

Many artists, designers and makers exhibit their work in trade shows. These are visited by buyers representing galleries, independent retailers, heritage outlets, craft shops and museums.

The benefits of exhibiting at a trade fair

The [British Craft Trade Fair](#), held annually at Harrogate for more than two decades, supports the very best British and Irish artists and makers. Margaret Bunn, Director of PSM Ltd, is the organiser of the fair. She draws on her extensive experience to effectively showcase the artists' work to top buyers around the country.

"The benefits of exhibiting at a trade fair are many, and at the British Craft Trade Fair the makers can be assured there will be no competition from cheap, mass-produced imports.

Every trade fair you attend will enable you to meet lots of buyers.

"The buyers who attend our fair do so because they want to buy British and Irish hand-made products of the highest quality."

As well as meeting buyers and potentially securing new orders there are many other benefits associated with exhibiting at trade fairs.

"The opportunity to meet other makers who can help, inspire and support is really beneficial. Working from home or in a studio on your own can be quite isolating. You may even find that you get the opportunity to collaborate with other makers you meet at the trade fair.

"The first year you attend, you might walk away with no orders. This has happened to some of our exhibitors, who have then become really successful in subsequent years."

How to price your product

"It is vital to set your price at the right level. Products should always have a recommended retail price, so that the price to customers is the same wherever they are sold, be it online or in a gallery or shop.

"If your own website undercuts the price shown in other outlets the buyers may decide not to use you in the future.

"Galleries have their own mark-up and I advise people to allow for 100 percent mark-up, with VAT on top. This can vary, and for very high-end products, such as paintings or furniture selling for several thousand pounds, the mark-up would be lower."

The cost of exhibiting at a trade fair

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If you are considering exhibiting at trade fairs you need to work out whether or not you will see a return on your investment.

The cost of attending fairs varies according the size of the stand you require, and the smallest possible stand will normally cost at least £370 plus VAT.

Some of the other associated costs include:

- Stands to display your products (you may find that the 'shell' – walls, fascia and carpeting –are all provided)
- Marketing materials for your products
- Lighting (this is sometimes included, or there may simply be an electrical socket and you will need to supply your own lighting)
- Accommodation and transport
- The cost of lost studio time for the duration of the fair

4 tips for dealing with buyers

Every trade fair you attend will enable you to meet lots of buyers and they are not as scary as you may initially imagine! You will both have the opportunity to establish a business relationship.

Margaret's tips for dealing with buyers:

1. Make sure your communication skills work to your advantage, be confident and establish good eye-contact
2. Be really enthusiastic about your work
3. Present yourself in a professional way
4. Consider how you can effectively sell your products to the buyers