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How to Start Your Handmade Craft Business

By Tahera Rene Christy, Founder and CEO of Amour Propre Wellness and Beauty Brand

Starting a handmade craft business can be an exciting and rewarding venture. Whether selling online or in person, this guide will help you navigate every step to launch on a small budget.

1. Decide What to Sell

- Choose crafts you are passionate about and good at making.
- Test product viability by asking friends or participating in small local markets.
- Research your niche to identify trends and customer needs.

2. Create a Small Budget Plan

1. Start-Up Costs: Aim to start with \$500 or less.
2. Supplies/Materials: \$200
3. Packaging: \$50
4. Marketing (business cards, photos, social media ads): \$50
5. Platform fees (Etsy listing fees, website hosting): \$50
6. Miscellaneous (permits, if required): \$50

Tip: Start small with limited inventory and reinvest profits into the business.

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3. Online Selling Platforms

Set up an online store on these platforms:

- Etsy: Ideal for handmade goods; low start-up cost and user-friendly.
- Instagram: Create a business account to showcase your products and connect with customers.
- Amazon Handmade: Reach a large audience but be prepared for stricter application processes.
- Michaels.com: A curated platform for artisans selling quality handmade goods.

4. Sell at Local Craft Pop-Up Shops

- Find Events: Search for local markets, fairs, and pop-up shops through Eventbrite, Facebook events, or local newspapers.
- Prepare Inventory: Have a mix of bestsellers and new designs. Aim for 20-30 items initially.
- Set Up Your Booth: Use a tablecloth, signage, and appealing displays.
- Offer business cards or flyers with your contact information and online shop links.
- Include price tags and clear labels.

Pro Tip: Engage with shoppers by sharing your story and answering questions about your craft.

5. Marketing Tips

Branding:

- Create a memorable name and logo. Try Canva, it's free!
- Use consistent colors and fonts in all materials.
- Highlight your story (e.g., why you started crafting, what inspires you).

Social Media:

- Post daily or weekly on Instagram, Facebook, or TikTok.
- Share behind-the-scenes content, customer reviews, and product launches.
- Use relevant hashtags (e.g., #HandmadeWithLove, #CraftBiz, #ShopSmall).

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Photography:

- Take high-quality photos of your products. Use natural light and plain backgrounds.
- Show your items in use (e.g., a candle burning, a scarf being worn).

Collaborate:

- Partner with local influencers or other small businesses to promote each other.
- Offer giveaways or discounts to new customers.

Customer Engagement:

- Respond to inquiries quickly.
- Include thank-you notes with orders.
- Build an email list for updates and exclusive offers.

6. Pricing Your Crafts

Use this formula to price your products:

- $(\text{Materials} + \text{Labor} + \text{Overhead}) \times 2-3 = \text{Retail Price}$
- Materials: Cost of supplies.
- Labor: Your time (set an hourly rate, e.g., \$15/hour).
- Overhead: Additional costs like shipping, listing fees, or booth fees.

7. Legal Considerations

- Check local business regulations and obtain permits if needed.
- Register a business name and apply for a sales tax ID if required.
- Use a separate bank account to manage finances.
- Obtain business insurance (Try Hiscox)

8. Recommended Resources

- **Canva: Free tool to create logos, social media posts, and business cards.**

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- **Square:** Payment processing system for in-person and online sales.
- **ShipStation:** Affordable shipping software to streamline orders.
- **Tailwind:** Schedule and manage social media posts efficiently.

9. Success Tips for Growth

- **Stay Organized:** Use tools like Google Sheets or Notion to track sales and inventory.
- **Learn and Adapt:** Attend free online webinars or YouTube tutorials on crafting or small business management.
- **Network:** Join Facebook groups like “Handmade Business Owners” or local artisan communities.

Starting your handmade business doesn't have to be expensive or overwhelming. With focus, dedication, and these tips, you can turn your passion into profit. Remember, small steps lead to big results. Wishing you success in your creative journey!