SELLING ONLINE 101
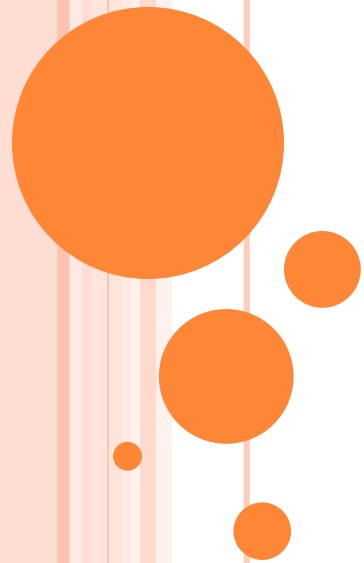
Day 1

Jillian O'Dwyer

Overview

- Day 1
  - Understanding Your Customer
  - Branding
  - Online Selling Platforms
  - Setting Up Your Shop

- Day 2
  - Search Engine Optimization
  - Social Media
  - Building Out Your Product Line

Understanding your Customer

Understanding Your Customer

- Drives How You Present Your Artwork
  - Lifestyle Photographs
  - Description Language
  - Tags

- Determines Where and How You Market Your Artwork

- Drives What Online Selling Platform You Use and What Art Shows You Do

- Helps You Expand Your Product Line

LEARNING ABOUT YOUR CUSTOMERS

- Who is most interested in your work?
  - Male/Female
  - Age Range
  - Etc
- Why are they buying?
  - Themselves?
  - Birthdays?
  - Wedding Gift?
- What words do they use to describe your work?
 - Comments at shows
  - Phrases in customer feedback

EXERCISE: WHO WOULD BUY THIS PLATE?

DESCRIBING YOUR CUSTOMER

- Think Back to the Plate From the Prior Slide and the Customer Characteristics
  - What occasions might this plate be purchased for? Is it likely to be purchased as a gift or personal use?
  - Where could this piece be used? Kitchen? Dining? Living Room Décor? Outdoors?
  - What uses could it have – include the obvious as well as the not so obvious?

- Based on Your Answers Put Together a Concise Customer Description
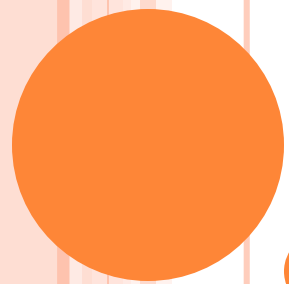
BRANDING

BRANDING

Definition: *The marketing practice of creating a name, symbol or design that identifies and differentiates a product from other products.*

ebay

amazon
Try Prime

Etsy

DEVIANT ART

BIG CARTEL

shopify

Branding 101 – Getting Started

- Write Your Artist Statement
  - Why do you create the work you make?

  - What inspires you?
    - A particular process?
    - A subject matter?
    - Something else?

  - Functional or Sculptural – Why?

  - How do your personal experiences factor into your work?

  - Themes to your work?

  - Factor in your target customer

EXAMPLES

- My approach to the items I make comes from my home, the all-time busy kitchen, the living room which is the living center of my life and the connection between these 2 spaces. My items are just like my home, aesthetic but simple, nice to look and to use.

- As I work at my wheel, I imagine my pots being used at a fancy dinner party with cake stands and flower vases decorating the table; or perhaps a favorite mug being filled with hot, steaming coffee or warm tea. My inspiration comes from nature, specifically flowers and the way their petals unfold and the infinite patterns they make. I always have a camera with me in case I see an interesting flower or beautiful bird.

BRANDING

- Website Headers

- Logo

- Business Card Design

- Tagline

EXERCISE - BRANDING

- Using Our Ideal Customer and Artist Statement Brainstorm:
  - Business (i.e. Shop) Names
  - Shop Tagline - (if needed)
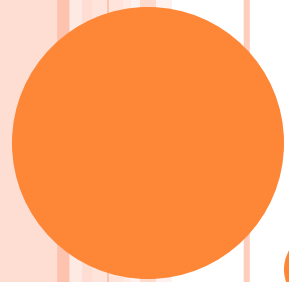 - Logo Design Ideas
  - Website Header Ideas

TOOLS TO CREATE LOGOS, HEADERS, ETC

- Requires Purchase
  - Adobe Photoshop
  - Adobe Illustrator
  - Microsoft PowerPoint

- Free Versions Available
  - PicMonkey.com
  - Fotor.com
  - Adobe – Creative Cloud

Let's Try It Out!

Online Selling Platforms

WHAT TO CONSIDER

- Your Branding Strategy

- Product Line
  - 2D or 3D?

- Your Comfort Level with Computers and/or Website Development

- Cost

- Seller's Tools and Support – Important or Not

WHAT TO CONSIDER – YOUR WEBSITE

Pros

- Ultimate Customization
  - More control over the look and feel of your shop
- Not Having to Manage Multiple Sites
- No Commission to Pay

Cons

- Security & Identify Theft Concerns
  - Avoid Using 3rd Party Interface
- Payment Acceptance Challenges
- Hidden Cost
  - 3rd Party Interface
  - Domain/Hosting Fees, etc
- Limited Seller Support Tools

WHAT TO CONSIDER – 3RD PARTY PLATFORMS

Pros

- Seller Tools & Support
  - Ease of Use Templates
  - Mobile App Options
  - Tutorial Availability
  - Discounts on Shipping, etc
- Marketing Support
  - Existing Customers
- No Risk for Security or Identify Theft – Platform Owns Risk

Cons

- Cost vs Expected Sales
  - Listing Fees, Monthly Fees, Sales Commission %
- Branding Strategy
  - Site's may differ from yours
- Limits to Customization

KEY SHOP PREPARATION

- About Page
- Product Photos
- Product Descriptions
- Policies
- Technical Stuff

ABOUT PAGE

- Polished Version of Your Artist's Statement

- Behind the Scenes Photos
  - You – In the Studio Working
  - Work in Various Stages of Progress
  - Other Action Shots – Booth Display, etc

- Things to Know
  - Specific Set-up for Your Chosen Platform
  - Character Count Allowed
  - Photo Upload Capabilities
  - Photo Size – See Photo Editing Options for Tools to Resize

PRODUCT PHOTOS

- Taking the Photo
  - Natural Light
  - Neutral Background
  - No Flash
  - Crop Later
  - Beware of Strange Angles
  - Largest Sized Resolution Possible

- What Photos to Take
  - Photograph ALL Sides, Top & Bottom
  - Life Style Shots
  - Remember Your Brand Strategy!!!

PRODUCT PHOTOS – TECHNICAL TIPS

- Research the Exact Dimensions Needed for Photos for the Website/Platform You'll be Using

- Take Time to Set-up a Consistent, Well-Lit Photography Backdrop

- Find a Photo Editing Software that You are Comfortable Using for Cropping, Resizing and Other Adjustments
  - Picmonkey.com
  - Fotor.com

PRODUCT DESCRIPTIONS

- Think Like a Customer – If You Were Buying it What Do You Want to Know?
  - Dimensions and Size Comparisons
  - Possible Uses
  - Food, Microwave or Dishwasher Safe?
  - NO Assumptions

- Use Target Customer Language When Writing the Description

- Tell the Story Behind the Piece

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION TAGS

- What Are Tags?

- Why Do You Need Them?

- How to Incorporate Them Into Your Product Description
  - Can be written as obvious tags – similar to our example descriptions
  - Can we worked into the text of your description – big ones should be contained in the first two to three sentences of your description.

POLICIES

- Often Overlooked

- Can Protect You From Customer Disputes Down the Road

- Better to Determine Up Front vs In the Heat of the Moment When Something Goes Wrong

PAYMENT

- What Forms of Payment Will You Accept?
  - Credit Card
  - PayPal
  - Money Order
  - Personal Check

- Are There Terms Under Which You'll Accept Certain Forms of Payment?
  - Ex: Money Order Must Be Received and Clear Before Shipment

Shipping Policy

- What Shipping Provider Will You Use?
    - USPS, UPS, FedEx, Other?

- What Shipping Speed Will You Use?
    - Express, Standard, Etc

- What Will You Do If Something Gets Damaged?

- What Will You Do If a Package Gets Lost?
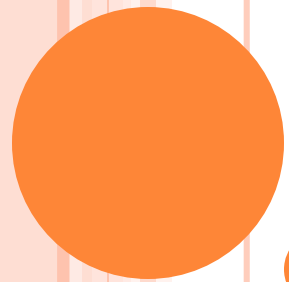
REFUND AND RETURN POLICY

- Under What Circumstances Will a Refund Be Issued?

- Will the Item Need to Be Returned First?

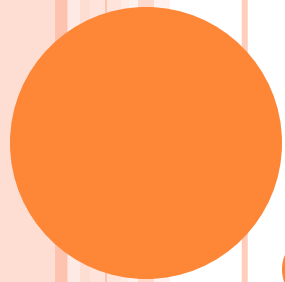- Are There Exceptions for Wholesale or Custom Orders?

Custom Order/Wholesale Order Policy

- What Process Will You Follow for Custom and/or Wholesale Orders?

- Do Any Other Policies Get Modified for Custom or Wholesale Orders?

QUESTIONS – END OF DAY ONE

SELLING ONLINE 101

Day 2

Jillian O'Dwyer

Overview

- Day 1
  - Understanding Your Customer
  - Branding
  - Online Selling Platforms
  - Setting Up Your Shop

- Day 2
  - Search Engine Optimization
  - Social Media
  - Building Out Your Product Line

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

WHAT IS SEO?

Definition: *the process of affecting the visibility of a website or a web page in a web search engine's unpaid results – often referred to as "organic" results. - Wikipedia*

WHY DO WE CARE?

- The earlier (or higher ranked) a site is on a search engine the more frequently it gets visited and visitors equal potential customers.

- As a marketing strategy, SEO takes into account how the search engine algorithms work and uses that knowledge to advantage

- SEO Optimization is a free way to maximize your shop's exposure in both general search engines like google, yahoo, etc as well as specific engines like Etsy, Amazon, Shopping, etc.

How Do the Algorithms Work?

- Indexed Websites

- Inbound Links

- Content, Content, Content
  - Keywords or Tags
  - Product Descriptions

- Quantity or Size of Website

INDEXED WEBSITES

- Basically Website Owners Ask Search Engines to Send their Spiders Crawling Through Their Site
  - If the spiders don't come searching – you can't get found, period.

- Yahoo, Google and Bing all have free, manual processes to get your site indexed

- Not required for 3rd Party Platform Shops (ex. Amazon, Etsy) – Already Done by Administrators
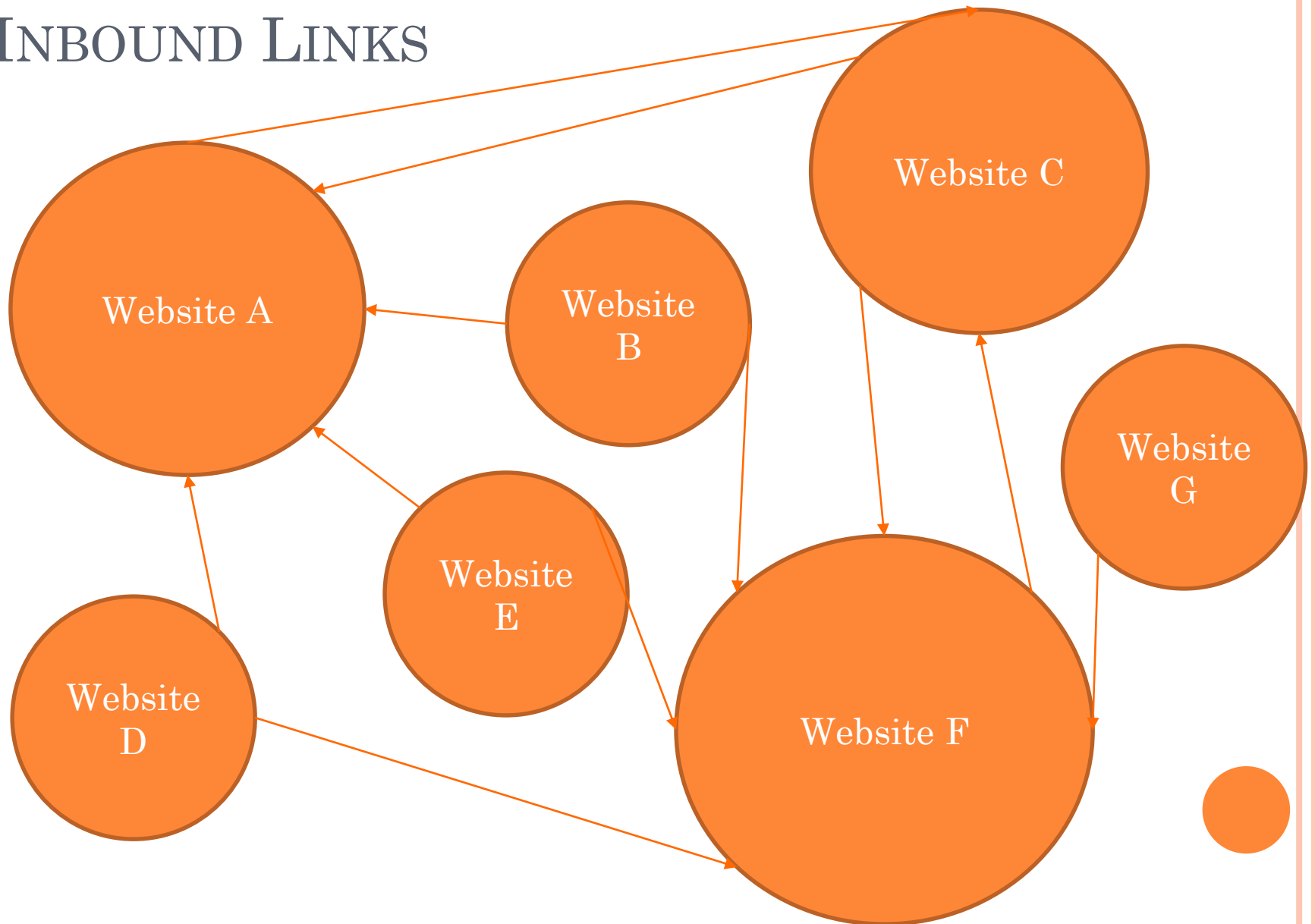
Inbound Links

- When Other Sites Link to Your Website

- The More Inbound Links a Website Has the More Important it Looks to the Search Engine Spiders and Therefore it Gains Higher Ranking in Search Results

- You Can Create Inbound Links Yourself and/or Partner with Others to Gain Inbound Links

INBOUND LINKS

CREATING INBOUND LINKS – YOUR WEBSITE

- Any time you embed a hyperlink to your shop or a product in your shop you create an inbound link from your website to your shop's site.

- Portfolio or Gallery pages are easy ways to create hyperlinks to your shop site.

- Able to add hyperlinks to photos on your site

- More on effective ways to do this when we get to Content

CREATING INBOUND LINKS - BLOGS

- Blogs are the Media of the Internet Age

- A Popular Blog Feature Can Give Your Shop
  - An Instant Boost in SEO Clout
  - Instant Up Tick in Visitors Direct from the Blog
  - Maintains Exposure Long After the Blog Post is Written
  - It's a Little Bit Like a Celebrity Endorsement

- May Need to Pay for the Feature

Getting Featured on Blogs

- Do Your Research – Seek Out Blogs Writing to Your Target Customer

- Spend a Little Time Reading Past Blog Posts to Be Familiar with the Blogger's Style and How it Fits with Your Work

- Check their Ranking (aka Audience Reach) on Alexia.com

- Draft a Personalized Email to the Blogger - Include
  - Photos of Your Work
  - Offer to Send a Sample For Them to Review

CREATING INBOUND LINKS - PINTEREST

- A Place Where People Can Pin (Save) Ideas Grouped into Boards (Think Folder) for Later Use

- Very Visual – Need to Have a Great Photo to Pin

- Why It Helps Your Shop
  - Each "Pin" is an Inbound Link to the Web Page
  - Each Liked Pin or Re-Pinned Pin Provides Further Validation of the Important of the Linked Web Page to the Search Engines
  - Well Curated Boards Get More Followers and More Followers Increase Likelihood of Re-Pins – Increasing SEO Clout

Effective Marketing on Pinterest

- Don't Only Pin Your Own Work/Website

- Create Boards Around a Topic
  - 80% Other Pins, 20% Your Pins

- Don't Lump All of Your Work in One Board – Create and Curate Several That Make Sense

- Build Out Your Profile
  - Create Inspiration Boards
  - Personal Boards
  - Its Also a Social Media Platform

CREATING INBOUND LINKS - STUMBLEUPON

- A Place for People to Thumbs Up (Like) Web Pages with the Goal of Helping Other Users Randomly Find Great Websites

- Users See the Entire Web Page When Stumbling Not Just a Single Representative Photo

- Why It Helps Your Shop
  - A Stumble or Thumbs Up is an Inbound Link
  - Users Follow Broad Topics and Stumble within them to Randomly See Your Website
  - If They Thumbs Up a Randomly Found Site – It Strengths Your Link Making It More Likely to be Found Conversely a Thumbs Down Makes it Less Likely to be Found by Other Users

Effective Marketing on StumbleUpon

- Upmost Importance to Categorize the Page Your Stumbling in a Way that Followers of that Topic Will Consider It a Good Find

- It is a Social Media Platform – Can Follower Other Users and Can Invite Other Users to Thumbs Up a Particular Web Page
  - The More Stumbles or Thumbs Up a Page Gets the Better, so its Good to Build a Network of People to Help you Stumble

- Will Need to Periodically Use the Random Stumble Function Yourself and Not Just Thumbs Up Pages

CONTENT IS KING

- Content is the Writing Found on a Website

- Search Engines Like Content Because it Gives Them Something to Actually Search or Crawl

- The Goal for a Search Engine is to Produce RELEVANT Results for Its Visitors and Content Helps Them Fine Tune Relevancy

- Their Spiders Can't Read Pictures - Only Words

- Keywords – Or Product Tags – Need to Be Found

Revisiting Product Descriptions

- Think Like a Customer – Use Words They Would Use Not only to Resonate, but to be Found

- The Two Most Critical Parts of Your Product Description:
  - Title of the Product – Don't Just Use an Artwork Title Include Keywords
  - First 2 to 3 Sentences of the Description Need to Be Important Keyword Heavy

- The Rest of the Description Should have Keywords Sprinkled Throughout
  - Don't Go Overboard – Not as Interesting to Read and Search Engines Will Think You're Writing Solely for Them vs True Content

Keyword/Product Tag Research

- Think Like a Customer
  - Brainstorm Possible Descriptors for Each Product
  - Brainstorm Possible Uses and/or Events
  - Leverage Customer Feedback for Words They Use

- Try Out Your List of Keywords Both Within the Platform Chosen (ex Amazon, etc) and General Search Engines
  - Did the Words You Picked Work?
  - What Types of Things Did You Find?

Keyword/Tag Measures of Success

- Shop and/or Website Stats Page Will Tell You How You're Being Found Online
  - Did the Words You Expect Show Up?
  - Which Words Show Up the Most Frequently?

- You Can Find Yourself and/or Similar Products Targeting the Same Customer Group
  - You May Not Find Yourself Immediately as You Build Your SEO Clout, so Look as Much for Yourself as Similar Shops and Websites Especially in the Beginning

- First Page Search Results is the Goal

MAKING THE CASE FOR STARTING A BLOG

- You Can Never, Ever Have Too Much Content (SEO)

- People Don't Buy What You Do, They Buy Why You Do It

- Inbound Links Opportunities Galore! (SEO)

- Quantity Matters (SEO)

- Fresh, New Reasons to Reach Out to Fans on Social Media

WHAT SHOULD YOU POST?

- Think First – How Will This Help My Customers
  - People Buy From Those They Know and Trust – First Gain Trust Then Sales

- Let Me Take You Through a Brainstorming Activity
  - Step 1 – Collect as Many FAQs As Possible
  - Step 2 – Prioritize the Questions In Order of Importance
  - Step 3 – Build Your Content Title List – Question by Question Determine Titles
  - Step 4 – Decide on a Content Type – Video, Pictures, Regular Blog Post, etc
  - Step 5 – Create a Publishing Calendar
  - Repeat As Needed

WHAT DO I POST?

- Inspiration Posts
  - Talks on Creativity that Resonate with Me
  - Artists' Work that Inspires Me
  - Other Things that Inspire Me – I Write A LOT About my Texture Tools!
- My Work
  - Either The Story Behind the Piece and/or How I View and/or Think About a Particular Piece
- Upcoming Events and Shows
- Clay Making Tips – How Tos
- Field Trips to Gather Texture Tools, etc

Blog Post Tips for Success

- Use Pictures – We're Selling Art
  - Can't Pin on Pinterest Without a Picture!

- Definitely Use Your Words
  - Search Engines Need Words to Crawl

- Keep it Short and Simple
  - 300 to 500 Words Maximum

- Plan Out Both Your Posts and When to Write Them
  - Write Them in Advance and Publish Them Later

- Cross Links Between Posts Also Strengthen a Site's SEO Clout

Blog Post Tips for Success

- Use Your Own Voice – Write How You Talk

- The First 2 to 3 Sentences Need to Contain Your Most Important Keywords – Sprinkle the Rest Throughout Your Post

- Choose Your Keywords for Each Post Up Front – Then Write
  - Its Okay if Your Keywords Vary by Blog Post

- Don't Get Caught Up in Perfect – Its More Important to Start Then to Have the Best Posts
  - Over Time Your Writing Will Improve the More You Practice

CONTENT IS KING AND QUANTITY MATTERS

- More Pages = More Attention From the Spiders

- Not Only Does Quantity Provide More Content to Crawl Through, It Signals a More Mature Website

- How Do You Build Quantity?
  - In Your Shop = The More Products Listed (Each Product Typically Has Its Own Page)
  - On Your Blog = The More Posts Published (Each Has Its Own Page)
  - Also Important to Note – Cross Links Between Pages in the Same Website Also Strengthen a Site's SEO Clout

SEO WHERE TO START & THEN BUILD

- Focus First on Your Shop
  - Strong Keywords/Tags in Product Descriptions
  - List as Many Products as You Can to Build Quantity
  - Pick One Inbound Link Method and Do It Well

- Next Refine Your Shop
  - Add in Additional Inbound Link Methods
  - Set-up Times to Regularly Review and Improve Your Keywords as You Get Shop Stats and Customer Feedback

- Then Expand
  - Start a Blog for Additional Inbound Links to Your Shop
  - Carry Over All Inbound Link Methods to Your Blog too!
  - Be Sure to Index Your Blog Site
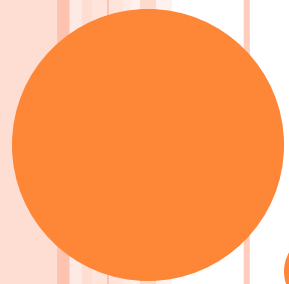
Social Media

SOCIAL MEDIA - FACEBOOK

- Social Networking Site for Friends and Social Acquaintances

- Three Types of Pages
  - Personal Profile
    - For Friends, Family, Social Acquaintances and the sharing of personal information
    - Two Way Exchange of Information
  - Business Page
    - For Business Use – Does not require you to see the personal information of the person liking the page
    - One Way Exchange of Information
  - Groups
    - Created Around Shared Interests, Can be Public or Private
    - Multiple Way Exchange of Information

Social Media – Facebook Business Page

- Preferred – No Need For Customers to Feel They Have to Share Personal Information with Page Owner

- Successful Posts Contain Photographs and/or Links
  - Need to Catch People's Eye in Their Newsfeed
  - More Engaging – Invite Post Likes, Comments & Shares

- Algorithms and Reaching Your Followers
  - The More People Interact with Your Page, The More Likely They will continue to See Your Posts
  - Good Quality Photographs and Content Are Key
  - Can Pay to Reach Both Existing and Potential Followers

Social Media – Facebook Business Page

- Features Great For Businesses
  - Can Set-up Multiple People to Assist in Posting to the Page – Called Page Roles and Can Customize Access
  - Informative Stats Page Covering Engagement, Reach, and Demographics as well as Popular Posts
  - Lots of Tools to Analyze What is Working and What Isn't Working
  - Ability to Write and Schedule Posts in Advance

- Today Typically Reaches Generation X and Older Populations
  - Many Younger Social Media Users Have Switched to Instagram and Snapchat

- Let's Check It Out

Social Media - Instagram

- Mobile Drive Social Networking Site

- Viewable on Computers, But Must Use Phone and/or Tablet App to Post

- Picture Based and Super, Super Important to Post Quality Photographs

- Others Can Follow You Without You Following Them

- Accounts Can Be Public or Private – Need to be Public for Business and Be Found Using Hashtags

Social Media - Instagram

- Using Hashtags
  - Help You Get Found
  - Great from a Business Perspective - Don't Need to Follow You To Find Your Posts
  - Can Do Research to Discover Popular Hashtags to Gain More Followers

- Limited Ability to Share Account Access – Need to Share Account's Password

- Let's Check It Out

Social Media - Twitter

- Social Networking Site that is Very News, In the Moment Driven
  - Tweets Older Than 20 Minutes Generally Are Considered Old News

- While You Can Post Pictures and Write Any Length You Wish – The Standard, 140-character Tweet is the Best Route

- Hashtags Are a Must – Don't Need Followers to Be Found with the Right Hashtags

- Let's Check it Out!

Social Media - YouTube

- Social Network to Share Videos of All Lengths and Topics
  - Video is Fast Becoming the Newest, Most Popular Way to Be Found Online – Other Sites are Joining In – Periscope, Facebook Live, Instagram Stories, etc
  - We've All Found Tutorials on YouTube

- Can Be Done with a Smart Phone – Just Need a Tripod and Potentially a Microphone Set-up

- Things to Video – Tutorials, Behind the Scenes, Artist Statements, etc

- Let's Check It Out

SOCIAL MEDIA – OTHER, NEWER OPTIONS

- Periscope
  - Twitter's Answer to the Trend Towards Video
  - Post Live Video and Get Comments and Likes Live as Well
  - Most Popular of All the New Video Options
 - Mobile App Driven

- Snapchat
  - Mobile App Driven, Time Limited Photo and Video Sharing Network
  - Posts Only Go to Followers and Disappear a Few Seconds After Being Viewed

SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS

- Pick the Platforms You Are Most Comfortable Using and Interacting On
  - If You Don't Like Using a Platform, Then You Won't Keep it Up – Might as Well Not Start

- Be Careful of the Amount of Personal Information You Share on Business Geared Accounts
  - You Want to Be Personal, but Your Followers Are Not Your Friends – They Are Customers
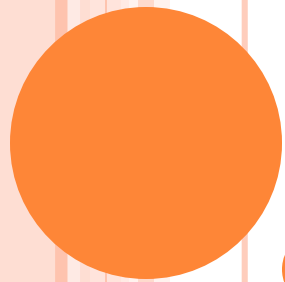
BONUS!

Email Newsletters

EMAIL NEWSLETTER

- Provide Regular Updates to Your Fans Who Aren't On Social Media and/or Typically Not Online

- Variety of Companies Provide Email Marketing Services and List Management
  - My Pick is Mailchimp – Free for Basic Use
  - Services are Useful Because Spam Rules Govern Permission to Market Via Email

- Typically Limited to Once a Month – Provides a Snapshot that Customers and Fans Find Useful

Email Newsletters - Spam Rules

- Must Have Permission
  - Use Service's Opt-In Forms for Online Sign-ups
  - Get Email Addresses in Writing at Events, Date Sign-up Sheets and SAVE!!!
  - Need to Email List Regularly – If too Much Time Passes Between Emails, Can Argue Permission is No Longer Assumable

- Must Respect Withdrawal of Permission
  - Someone Unsubscribes – Can't Keep Emailing Them
  - Use Services to Track Automatically

- Let's Check It Out!

Building Out A Product Line

WHAT IS A PRODUCT LINE?

- A Set of Products Meant to Be Sold Together or in a Series
  - Classic Example is a Dinnerware Set

- Why Do You Want to Think About Grouping Your Work into Product Lines?
  - Presents a Well Thought Out Grouping to Customers
  - Offers Up Ideas and Products They May Not Have Considered Purchasing
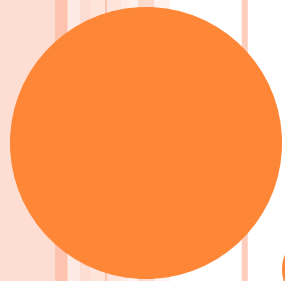 - Collectable – Encourages Additional and Future Sales

PRODUCT LINE

Pros

- Encourages Additional Sales
- Makes Marketing Easier
- Standardizes Sizes, Surface Finishes
- Streamlines Updating Shop
- Prepares for Wholesale Orders

Cons

- Less Room for Variability and Experimentation
- May Not Enjoy Production Work

Bonus

Pricing

PRICING FACTORS

- Materials
  - Raw Materials Used in the Creation of Each Piece
  - Be Sure to Break Down Cost to the Correct Unit
    - Ex: 1 lb of Clay = $x

- Labor
  - Time to Create Each Piece
  - Remember to Pay Yourself a Reasonable Rate

Pricing Factors

- Expenses
  - Things Like Studio Space Rent, Packaging, Shop Fees, etc
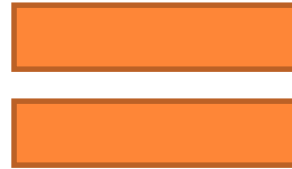 - Add it All Up and Then Work Out a Daily or Hourly Rate

- Profit
  - This is Up to You and Where You Want to Go With Your Business
  - Keep in Mind the Rest of this List is Cost, Not Profit

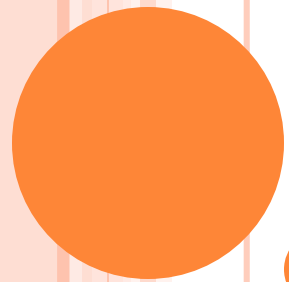# Pricing Formula

Materials + Labor + Expenses + Profit

=

Wholesale Price

× 2 =

Retail Price

QUESTIONS – END OF DAY TWO