Effective and dynamic sales skills take practice, like playing a musical instrument. Sales are always evolving, what worked last year most likely will not work in the future. Practice and training are required so sales are conducted at peak performance. Keeping up with sales and merchandising trends is the best way to secure a sustainable business. Sales venues are often very relaxed; this dynamic can result in many potential sales being lost. Laid back sales skills are a huge missed opportunity for vendors in a sales situation. By taking an active role in the sales process many more sales can be closed.

Selling is a language-based skill, an effective sales person knows how to use language, both verbal and body language, to get the results they want. Effectively using the four phases of a sale (with each customer) will increase profitability in art based businesses. Each phase must be completely resolved before moving to the next phase to insure the best sales results.

The GREETING phase: Greet customers quickly and with meaningful dialogue. It is part of an artists’ job to greet customers, or to hire someone to do so. Many sales are blown in the greeting phase. Ineffective questions like: “Can I help you?” are a perfect way to “blow” a potential sale. Greetings need to be open-ended and not possible to be answered with “NO”. I.E. “Are you looking for anything in particular?” A common and worst greeting of all time!

The PERMISSION phase: It is unlikely that a customer can be sold anything, until they have given the seller permission to talk to them. Creating an environment that encourages the customers’ permission is a skill that needs to be understood before effective selling can take place. Once a customer gives a seller permission, now the sale can begin. Learning how to get the customers permission is the objective of this phase.

The OBJECTION phase: This is the most critical phase of any sale, and most people in a sales situation do not know how to deal with customer objections. The Seller must uncover and solve the customer’s objections before a sale can be closed. If you ignore the objection phase many sales will be lost.

The CLOSING phase: Closing a sale is simply asking for the sale. It is easy to close a sale if you have completed the three phases above. The biggest problem with closing a sale is the objection phase has not been completely dealt with.
Dynamic Sales for Artists from Bruce Baker  www.bbakerinc.com

Sales Tips to close more sales:

The seller must take an active role in the sales process.
  - Greet customers effectively and use the four phases
  - Standing up and keeping busy are crucial steps in closing more sales

Use the senses when selling: Sight, Touch, Smell, Taste, and Sound
  - Use all the senses, they are allies in the sale, the more senses you involve the more you will sell.

Learn to articulate the benefit of what you create.
  - Benefit is the foundation of all sales, if the customer understands the benefits, the sale is easy
  - Functionality is more important now than ever

Project energy and enthusiasm about what you are selling!
  - Enthusiasm is contagious; creating excitement usually starts with the seller and spreads to the customers. They pick it up and spread it around.

Display effective body language.
  - Eye contact is key.
  - Hands are important in the sale, use them!
  - Avoid defensive postures like crossed arms.

Avoid Customer Turn off’s
  - Not noticing them, talking on cell phone, reading, eating in booth, messy or over crowded displays etc.

Concentrate on what works! Focus on the solutions not the problems

Make it exciting, and make it FUN. Fun SELLS!
Pricing Strategy

*my pricing strategy* outlined here is for mass produced items and may need to be adjusted for items that have a higher material cost or labor costs but the theory is always the same: you have to build a margin of profit into your pricing or you won’t have a profit!!!

My pricing formula:
Cost $ \times 3 = \text{wholesale price}$  \hspace{1cm} \text{wholesale price} \times 2 (or 2.2) = \text{retail price}

**Wholesale prices breakdown** to:
\begin{align*}
\text{1/3 cost} & \quad \text{1/3 overhead} & \quad \text{1/3 PROFIT}
\end{align*}

Most galleries I know mark up at least 2 times the wholesale cost—when I sell my items to a retail client I do the same to cover added expenses.

> "When it comes to custom projects – especially web orders - it’s important for me to quickly get a grasp of a client’s expectations. By requesting something visual to work from - a rough sketch, anything that will make sure I understand what they envision - I can give them a REALISTIC ballpark of budget and timeframe."

- Guido Schindler

www.schindlermetalworks.com
Pricing paper jewelry

I’m a chemistry doctor and I divide my time working as research at the University of Rochester and in my studio, where the favorite media to work is paper.

Paper is an easy access and affordable raw material. On the other hand, the technique I use (paper weaving) is rather time consuming. The combination of these two aspects make pricing my work quite a challenge.

Price perception depends on the customers:
Educated customers (collectors, contemporary craft lover, readers of specialized magazine, etc) perceive the price as right, they don’t discuss or comment it. In contrast, there is still a good fraction of customers not yet educated to art made of alternative materials especially low cost raw materials.
My approach in this case is to try to explain and spend time describing the work behind each piece, why I decided to work with a specific material, make them curious and aware of the ‘new’ directions in contemporary craft world.

At this point of my career paper artist I’m still try to find the right venue for my work, for this reason I have decided that for the next 2 or 3 years I’ll explore all the different options.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selling options (i.e. Ets)</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-line</td>
<td>• Inexpensive</td>
<td>• Broadness of the site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Help with SEO and online exposure</td>
<td>• Some galleries see it as competition</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reach a wide young audience</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Consignment (i.e. Galleries)</td>
<td>• Not time-consuming</td>
<td>• Keep track of inventory</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ownership of the work</td>
<td>• Not always easy to approach</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Team work (i.e. expert guidance)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale</td>
<td>• “Educated” customers</td>
<td>• Price managing (i.e. key and a half)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My price range is appealing</td>
<td>• No price control (i.e. discounts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sure money</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail (i.e. Craft shows)</td>
<td>• Direct interaction with customer</td>
<td>• Time out of the studio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Higher profit</td>
<td>• Theft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cash flow</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

No matter which is your choice be aware that you need to keep your pricing consistent for all you revenues.