



CRAFT SHOW SUCCESS

Introduction:
The Unique Craft Show Experience

When I first started my handmade business, Random Nicole (a line of one-of-kind clothing and accessories) in 2001, I was focused on in-person retail sales. E-commerce was still very new and people weren't as comfortable as they are today buying products online. I know this is hard to imagine now, but Etsy didn't even exist until four years later!

The in-person retail sales world for handmade goods was also very different. The craft show scene was still in its infancy and big shows like Renegade Craft Fair, Crafty Wonderland and Urban Craft Uprising, as well as our own Patchwork Show, weren't around yet. I had to get creative to find venues to sell my goods. I set up shop just about anywhere I could ... flea markets, farmers markets, people's houses, holiday office parties, churches, schools, and even in small backrooms or corners at local brick and mortar boutiques. Now the opportunities for makers to sell directly to customers at craft shows are abundant.



**During the not-so-glamorous early days of my business Random Nicole I set-up shop pretty much anywhere I could including a weekly flea market, where I had to arrive at 3 a.m. (on the left), and a dingy bar in San Francisco where I sold artwork and handmade accessories (in the center). Eventually my set-up got a bit more professional (on the right). It's kind of embarrassing to share these but this is where I started and it was all part of the experience that led me to where I am now.*

Even though makers have more retail opportunities than ever before, you might be wondering why you would want to put in the time, effort and money to sell at a craft show. It's because craft shows offer a unique experience that you can't get through e-commerce. At craft shows you get to interact with your customer directly, network with potential new customers and fellow makers, as well as supplement your income.



Despite the thriving e-commerce world, craft shows are still around and probably aren't going anywhere anytime soon. There's something so special about purchasing something directly from the artist who made it that's missing when you make an online purchase. Aside from helping makers grow their businesses and brands, craft shows offer creatives a chance to network in person that just can't be replaced by clicking the "buy now" button on a website. Craft shows foster the sense of community that the maker movement started with. If you've sold at a craft show before, you know what I mean. If you haven't, get ready. It can be an awesome experience.



Finding your footing and making the most out of craft shows requires knowledge, research, dedication, time and money. But if you're ready to build your business and brand by selling at craft shows, this course will help you make the most out of the adventure. In the years since I started my business I've sold my own handmade goods at over 200 craft shows/retail venues, have done several wholesale trade shows, had over 300 wholesale accounts and produced more than 50 craft shows and art shows. In other words, I have oodles of experience as both seller and craft show producer and I'm so excited to share everything I have learned with you!

Let's make it happen!

