

TEN TIPS FOR BEGINNING TO MARKET YOUR ART

Tamara Holland

OVERVIEW

You've created a repertoire of good things that keep inspiring your friends to exclaim, "You should sell these!" You're a game and curious person who's thinking you might like to give that a shot. And you're savvy enough to know that no matter how fabulous your art is, it doesn't just magically sell itself. As your art's marketing steward, you'll need to introduce (and reintroduce) it to folks with whom you've built relationships and who will want to buy your products. Here are ten easy, inexpensive tips to help you start that work.

TIP ONE: GET EDUCATED AND OVERCOME FEARS

Start reading blogs, articles, and books by artists in your field, and by terrific marketing people like Scott Stratten, who will give you all sorts of information about ways to market your art. Realize that the time calculus for starting a business in which you'll be selling your wares is 20% visioning/new production, 30% administration, and 50% sales time. Know that you'll be afraid in the sales process. Know that you'll get over that.

TIP TWO: GET YOUR WORK UP ON ETSY.COM

You need to establish an on-line location for people to view (and even buy!) your work. Etsy.com is not flawless (what business is?) but this on-line marketplace for artists is the best combination of largest, least-expensive, and easiest-to-use venue for getting your work "out there" on the internet.

TIP THREE: GET YOURSELF A FACEBOOK BUSINESS PAGE

If you have a Facebook personal page, the system also allows you to set up a Business Page. Free exposure! Set up your Business Page and post photos of your pieces on your wall. Invite your friends to check out your new page. Use it also to post links to other artists' work or blogs that you like or find helpful. Your Facebook Business Page is a good tool to share information and build connections.

TIP FOUR: GET YOURSELF A BLOG AND START BLOGGING AWAY

Your blog is another great way to build relationships with other artists, helpful contacts, and prospective buyers of your wares. You can set one up for free, and in not very much time, on sites like blogger.com. Display your art. Provide your readers interesting information - like your own "ten tips" lists! Blog about others' good works, and send them the link to that post to pass along to their own social media communities.

TIP FIVE: GET TOGETHER A SOCIAL MEDIA CHEER SQUAD

Band together with several of your artist friends who also have internet presences -- Facebook Business Pages, blogs, etsy shops, etc. -- and provide each other social media support. Post "likes" on each other's Facebook Business Pages. Read and comment on each other's blog posts. "Heart" each other's etsy shops. Make yourselves popular and have some fun together. A Facebook "Group" page is a great way to facilitate this.

TIP SIX: GET YOURSELF A T-SHIRT

Upload your art business' name and logo to a shirt-making company like Zazzle or CafePress. Buy that shirt and wear it while you're running errands. People - - like shopkeepers! -- will read your shirt and ask you what it's about. Which is exactly how I got my wares placed in one of my first brick and mortar stores.

TIP SEVEN: GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR LOCAL ART GROUP

Many communities have geographically-based art groups you can join at little cost. They typically have great resources to link you with other artists, venues that are looking for art, upcoming faires and shows, and often provide discounts to local art supply stores and museums. Some also have their own galleries that will carry your work.

TIP EIGHT: GET CRACKING ON AN ART GARAGE SALE

Advertise and have an art sale just like you would a garage sale -- held at your place, with signs posted in your neighborhood, on Craig's List, and anywhere else you'd be telling people about your garage sale. Use the sale as an opportunity to clear your studio of items you don't use any more. Bill your event as an "Art and Supply Garage Sale," and get even more people to come.

TIP NINE: GET ON THE TEACHING CIRCUIT

Pick a project from your art life that you'd like to teach in a two-hour class . . . a how-to lesson that is easy and gratifying for you to teach, and for others to learn. Pitch it to venues where you'd like to hold the class: a home decor shop? A frame store? A preschool? Advertise on your Facebook Business Page, on your blog, and ask your social media support group to do the same for you.

TIP TEN: GET BRAVE AND APPROACH BRICK AND MORTARS

Voila! You've got a shop on etsy. You've got a burgeoning social media presence. You know from your art garage sale and your teaching that people like your wares. Now go ahead and ask the owner or buyer of your relevant local shop whether she'd like to carry your products. Know the rule-of-thumb that the wholesale price you charge the shopkeeper is typically 50% of your ware's retail price. You can also try consignment sales.

RESOURCES

UnMarketing, by Scott Stratten

The Creative Entrepreneur, by Lisa Sonora Beam

blog.beanupthenoseart.com

ABOUT TAMARA HOLLAND

Tamara Holland turns her mixed media collage pieces into reprinted paper art products and sells them at her company, Bean Up The Nose Art. Starting in spring 2009 with 10 greeting cards on etsy.com, Bean products are now sold by a sales rep and have already made their ways into over 50 independent brick and mortar stores. Tamara is also a post-conviction attorney for death row prisoners, and is marketing her first two screenplays. She has three grown children, and lives on the West Coast with her husband. Visit beanupthenoseart.com or contact her at tamara@beanupthenoseart.com.

