

Episode 15: Five Tips for Finding Art Buyers Offline

Hi there, I'm Cindy Hohman, and this is the Art Marketing Project podcast, where I help empower artists to take the reins of marketing and selling their work into their own hands so you can sell more work and get back into the studio. This is Episode 15: Five Tips for Finding Art Buyers Offline. You can find show notes for this episode at www.artmarketingproject.com/15.

So I talk a lot on the podcast as well as in the Art Marketing Project membership about how to sell art *online*. But online isn't the only place where you should be spending your time. It's important, but not the only thing you should focus on. Most of you probably hear, you know, recommendations these days about selling art online. But a good chunk of the advice that you hear is about online tools, Facebook, Instagram, selling art on your website, using email and other things. So today I want to answer a question for you that I hear from artists all the time, which is how to find art buyers *offline*.

Let's just hop right into the five tips.

Tip number one. First is, you probably won't be surprised to hear this from me, but it's to know your ideal buyer. And really this is the number one tip for finding art buyers offline, is to know who you are talking to, whether you're marketing online or offline, understanding your ideal buyer is the foundation of your success in marketing that you need to know who you're marketing too. Your whole marketing plan will flow from this. So if you haven't done that yet, make sure to download my ideal buyer worksheet and start that process. That will be linked here in the show notes. It might seem counterintuitive to potentially ignore a large number of people by focusing on a specific ideal buyer, but it works. The more specific you can get about your ideal buyer, the better you will be at selling your art.

So think through what your ideal buyer does and their leisure time, what their interests are, where they engage in the real world. So this is going to be the key in helping you figure out where you should be looking to find buyers offline. So get really good at thinking about your ideal buyer. And putting yourself in their shoes and in their life. And think about where they spend their time, what organizations they're involved with, what their passions are in real life. And you know, it's important to think about where they would engage online. But start thinking about number one where your ideal buyer lives. So just because you live in, you know, Canada and you know, Vancouver, doesn't always mean that your ideal buyer lives in the same place. I talked to a lot of artists who live in smaller towns and more small town or rural locations, but their ideal buyer would live in cities because they create abstract work or something that's a little more contemporary.

So think about where your ideal buyer lives. Think about where they spend their time in their life. Think about: are you reaching ideal buyers — is your ideal buyer somebody who is traveling to a location? Are they purchasing your work because it is a reminder of a vacation or a specific visit to a certain part of the world. So get good at thinking about that ideal buyer. Then put yourself and your work in situations where they're likely to be. Make sure that when you're thinking about your ideal buyer, you're being as specific as possible so that when you're meeting people, whether it's at a summer art festival, a group show, or a networking event, the right people, the ones you're looking for, are going to be the ones attracted to you.

The Art Marketing Project Podcast — Episode 15: Five Tips for Finding Art Buyers Offline

Tip number two: create a list of places you could go to meet your ideal buyer. So brainstorm a big list of places you might go to meet your ideal buyer. Say you're a landscape painter; perhaps your ideal buyer is an outdoor enthusiast. Think of the national organizations they might belong to, and then bring it down to local ones. For example, here in Colorado we have the Colorado Mountain Club. Members are people who like to get outside, and the club hosts events for people to learn mountaineering, backcountry avalanche safety, or even just hiking skills and you know, first aid and safety or just being outdoors. So in the summer, the Colorado Mountain Club regularly organizes hikes. They also do fundraising events. They're a non-profit organization, so think about how you might be able to, if you are a landscape painter of you know, the Rocky Mountain West, how you might engage with someone like the Colorado Mountain Club or other organizations throughout the Rocky Mountains or throughout mountainous regions, and do a Google search and find them.

So use your imagination and write down all the possibilities for your ideal buyer. Brainstorm related organizations, meet-ups, non-profits; think of businesses, museums, festivals, and ask yourself, could I meet my ideal buyer there? Is that where my ideal buyer is spending their time? Then choose where you're going to focus your efforts and then get to know some people. All right?

Tip number three: find in-person sales opportunities. So first of all, find the traditional art sales opportunities in your, of course like galleries, festivals, boutique stores and tourist shops. See if your local artists association provides group show opportunities or an arrangement where you can apply to display your work in local businesses, but be creative and find non-traditional opportunities too. You can show your work in a tattoo parlor if your ideal buyer might go there. What opportunities can you think of?

Tip number four is to get out, meet people and make connections. You don't have to be an extrovert, but what you do need to do is to get out into the world and make some connections. Try attending exhibitions at galleries where the work that's showing might be similar to your work. You might meet other gallery owners at the show, other artists, potential buyers. I'm not suggesting that you're going to walk up to people and say, "don't buy what's on the wall; buy my art instead," of course, but you know, it's just that like organic opportunity to meet people who could be your buyers. So seek out artists who are successful in business and network with them. These are the kinds of people who can help support you in your business and then get some practice telling the story of your own journey. As an artist, we're drawn to other people's stories, to their deep experiences of life.

You can start by telling your backstory, the story of where you came from, what you do, who you do it for, and kind of the process or the core fundamental process behind your work. Telling engaging stories helps your potential buyers feel an emotional connection to you in your work. So just meet people, say hello and kind of have that quick stories and quick story ideas or things to tell people about your work and you as an artist ready to go and just go out and get started talking and meeting people.

And tip number five is to build a relationship with past buyers. So you need to be staying in touch with the people who have bought your art in the past. You need to be communicating regularly with them, telling them about the projects you're working on in the coming season, engaging with them about a show or an open studio that you have coming up.

The Art Marketing Project Podcast — Episode 15: Five Tips for Finding Art Buyers Offline

Invite them to whatever you have coming up. Include them in special VIP offers. So you know, think about your past buyers and how you might do something a little bit special for them. Invite your VIP folks to an early opportunity to meet with you before an opening or invite them to a special opportunity, a VIP only studio tour. These people could and will purchase again, and they could also be your connection to new buyers if they fit the profile of your ideal buyer. Invite them for coffee to learn more about them. Let them know that you're expanding your network and that you're looking to connect with more people with similar interests. Ask them, can you think of anyone who would be a good for me? Would you be willing to make an introduction? So make sure that you're just building a strong relationship with your past buyers to help you bring future sales from those individuals.

Help them connect you to others who might have similar interests to them and you know, asking them if they can help connect you to even other organizations, non-profits, like we were talking about earlier, an email is one of the best tools for doing this, to stay in touch with your past buyers. Staying in touch can result in follow-up sales and referrals. So make sure you get email addresses from your past buyers. Then make sure that you tag them in your email system so that you know who they are and reach out to them as a group much more easily, but making them feel special.

All right, so those are my five tips for you.

My action item for you for this podcast is if you have not downloaded my ideal buyer worksheet, do that now. It's here, linked in the show notes for Episode 15. Download that and work through it and then go through this challenge that I laid out for you in the podcast episode, which is to brainstorm a list of let's say 10 you could even do 15 or 20 but at least 10. Brainstorm a list of 10 places where you could find your ideal buyer and then set yourself a goal to start reaching out to potential partners in those locations.

And I would love to hear that you are once a week reaching out to a potential partner and following up. And what you're going to have to do is just commit to that work of the outreach, whether it's email or if you even have to get a friend or another individual to introduce you to somebody in an organization that you're trying to connect with, but take steps weekly to be connected to some of these organizations and businesses and potential partners locally and for selling your work, so plan it. Put it on your calendar and go do the work.

Just a reminder that you can find all of these links that I've mentioned in the episode show notes at www.artmarketingproject.com/15. Thanks a bunch for listening today. I look forward to catching up with you again next week. Thanks so much everyone. Bye.

Thank you so much for joining me today and listening. I really appreciate it. If you enjoy this content and you have a minute, I would love it if you would rate the podcast or leave a review wherever you listen to podcasts. If you have questions for me, a suggestion for a podcast episode, or if you just want to say hi, you can connect with me on Instagram at ArtMarketingProject. Thanks everyone.