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Make Money at Craft Shows: A Guide for Crafters
Russ Searle
Shirley Searle
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Three Stars (out of Five)

Many crafters wonder if it would be possible to make a living, or at least some extra cash, from selling their wares. But for people who've never sold at craft shows it can be difficult to know where to start or what they can do to ensure success.

Make Money at Craft Shows: A Guide for Crafters by Russ and Shirley Searle aims to provide crafters who are new to the world of sales with information and tips that will help them get started and be successful. Shirley Searle is a craft show retailer in Canada, and her husband has experience in retail sales and advertising. Their book is a good overview of what selling at shows entails, from ideas for setting up a booth to the nuts and bolts of surviving a day at the fair.

The book discusses checking out the competition and doing market research, applying for shows, setting up, selling work, personal attitude and health at shows, craft show etiquette, and the financial aspects of a successful craft business. While the authors present an overview of the process, they don't provide the details that crafters getting started selling their products might like to know. For instance, new sellers are probably most interested in the financial aspects—particularly determining the right price for their products—but the financial section of the book is only ten pages long.

The book notes that it is important for sellers to have a business plan, but doesn't provide a lot of detail about what the business plan should cover. And even if you have a plan, the authors say, it's likely to change as you actually work some shows. "Reality has a way of intruding with unexpected costs when you're starting any business venture," the authors write. That is true, and it would have been helpful if the authors had elaborated, giving some examples of unexpected costs or bumps in the road they encountered when starting their craft business.

Still, for people who are just looking for an introduction to the process to determine whether selling at craft shows is right for them, this book provides a fair amount of information that should help them decide if they would like to learn more.