

# How to Boost Sales at Vendor Shows

## And the 2 Magic Words that will Help

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If you have not started your business yet, please get the business start up check list I have in the files of my *Soap Making and Business Coaching* group. You'll need insurance and get your tax ID from the IRS. Some vendor show coordinators require proof of those too.

*I'm going to go over some sales tips, and lots of vendor show tips to boost sales. After all you are in business to make sales! We all are. I've been a successful entrepreneur for almost 15 years, and been in sales even longer. I could write a whole book on sales, but my next book, The Soap Making Handbook Vol 2, will be solely focused on growing your soap business. There will be much more information in that on sales too. This here is to help you specifically with vendor shows.*

The old way of sales doesn't work anymore, and it can turn people off quick! The old way is the "Always Be Closing" method, where you never let people say no and assume they are already buying. People do not like to be sold. They want to feel like it's their idea to buy. I'm going to talk about what I like to call... Sell without Selling. I'll also give you the 2 magic words for this technique that I have used for years.

People buy from people that they like and trust. People like people that ask them questions to get to know them. You need to build relationships and network. You have to be a people person, and use what you have... Don't try to be anybody else. No one else is you, and no one else will do things like you. If you are funny use it, and if you aren't don't try to be... just be you.

People also don't buy products, they buy benefits. They also buy something because of how it makes them feel. For my old cleaning business... I didn't sell a cleaning service, I sold free time. Soaps can offer a scent that brings back good memories, and a chance to relax, or can make them feel luxurious and pampered. Those are the best benefits, since we can't make claims.

Think of your customers as wearing a sign that says... Make Me Feel Special. Everyone is tuned into the same radio station... WIIFM (what's in it for me). If you go above and beyond with customer service and make your customers feel spoiled they will become loyal and be some major brand advocates. If you go out of your way every time that will set you apart, and keep people coming back with their friends. Do what others won't, that blows the competition away. Innovate!

Every interaction you have is a chance to build your brand (reputation)... every person matters, even if they don't buy... give them a great experience.

Even though you are in sales, I want you to think of yourself as a problem solver. Your business is you, but it's about your customers. You need to know the exact person you are selling to.... If you have not gone through the Branding and Target Market workbook in the files of my group SMBC, that's your first step. You have to have your customer avatar completely defined. Define your niche also, which will be your focus. Once you know who you are selling to, you can better meet their needs.

You can't sell to everyone, you need to sell to your target market. Your products will be specifically for your target market. If you try to be all things to all people, you will fail.

## **Vendor Shows....**

How to Pick what vendor shows to do...

- 1) I don't recommend doing first year shows, because they often do not have the advertising budget needed and the foot traffic. Some may be a chance to do some networking though... just be really choosy.
- 2) Be a customer to the show first, check it out. Scope it out, and talk to other vendors to see what they think of the show. Ask also what other shows they recommend.

- 3) You want to make sure the show fits your target market, and they also have crafters.
- 4) Make sure they advertise a lot, that they use bill boards, signs around town, and have ads in the newspaper and radio.
- 5) But you want to make sure they only allow a certain number of soap makers. The big show I do allows 2 soap makers.
- 6) Consider the location... if you need to travel, get a hotel for 1 or 2 nights this is another expense on top of the vendor show fee. I suggest doing local shows to start. Also, consider if people have to drive to a remote place in town that doesn't get much traffic this can hinder people coming. If the show is already in a high traffic area this is great.
- 7) Be choosy on what shows you do to help boost sales and limit shows that people don't show up too, and to make sure you don't sit there all day doing nothing and wasting money.

### **Must Haves for the Shows...**

- 1) Help... You need someone with you.
- 2) Credit card swiper... for those that don't have the cash... don't lose those sales.
- 3) Have at least \$120 in change.
- 4) Cash box
- 5) For outdoor shows... Make sure you have a canopy, weights to keep the canopy on the ground! (we have to have 40 pound weights on each leg), Table cloths that go to the ground and are fitted so they don't fly up. Make sure everything is weighted down that needs to be.
- 6) Keep the extra stuff under the table hidden by the table cloths.
- 7) Banner
- 8) Table sign with your business name
- 9) Price sheets
- 10) Business cards
- 11) Pamphlets on the difference in hand made soaps and/or brochures of your products.
- 12) Paper, pens, calculator

Now that you've got your show picked and know what you need... here's the good stuff.

Many studies have been done on meeting clients or customers face to face for sales, and it by far outweighs other forms of sales like Skype and phone calls. It's why people travel for business to make sales still... they know that meeting in person will boost sales. It's also how I grew my cleaning business when I was 25 that I mentioned earlier... I offered free in home consultations... every free in-home consultation resulted in them becoming a client (mainly because they were already sold, even if they didn't know it yet. I'll explain exactly how I did that in Vol 2)... Also, because of the relationships I built 90% of those clients were long term clients that I cleaned for until I had to move. The ones that didn't become long term clients just had a project they didn't want to do themselves. I also gave them what they wanted... every client also had their service tailored to fit them and their needs.

Remember... Your business is not about you... but you are your business.

Vendor shows are your time to shine, meet your customer's needs, and to build relationships. Try several things to boost sales, and record what worked and what didn't for you.

Dress for success! Studies have been done on color psychology for sales. Blue, and more specifically navy blue is the top selling color, and purple is next. Try dressing up for shows, and try different colors to see what works best for you. Blue also instills trust, which is why a lot of banks use blue in their logos.

Also, put a lot of thought and planning into your table display and the colors used. If you google color psychology for sales, you'll get a list of all the colors and what they mean. This can also help build your brand image if you are stuck. Your logo will need to fit your brand as well, and the colors matter.

People will size you up and your products in seconds and decide if they want to stop and look. Appearance is so important! Try different things too, and record your sales.

Sometimes getting people to stop and look can seem frustrating. A big tip is to compliment people! Compliment them on clothing or a previous purchase... this tells them you think they have good taste and makes them feel good. If they

already bought something from another vendor compliment that purchase, and talk up the other vendor... (if you have been doing networking with the other vendors this is easy). I highly recommend you get to know the other vendors, and sometimes you can work sales deals with other vendors... Get creative and innovative.

**True story-** My mom comes to help with shows sometimes, and I love her to death. One day there was a lady across the street that had tattoos, so my mom (being my mom), yelled "I like your tattoos!" Well low and behold when she came around to my side of the street, she bought soap. After she left I laughed because that worked. You never know what will work, and don't think by the look of a person that they won't buy either.

Greet everyone that walks by your tables! Say hi, compliment them, and start small talk about the weather or ask how they are. DO not sit and stay on your phone! Stand to greet people if you can.

*Know that sometimes people really are just killing time and "just looking". You may get that line a lot.*

Instead of asking "Can I help you find something in particular?" (which can lead to them just saying "Oh no thanks... I'm just looking") Ask instead if they have tried your soaps before or ask if they have tried handmade soap before? This will open up conversation. If they have or haven't you can continue the conversation accordingly.

What's even better is having the ability to let people try your soaps at the table. For me, I've found that having them try soaps and lotions at my table boosts sales dramatically... much more than giving out free samples.

**Side Note:** Free things brings people to the table! If you don't have the sink option I talk about next, you can offer free soap samples. You can also talk to your show coordinators about offering free cookies, candy, or drinks. I've also used a bubble machine... that really helped bring the kids and their parents in... but make sure your show coordinator allows these things first.

I have a Coleman Portable Sink, that has a battery-operated sprayer. If you sell liquid soap or foaming soap, this is really easy for people to try then. Bar soaps can be a little trickier, but what I'm going to do this year is those pepper

shaker containers with the bigger holes (like the ones at Pizza Hut). I'm going to grind up the bar soap end pieces to put in those containers, so people can shake a little soap out to try it. I think this will help those end pieces go that much further for samples, and it'll be a great option for trying bar soaps.

**The 2 Magic Words to boost sales!** Remember what I said about people not wanting to be sold, and they want it to be their idea to buy. To do that... start your sentence with **Feel Free**. After you greet them...Say "Feel free to look around and smell the soaps. Let me know if you have questions." Then don't hover, act busy with something else. Something I do while I'm acting busy is pay attention to what they say to people that they are with about the soaps... I usually get very valuable feedback.

Saying feel free is something I have done naturally forever, and recently I came across some studies on this... crazy right? They have actually proved those 2 words boost sales and reduce buyer's remorse. If a person feels like they were pushed into a sale they will feel remorse, and never come back to you... we don't want that. It has to be the customer's decision to buy. That's how you sell without selling. Pushy sales people I hope are becoming a thing of the past.

Something my Dad will do (love my parents), is come to the shows and stand and look at my soaps to help draw other people in. People feel less threatened to come up to the tables if someone is already there. They don't want to feel like they will get jumped by pushy sales people. Nothing brings a crowd... like a crowd! Which is another reason having something offered for free is great.

I wanted to throw out an idea for those that are thinking of doing a week long fair, such as a state fair. Most people that go to the state fairs do not really go with the intention of buying things. For me personally, I don't want to lug around a bunch of purchases all day or have to make a bunch of trips to my car that is parked a mile away. The fairs are good options for getting information out to people with pamphlets though. Here's my thought I had today... what if you offered free shipping to their house on 3 or more bars, so they didn't have to carry the soaps around. Have someone with you package the soaps up and make a run to the post office at the end of the day. (You'd need a cart or something to haul the boxes in). Your prices will most likely be higher anyway to cover the free

shipping. Just thinking outside the box here. It'd be easier to upsell them too with this idea.

I also want to talk about confidence and introverts... I by nature am an introvert. First and foremost, you need confidence in your products and knowledge of your products, which is a huge bonus for small businesses that make their own products, and this is why I wrote [The Soap Making Handbook Vol 1](#)... so you'd have the knowledge you need to get you started right and much faster. Your heart has to be in your business. If your heart isn't in the business your sales will reflect that. Your business and products will be a reflection of your heart and soul. That's the first step in confidence.

The next step in confidence is getting rid of negative self-talk, and replacing it with positive affirmations. Also, practice mental rehearsal of talking to people and making sales before the event.

You also need to get out of your head, and focus on the people... not you. Once you master being able to do that it's so much easier. Focus on your customers and finding out what they like and want... don't worry about you. Remember it's not about you, your business is about your customers.

Remember Greatness happens outside your comfort zone, and any fear you have is warning that you are doing something you need to do... you are pushing beyond your success barrier.

Every vendor show you do will help build confidence and give you experience, but you have to start. Nobody is perfect, and don't stress about that. You will learn things and change things as you go.

You can also try changing up the table set up. Instead of being behind the tables, try setting them up so people walk in and you are on the same side they are. Being on the same side the customers are on is more personable, and it forces you to get out of your comfort zone and engage more... which will help boost sales.

Try different things... if the table set up change doesn't work for you, try different displays or higher shelves.

Another option to try is Product Tiers to cover a wider range of people's wants. I have some more changes in this regard that I'm going to try this year as well. Many businesses have product tiers. You could offer cheaper soaps, a mid-range line, and or a luxury line made with specialty ingredients. You know your market best, and what will work best for it. Don't be afraid to try different things... just remember to keep track of what worked and what didn't.

Bonuses for vendor shows is being able to get valuable feedback. To get to know your market better, you can have paper surveys out to find out what the people want. You can also offer a free sample for filling out the survey. This can help you make soaps that people want, rather than making soaps that don't sell.

Also, and this is huge... get peoples email addresses. Have a form out for people to sign up to get your updates. Yes, we want people to like and follow our social medias, but we do not own those followers. There is always a high chance they won't see the post. Everyone has an email address, and there is a much higher chance they will see the email than a social media post. You want them to know what other shows you are doing, and also provide great content to them so they look forward to your emails... do not send spammy emails. Some believe that email addresses are archaic, but all my business mentors have all said email addresses are a must. You need to build the email list. You can't rely on social media posts.

One last thought for you... not every show will be killer in sales, and sometimes the people just don't come. Do not get frustrated, which I know is easy to do. Focus on the experience and what you learned, and what people you did get to talk to. Stay positive, because if you start to think negative and people do show up, you will lose sales. Don't let your mood dictate sales.

Remember you are in complete control, and if you lose hope you gave your power away. You can't control what happens, but you can control how you react to it. Choose to be positive and look at the bright side, which may sound cheesy, but it's true.

To sum it up... You have to have your heart and soul in your business, and you need to focus on your customer's needs. Wow your customers with amazing customer service. Change things up and keep track of what worked and what didn't. And stay positive!



I really hope this helped you, and I would love to hear your stories on what worked for you!

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