



Always do your best.

*What you plant now,
you will harvest later.*

EXPERIENCE IS THE BEST TEACHER



What good is knowledge if you don't share it. I put this booklet together to share some things I have learned as a show organizer and promoter since my first event in 1981. I love success and I am sure you do to. So, I hope these ideas will inspire to reach for the stars!

My flagship event is Christmas City. My dream began in 1983 as an outdoor show under the Rice Pavilion in Gulfport with 35 booths. In the second year an exhibitor said, "Ron, you need to move to the Coliseum. You have outgrown this place." I moved and today, Christmas City is one of the longest running events inside Mississippi Coast Coliseum and Convention Center in Biloxi, Mississippi. Christmas City did go on the road for a short stint in the New Orleans Superdome, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, Mobile, Alabama and Pensacola Florida. But it was Biloxi that drew the large crowds. So, I decided to put all my energy into the Biloxi show.

Much of the success of Christmas City is the variety of gifts. From handcrafted to the most unusual and unique gifts anywhere. Christmas City provides an atmosphere that has shoppers reliving the memories from their childhood. Christmas is the place where friends and family meet and create memories. In 2016 we added Shoppers Paradise. Adults only and it is a very popular part of Christmas City.



YOU ARE AN ENTREPRENEUR

Exhibitors are entrepreneurs. You are going to shows to sell your products, services and most of all yourself. I have met thousands of exhibitors with incredible stories of success. Every one of them finding out that you do not always hit home runs. In fact, they sometimes strike out, but walk away determined to learn from their mistakes.

Life is a constant learning experience. I am sure you have heard the saying, "If it was easy, everyone would be doing it!" Not everyone can do it, but you can, and I want to help you achieve greater success! If you were not a success-oriented person, you would have never started your business. I want to encourage you to follow your dreams, never give up and be thankful each day for the opportunity to do what you love to do.

You are your own company, so always invest in learning, asking lots of questions, reading success blogs and always maintain a positive attitude, especially when you hit a slump. Some of my greatest ideas came after failure.

I want to share with you some traits of successful exhibitors that I have met over the past 35 years. Success means they consistently turn in significant sales and get many leads and travel the country living their dreams!

DO WHAT YOU LOVE AND LOVE WHAT YOU DO

They love what they do and do what they love! The minute I meet them, I can feel the love of what they do and positive vibes. These vendors prepare themselves mentally by being focused on the task at hand, which is to make as much money as they can. They understand that risk is involved and that they have no control over the customer spending money with them. However, what they can control is their attitude.

Do not prejudge the customer. You will meet some customers who look and talk like they could buy everything in your booth, but after much time spent with them, they just walk away. They will get another customer that doesn't look or talk like they have much money, and that customer will buy a big chunk of their inventory.

Produce a promotional video. It is so simple with today's technology to create a promotional video. Most phones have a camera that will allow you to film your items and booth and even a personal message from you. You can share your videos through social media and display them on your website year-round. You can promote your participation in upcoming events, causing customers to come looking for you. While you are at the show, video your booth and items and post it on your social media. Invite your followers to come shop with you!

HAVE AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Capture your customer's contact information. One suggestion is to let customers register with their email for a gift giveaway at the end of the show. Make sure you tell them that they do not have to be present to win. Display the gift and get their contact information. Create an email data base and keep in touch with your customers. We use a company called MailChimp.

Your square footage is money. The number one complaint I hear from new exhibitors at the end of my show is, "I didn't have enough space." I see so many customers at our show pass by booths because they can't get in. You want to make it easy for customers to stop by and shop. They might say they will come back, but most won't. Here is a math formula for you. Ten customers in your booth for an average of two minutes is equal to potentially 300 customers per hour. Multiply that by the number of show hours, and that is potentially the customer count you to who you could be selling your product: Larger booths create greater sales. The more space an exhibitor takes, the smaller number of exhibitors are at the show. Your competition is smaller.

Check out the show organizer/promoter. Make sure they have a track record. Look for a track record and check out their website or social media feed. Ask other vendors.

PROMOTE, PROMOTE AND PROMOTE!

Websites are important in showing off what you do. Think of this as your storefront, which allows customers to engage with you. Your website should have product information, customer reviews, pictures, opportunities to sign up for a newsletter, and promote all the shows you will be attending and online ordering. We found out with COVID-19 that people that had an online presence could sell products in the comfort of their home.

Wearing a shirt with your logo or company name gives you additional branding. I believe in the philosophy of promote, promote, and promote, whether at a show or at the local grocery store. Make sure your business cards list your website, email address, and a daytime phone number. Vista Print is an excellent company to order business cards from, as they usually offer generous first-time discounts with a good product and exceptional pricing. Also, check out an online platform called Canva. They have incredible templates to design business cards, and their online software site is free. When you're at a show, engage, and talk to the customers.

Draw people into your booth and smile, make them feel welcome! Give them a reason to come in, look, and visit. Consider keeping a candy dish to welcome your customers. Shows can be exhausting, but don't nap in your booth. (I have passed booths where the exhibitor is snoozing!) Get up, walk around, or go outside for some fresh air.

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

Social Media is the way to get the word out. Keep it up to date, post informative things, and engage your potential customer and tell them to look for you at the show so they can register for a door prize! If you are an older individual and not sure about social media, ask your children or grandchildren to help you.

Make sure you can process credit cards. People don't carry large amounts of cash. The Square is a quite simple thing to use, their rates are fair, and customers can be emailed a receipt on the spot. Best of all, your money goes straight into your checking account.

Consider putting a "Thank you for your purchase" message on the backside of your business card. If you have the budget, create some inexpensive bags with your company and contact info on them. You could even have some canvas or plastic promo bags made up and sell them inexpensively or give them away for free with a purchase of \$50.00 or more. (You set the price.)

Your booth design is particularly important. Choose a color scheme that accents your items and be sure to steam or press the wrinkles from your table covers. We hear conversations a lot from customers who comment to each other, "Did you see that booth over there? It was so beautiful. It just made me want to buy something!"

SHOW CHECKLIST

Don't Forget

- Show Info & Directions
- Tax Info & Business License
- Key to Cash Box
- Hand truck to move everything

Table Set-Up

- Tables & Coverings
- Display Items & Decorations
- Company Banner or Sign
- Business Cards
- Merchandise
- Display Lighting

Sales Items

- Cash Box with Change
- Credit Card Swiper
- Phone or Tablet
- Receipt Book
- Shopping Bags & Tissue Paper
- Extra Price Tags

Tools

- Extra Pens, Sharpies
- Scissors
- Trash Bags
- Tools to repair product/display
- Masking & Duct Tape
- Extension Cords

Personal Items

- Chairs
- Cooler with Drinks
- Snacks, Lunch
- Mask or Face Shield
- Hand Sanitizer
- Tylenol, Band Aids, etc
- Paper Towels, Tissues
- Sweater or Jacket

Outdoor Shows Only

- Tent
- Tent Weights or Stakes
- Fan
- Tarps in case of rain
- Sunblock & Bug Repellant

When you are the best you can be, good things happen!

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

I want to encourage you to follow your dreams. Never give up and be thankful each day for the opportunity to do what you love to do. I know a lot of people who have retired to the islands of regrets; would have, could have and should have.

My faith guides me. God knows my plans and I trust Him with all my heart and soul to unveil my purpose in life one day at a time. God has never failed me. When life brings you junk and unexpected situations, turn to God. God loves you so much that He came in the person of Jesus so you could have a personal relationship with Him. God loves you! God has a plan for you and God will never leave you or forsake you. Take time to tell the people in your life how much you love them and forgive those who have wronged you. Life is short and never forget to stop and smell the roses. If it doesn't honor God, I don't do it. Always invest in learning, asking lots of questions, and most of all draw near to God and He will draw near to you! You can win your race if you NEVER QUIT! - Ron Meyers

"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,." — Colossians 3:23

"'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future. '" — Jeremiah 29:11.