

SF Open Studios 2008: Marketing Your SF Open Studio Workshop
August 5, 2008 * California College of the Arts

Marketing Your Artwork Year-Round

Matthew Singer, of Matthew Singer Consulting, is an entrepreneurial and skilled professional with 20+ years of experience contributing to the profitability and viability of successful companies through outstanding marketing, client development, event planning, and team building expertise. He advises small business clients in developing strategic marketing and management processes to enable them to utilize available resources effectively and efficiently.

Marketing your artwork is a year-round endeavor and not something that artists do once a year, merely for SF Open Studios. Marketing is done in a lot of different ways and every time that we meet someone new, or run into someone we know, we have an opportunity to market ourselves and what we are doing in life, in work, in pleasure. If during that conversation, you are able to provide insight into what you are working on, you have just marketed yourself. Marketing is not as difficult or expensive as people think it is; it really is a matter in having confidence and a belief in what you are doing, and letting as many people you know, or don't know, what you are working on, and why it has value.

A. Art as business

1. If you sell your art, you are doing business.
2. Don't be afraid to do business; it is just a transaction between you and another individual, corporation or other entity.
3. You are providing a service that other people want and desire.
4. Have realistic expectations as to what you will garner when you are just starting out, do some market research and determine what your value is worth.
 - a. Look at other artists and what they are selling, how long they have been creating and selling their art, and what type of reputation they have in comparison to yours.
 - b. You can sell based upon time spent on your piece plus costs, do not factor in emotional attachment to a piece of art.

B. Marketing is a year round endeavor

1. Marketing can be as simple as talking to a friend about the piece you are currently working on, or as complex as developing a complete marketing strategy, outlaying large expenditures to increase public visibility.
2. Don't think of marketing as a chore but as a way to get your message across, in this case that message is your art, and getting it into the right hands to increase visibility and exposure.
3. You hate being a sales person, it brings on negative connotations, I am an artist, and all I want to do is create art.
 - a. Who is a better person to know what your art means then the person who created it? Consequently, who is going to be the best person to sell that piece of art that you spent many days, months, and years creating?
You are!
 1. It will be your natural enthusiasm for what you are creating that will help to translate your most effective marketing strategy,

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talking about what you created, how you created it, and why you created it.

4. Art is a commodity, you must extol the value of that commodity realizing that the value will be greater for you due to what you put into it, it is a matter of convincing the buyer that what you put into it is worth their expense. Show them the value.

C. Where do I market and how do I start?

1. You have already begun; you are attending this seminar.
2. Turn to the person to your right, extend your hand and introduce yourself, then repeat this process and do the same to the person on your left.
 - a. You have just marketed yourself to two people.
 - b. By extension, when you are marketing your art, you will be talking about that process, and what it requires. The more that you can involve your audience in its process, the better you will spark their interest, and plant an idea into their head to buy your art.
3. Start with talking to your friends about what you are working on.
4. Talk to your co-workers about what you are working on.
5. Talk to anyone you come into contact with about what you are working on.

D. What are some things that I can do to market myself that will be inexpensive?

1. If you do not already have a web site, develop one.
 - a. If you can not afford the outlay to pay someone to design and develop your website, then try working out a trade, art for design and development
2. Maximize keyword searches on your current website.
3. Give free talks about Art
 - a. Work with other non-profit associations or women's groups, or even museums.
 1. Offer your services for free; it is only time out of your day.
4. Lend your art to friends for show
5. Lend your art to corporations or business that you know for show
 - a. Restaurants
 - b. Corporate offices
6. Develop a blog and blog about art. Or answer other people's art blogs.
 - a. Get your name out there, it is all about exposure.
7. Invite people or groups of people on a monthly or quarterly basis to your studio. Have some wine and cheese available, and talk about your art.
8. Network with other artists, trade your works with other artists, you never know who is going to see your work in someone else's studio or home.
9. Contact furniture or art rental companies about using your art.
10. Volunteer at an Arts organization or other non-profit, and see if they will display your work.
11. Develop a monthly newsletter than can be sent out via email

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- a. Use Constant Contact or large email services – they are relatively inexpensive.
12. Collect business cards, email addresses to keep people updated about your work.
 - a. If you know someone with an extensive email list, try trading your art for the email addresses.
13. Have an on line contest to increase email list. Have a give away of your art, and specify that they must attend your SF Open Studio to win.
 - a. You will need to give away a piece of your art for this one.
14. Sponsor preview showings in conjunction with other artists to defer costs.
15. Trade art for marketing or other outreach services.
 - a. You may be able to pay an actual Marketeer with Art.
16. Create a referral program.
 - a. Start with your friends, and ask for three names, contact those people and ask them to give you three names, and so on. Eventually, you will have a large email list.
17. Gift Certificates
 - a. Offer gift certificates to people. It may not be for the entire purchase price of a piece, but it may go toward the cost of a piece and defer the cost for the purchaser.
18. Direct Mail letters, or newsletters.
 - a. You should constantly have access to peoples mailing addresses and email addresses. Anyone who visits your studio, have a sign in book at your Studio or wherever you are displaying or talking about your art. Collect that info.
19. Hire commissioned sales people to sell your art
20. Join clubs and associations to get your name out there: Network, Network, Network!
21. Post on Internet Bulletin Boards and free directory listings:
-bizweb.com, commerce.net, galaxy.einet.net, netmarket.com, yahoo.com
22. Sell your art on Ebay.
23. Allow previous customers to try out art in their homes on a trial basis.
24. Become an art consultant. Instead of just selling your piece of Art, work with your clients to develop an art program for them. This allows you to gain credibility, get your name out there, and can provide additional avenues of revenue.
25. Work in conjunction with other Artists displaying at SF Open Studios to create a newsletter or email blast. Combine your resources, and utilize all the resources at your disposal.

E. Don't be afraid to ask your friends and acquaintances for help. People love to feel needed, if they can help they will, and you offer them the same.

1. Patience is a virtue, and everything good to come takes time, have patience and persevere, it will come in time.