Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Outreach Programs

[www.tsbvi.edu](http://www.tsbvi.edu) | 512-454-8631| 1100 W. 45th St. | Austin, TX 78756

The Business Side of Making

Holly Cooper, Ph.D. TSBVI Outreach Deafblind Early Childhood Specialist

## Quick Check List

* Get a Tax I.D. number, pay sales tax quarterly
* Report earnings on income taxes
* Equipment and supplies are exempt from sales tax
* Keep good records so you know what you’ve spent, what you’ve earned
* Don’t do it if you don’t enjoy it, it’s a lot of work!

*Show an etsy shop  
shops by people with disabilities:*

*Macon Resources Decatur Illinois*

*Recreate Project Denver Colorado*

*UCPRI United Cerebral Palsy Rhode Island*

## Selling On Line

Pros of on line selling of your products through a craft selling site

* Low outlay of money for initial expenses
* Easy to keep up with sales, leaves a digital trail of records
* Less manual labor
* You don’t have to set up a whole website yourself, but you will get a web address you can put on a business card or label for follow –up sales
* the website has an integrated shopping cart to accept credit, debit or paypal payments
* the site may drive traffic to your on line shop with browsers
* the site sends an email notice when you have a sale, and lets you correspond with buyers through their site
* Etsy has lots of good instructions, tutorials, blogs and information to help with starting a small business.

Cons of selling on line

* Hard to get noticed in a busy web environment. Etsy has millions of listings
* Etsy is now letting re-sellers and mass manufacturers list items so it’s not all hand made. It’s less trendy and fewer new people are coming to the site to shop

## Selling Live at Booths, Farmer’s Markets, Craft Shows

### Pros for Selling at a Farmer’s Market or Show:

* Booth space may be fairly cheap at outdoor markets
* Customers and browsers will see your products and you will have exposure to impulse buyers and repeat customers
* You may sell a lot of products in a short time
* If you have a seasonal product, for instance something that appeals to people for Christmas, you can prepare and sell a lot in a targeted sale
* Small sales such as church Christmas bazaars may not attract a large crowd, but if it is your family’s own church it is a way to be visible both socially and as a business, you may sell a lot for the effort, and it is usually low cost for the space.
* It can be an enjoyable social experience

### Cons for a Farmer’s Market or Show:

* May be outdoors
* Will charge a fee for space or a commission
* You will have to supply all your own materials and equipment, so there may be a considerable outlay of money
* Some are managed by volunteers, so you have to be patient with the management, and the quality of management varies widely
* Most are outdoors, you will have to cope with the weather. Usually you will need a shade tent with weights to keep it from blowing away and to help define your space.
* You will usually need 2 able-bodied adults or willing teenagers to haul your products from the car to your selling space. If outdoors, they will have to help you set up the tent. You will also need help to take down.
* Someone must be at the booth at all times to be ready for sales. Think ahead about bathroom breaks. It’s best to bring your own lunch and cold drinks. Watch the money and the products for theft!

*Show cash box and supplies*

### Equipment and Supplies you need to sell at shows

Depending if you are outdoors or indoors, your needs may differ

* Know about how sales are handled: do you take cash only? Checks? Card purchases can be handled with phone apps and a small scanner like the Square
* Shade tent, weights
* Stool/chair for the seller(s)
* Table(s), table covering
* Display racks, shelves or trays
* Labels, price tags, signs
* Lighting if indoors
* A power source, or pay an additional fee for power if needed
* Cash box, paper receipts, business cards
* Packaging, shopping bags

### Selling Through a Store or Antique or Craft Mall

Antique/Craft malls or shops sell on commission, will take a larger cut, as much as 40 to 50% but you don’t have to be there in person or worry about credit card purchases and you will have browsing customers who will buy on impulse.

## Craft Selling Websites

### Etsy <https://www.etsy.com/>

Pros: well known, lots of user support including tutorials, blogs, data, etc.  
Cons: large, get lost in the crowd, not always easy to search for shops/people

Originally allowed makers only and re-sellers of vintage items.   
Now allows manufacturers and resellers.

### Zibbet <https://www.zibbet.com/>

Makers only, can copy listings from your etsy store

Costs: Free for 10 listings, $10/month for more

Handmade artists

Everything must be handmade. No listing fee but $5/month subscriptions

### UncommonGoods <http://www.uncommongoods.com/>

A site that sells some hand-made some other items. You don’t set up your own store, but you submit items to them and they decide if they will list them. Like a juried or curated show.

### Aftcra <http://www.aftcra.com/>

High quality, 7% fee on all sales goes to site.

### Supermarket [www.supermarkethq.com](http://www.supermarkethq.com)

High traffic, high quality, juried/curated

### Hyena Cart <http://hyenacart.com/>

Crafts which are eco-conscious. Many products aimed at young parents of babies and young children.

Auction site, not fixed prices. No listing or selling fees. $10 initial set up fee, $5/month subscription

*Show my Etsy shop, show template for how to create a shop page.*

## Photos

Take good quality, high resolution photos. Using a good smartphone is OK. Be aware of lighting, shadows, background, and overall quality.

* Background: neutral, good contrast with the product, plain
* Setting and accessories can add atmosphere or a theme
* Props can create a theme and convey a message

Setting: If your product is food, a kitchen or serving area is good.

If your product is a decorative accessory for the home, think about styles such as modern, country, vinage/antique. You can just use your own home, a hearth, dining table, coffee table, etc.

Props: can convey a seasonal theme such as Christmas, Valentine’s Day, Halloween. They can also be used for a size comparison. A simple ruler is good if the main message is about size, but a comparison object such as a coin or coffee mug can be more interesting. Some good sources for props:

* Objects around the house
* Thrift stores
* Garage sales
* Discount stores
* Kitchen wholesale

Unless your product is flat like a photo or painting, it’s a good idea to take pictures from at least 2 different angles.

## Written Description

Read some samples for good ideas. Your description should include:

* Size
* How many items are included in the purchase
* Materials
* Relevant details

Your description can include:

* Creative descriptions about uses for the item
* Eco-friendly, recycled, organically grown
* Information about the seller (disability, why they chose this product to make, etc.)
* Fanciful, creative or romantic descriptions of the product and it’s purpose

Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired

Outreach Programs



Figure TSBVI logo.