move toward retirement, they have plenty of energy and creativity left for a new passion in life, one that expresses all that creativity of their youth.

This is one reason we have seen such an explosion of craft fairs in the country which provide an outlet for all of that creative talent baby boomers are expressing through their arts and craft. The great thing about crafts shows is you can start wherever you are in your creative arts and continue to grow and become more skilled each passing year. To get started, you should take on this new hobby and small business with the same enthusiasm and passion you did when you were employed in your former career. That is the great thing about baby boomers having this kind of free time in the retirement years. There is so much talent and energy available that to not make it available to the public would be a crime.

It is going to take some preparation to get ready for your first craft fair. The preparation will be on three fronts. One is making contacts with the organizers of upcoming fairs and getting on the schedule to be able to display a booth there. The easiest way to find out how to do that is attend the new craft fair that comes up in the area. They are often associated with special events such as Oktoberfest or a food or music festival. By attending several as you are in your preparation period, you can accomplish several good things...

. You can look at booths of many different vendors to get ideas for your booth when you are ready to take the plunge.

. You can talk to vendors who are selling there and learn about how to go about getting on the program for this fair and to learn about upcoming events you can participate in. Don't worry about you seeming to pose a threat as a future competition for sales. There is a camaraderie among crafters and you will enjoy the social aspect of mixing with other creative people.

. You can talk to the people who organize the show and get a feel for how you will fit in to their next event.

Another line of preparation is booth creation. It's good if you are starting early because it will take some time and a bit of expense to get the materials together and for you to build the skills to put the booth up, take it down, move it and store it between shows. Again, your contacts with experienced craft show veterans will be invaluable for this.

Finally, but this is the most important part of your preparations is your talent and craft that you will be preparing to sell at the craft shows. You can purchase some examples of similar crafts you see doing well at the fairs you scout out. These can be templates for what you want to do. But you will impose your own creative vision on the craft so what you offer when you finally get to the craft faire will be uniquely yours and speak of your vision.

Along with these preparations, think about how you will customize your booth to draw customers in. From craft fairs you have attended in the past and the ones you scout, you will witness that there are certain booths that draw crowds and others that just don't seem to get the customers. So you want to make your booth inviting to customers so you will reap a good return on your effort in the form of sales.

There are a variety of ways to draw customers. From candles, to contests, to videos playing, to using music or live talent to making your craft as people watch, there are many ways you can experiment around with to draw customers. You will get a unique thrill from the sales you make each day. But more importantly, you will be expressing that creative side of you and getting that fulfillment that you had to wait to this phase of life to express. And that's a wonderful benefit of learning to sell your crafts at craft fairs.