



## These notes accompany the Midwest Penturners Gathering Virtual Symposium of April, 2021.

### I. Choice of Shows

- 1) Flea markets are not suitable. Mainly for used items or knock-offs. Prices are often bargained between seller and customer.
- 2) Juried shows require proof of your handmade status and quality before acceptance. Audience is willing to pay for handmade quality items.
- 3) Church & School bazaars are often social events for the organization members.
- 4) Size of audience should be 1500 or more
- 5) Audience Fatigue can occur if the customer base is substantially the same year after year. Pens are mostly not repeat purchases.

### II. Differences Between Outdoor and Indoor (Figures 1A-1D, Figures 2A-2C)

- 1) Outdoors
  - a. Plan for wind and rain and heat
  - b. Anchor canopy. 160lbs usually required, but 240lbs is better. Anchor at each corner plus center of sides.
  - c. Canopy must have four sides because of weather and overnight covering.
  - d. Take extra shirt and maybe shorts for change due to heat and perspiration
  - e. Take sunscreen and insect repellent
  - f. Take cooler with lots of ice & water or other beverages. Avoid caffeine in hot weather.
  - g. Hats are good, as are cool scarves
  - h. Use battery operated fans, rechargeable preferred.
  - i. Take credit cards via cellphone. Wi-Fi will not be available
  - j. Or use cellphone as Wi-Fi hotspot for iPad POS if your plan allows that. Make sure both iPad and cellphone have constant power.
  - k. Lighting is ineffective under daylight conditions
  - l. Don't use a lot of free standing signs on tables. Wind will knock them down.
  - m. Think about how everything in your booth will react to wind, rain, heat and plan accordingly.
- 2) Indoors
  - a. WiFi most likely available, but check beforehand
  - b. Consider battery powered 120VAC inverters for power. Some venues have no power, others charge way too much.

- c. Inverter cost can be recovered by saving on power charges of up to \$35 per show.
- d. Setup a three sided booth using curtains or Chinese screens
- e. Use Lighting!
- f. Take warm sweater or down vest in the fall. Building may be cold.
- g. Overnight table covers if leaving stock overnight. Twin bedsheets are perfect.

### **III. Booth Décor, indoors**

- 1) Have a backdrop and sidewalls. Can be pipe & drape or Chinese Screens
- 2) Screens take more room for transport, but less time to setup. Cost more.
- 3) Use drapery panels, 3 per 10ft. Can be mixed or uniform colors.
- 4) Use heavy duty pipe system. Make center pole if you hang banner
- 5) Have seasonal or holiday decorations. Dollar Stores great source
- 6) Have signs, standing on tables or hanging from sides and backdrop
- 7) Have a good sized banner for center rear backdrop
- 8) Light the banner. Ikea gooseneck LEDs with clamps work well

### **IV. Tables (Figures 3A-3C)**

- 1) 4'x2' folding plastic are the best
- 2) Use 36" height for customer and vendor comfort and ease of viewing
- 3) Black to-the-floor coverings usually required
- 4) Fitted commercial covers are not made in 36", so sew black cloth on the bottom. Only three sides need additional material, leave short by 1".
- 5) Do NOT use fitted stretchy covers! Cannot be extended to 36"!
- 6) Consider table runners to add color, especially Christmas (Dollar Store)
- 7) Make 4" squares of 1/8" plywood as floor protectors. Good for leveling
- 8) Have a smaller or lower table for POS, packing, personal items
- 9) Arrange tables to draw customers to see every table, and so you can see customers at all times.

### **V. Displays (Figures 4A-4B)**

- 1) Pen displays make product more attractive
- 2) Use displays to attract customers. An exciting booth gets more traffic.
- 3) Choose displays that show off particular styles, colors, types, etc.
- 4) Group like items: Fountain Pens, Rollerballs, Bolt Actions, Religious, etc.
- 5) Plastic displays available from Amazon
- 6) Wood displays from other turners or suppliers (EB, PSI, Rockler, etc.)
- 7) DIY Displays – get creative! Use your 3D Printer.
- 8) Decorative serving trays with beans or terry cloth toweling
- 9) Outdoors, display pens in trays which will not blow over with wind

### **VI. Lighting**

- 1) Pens under house lighting are dull and unattractive
- 2) No lighting in a tent during daylight
- 3) Use bright mini lights over each display to highlight pen's beauty
- 4) Use LEDs! Less power required, no chance of customers getting burned
- 5) Recommend gooseneck table spots from Ikea
- 6) Amazon good source of LED desk lamps
- 7) Use spots for tight display lighting, floods for wider area

- 8) Make sure lights aimed down onto pens, not in customers' eyes
- 9) Use lights on backdrop banner. Ikea gooseneck clamp lights
- 10) Use battery inverters. Covers venues where power not available
- 11) Cost of inverters can be retired by savings of electric fees
- 12) Inverters reduce underfoot wires
- 13) If using on-floor wires cover with mats or tape for safety of people and equipment. Look for "Gaff tape" on Amazon. Like duct tape but peels off cleanly. Used in professional theatre.
- 14) If using house power use portable GFCI & Surge Protector at source
- 15) Inverters have 1-3 USB ports which can be used for phones or LEDs

## **VII. Packing and Transport (Figures 5A-5F)**

- 1) Make a checklist!!!!
- 2) Checklist organized by packing case
- 3) Plan for efficiency in packing, loading, and unloading
- 4) Take nothing you don't need or think you will not need
- 5) Wheeled cases a must!
- 6) Handcart and/or platform cart a must!
- 7) Pack drape sections in Ziploc bags for cleanliness. Add desiccant packs.
- 8) Pack pipe systems in cases. Speaker stand cases are great for this.
- 9) Place all pipe hardware in good quality plastic divider boxes
- 10) Mark all containers, wheeled cases, etc.
- 11) Wheeled duffle bags for things like table covers, drapes, decorations
- 12) Wheeled hard cases for electrical, lights, displays, etc.
- 13) Jewelry cases for pens. Pen cases take too much time to load/unload.

## **VIII. Security & Covid**

- 1) For tents, pack all stock and remove overnight
- 2) Never, ever, leave booth unwatched
- 3) Have partner, or befriend neighboring vendor to watch during rest breaks
- 4) Plan to bring food or have it delivered by venue
- 5) Partner can come just for a midday break, doesn't have to stay for day
- 6) Arrange tables so that you can always see every table & every customer
- 7) Do not turn your back on customers
- 8) Use mini cameras on drapery rods. Can be unpowered, just so they show
- 9) Place small "video camera in use" signs discreetly but visibly on tables
- 10) Have an inventory of your products, track sales, watch for discrepancies
- 11) Get a UV-C wand or cellphone sanitizing case
- 12) Have one or more trays clearly marked for "touched pens".
- 13) Remind customers to place any pens they touch in those trays
- 14) Sanitize touched pens and return to regular display
- 15) Can use sanitizing wipes on NON-WOOD pens, but better to use UV-C
- 16) Take disposable masks, nitrile gloves, hand sani wipes

## **IX. Your Comfort, other necessities**

- 1) Folding chair or folding stool
- 2) Water or other beverages
- 3) Shoes that can handle standing for 8 hours
- 4) Work gloves for loading & unloading

- 5) Knee pads for assembling tables, drapes, etc.
- 6) Munchies
- 7) Trash bags
- 8) Medications
- 9) Cellphone (fully charged!!!)
- 10) Clothes that allow freedom of movement for loading and setting up
- 11) Comb. Fingernail clippers.

**X. Finally.....**

- 1) Greet all customers; do not sit and be preoccupied
- 2) Have business cards on display on each table
- 3) Keep booth clean and orderly. Stash packing boxes under tables behind table skirts.

**Photo Gallery**

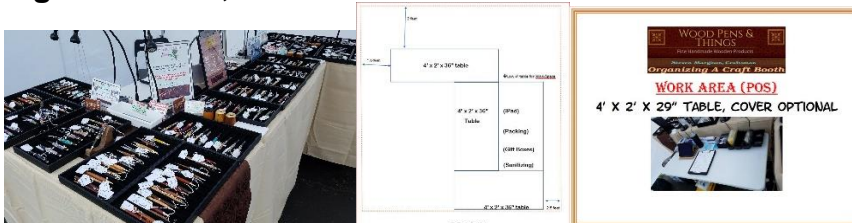
Figures 1A – 1D, Tent Weights



Figures 2A-2C, Outdoor vs Indoor



Figures 3A-3C, Tables



Figures 4A-4B





Figures 5A-5F



## Online Sources for Products

### **Eurmax Canopy**

Amazon

10'x10' EZ Pop-Up Canopy Tent Commercial

### **ABCCanopy Weight Bags**

Amazon

ABCCanopy Weight Bags, 4pcs, 50 pound capacity

### **Drapes**

Amazon

Sun Zero Barrow Energy Efficient Grommet Curtain Panel 54"x84"

### **Drapery Pipe**

Amazon

WinSpin 10x8ft Banner Stand Adjustable Trade Show Display

**Rope Tighteners**

Amazon

Vivosun 6 pair 1/8 inch adjustable rope hanger

**Speaker Stand case (for drapery pipe systems)**

Amazon

Gator GBA-SPKSTDBG-50DLX

Also available at most online music equipment vendors

**Banner Printing company (for tent banner)**

[www.Banners.com](http://www.Banners.com)

**Tables**

Amazon

Lifetime #4428, 4'x2' Adjustable to 29" or 36"

(Also available at WalMart)

**Table coverings**

Amazon

Iveecky 4ft Fitted 29 Inch Wide Rectangular Polyester Wedding Tablecloth

**Ikea lights**

Gooseneck Spots

Item: NAVLINGE (This is a newer version of mine)

Gooseneck Flood

Item: HARTE (I use these but not shown in my photos)

**Inverters**

Amazon

250WattHour: Rockpals 250W Portable Inverter

178WattHour: Rockpals 178WH Portable Inverter

220WattHour: AcoPower 220WH Portable Inverter

**Business Cards, Pamphlets, Tee Shirts w/logo, Banners (indoor use)**

[www.Vistaprint.com](http://www.Vistaprint.com)

**NameTags**

[www.NameTagCountry.com](http://www.NameTagCountry.com)

**Jewelry Cases**

[www.GemsOnDisplay.com](http://www.GemsOnDisplay.com)

**Rolling Tool Cases**

Home Depot

Menards

Lowe's

Brands: Husky, Stanley, house brands

**Rolling Duffle Bags**

Meijer, Walmart, Target