

How to Sell Phenomenal Fudge TM

A manual for wholesale customers of Phenomenal Fudge



Our hero

Pheno-Man TM

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Phenomenal Fudge

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This manual is only available to our current wholesale buyers. It is not for sale and is not intended for, nor distributed to, any other business enterprise.

Phenomenal Fudge is different than most items in retail stores and needs special treatment. While it is a perishable product we know that with proper handling and sales techniques Phenomenal Fudge will most likely generate more profit per square-foot of retail space, build more customer traffic and create probably more positive word-of-mouth advertising than any other item in your store.

We have made, sold and marketed our fudge for over 34 years beginning in 1985 with our country store in Middlebury, Vermont. In 2001 we expanded our customer base with an online presence selling to retail markets at www.pfudge.com and to wholesale customers at www.wholesalechocolatefudge.com.

We also have many years of experience selling Phenomenal Fudge at New York and New England craft shows and festivals and have partnered with clubs and schools to help them earn money with our simple fundraising program.

Phenomenal Fudge is happy to present you with this "How To Sell Phenomenal Fudge" manual; an invaluable compilation of one family's experience selling one product continuously over a thirty four-year period.

In summary, we make the fudge so you don't have to. All you need to do is sell it but because it is a perishable product Phenomenal Fudge does require unique attention. But once you understand our marketing system you will discover a whole new window of opportunity and income for your family and business. It's that simple. It's that Phenomenal!

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Chapter 2

A reminder

Why you chose to sell Phenomenal Fudge!

1. Phenomenal Fudge is a consumable product so they'll come back for more.
2. Phenomenal Fudge is a crowd pleaser, especially when you give out samples.
3. Phenomenal Fudge promotes excellent word-of-mouth advertising for your store.
4. Phenomenal Fudge is made with real cream and butter.
5. Phenomenal Fudge is soft and creamy, not hard and grainy.
6. Phenomenal Fudge can be sold in any size and flavor combination.
7. Phenomenal Fudge has fudge displays you can get for free with a minimum order.
8. Phenomenal Fudge orders are shipped within two business days.
9. Phenomenal Fudge ships throughout the year.
10. Phenomenal Fudge can be frozen for up to a year in perfect condition.
11. Phenomenal Fudge can be cross-merchandised with other items in your store.
12. Phenomenal Fudge bars are available in over 30 flavors.
13. Phenomenal Fudge bars are pre-scored for easy cutting.
14. Steve and Robin have been making and selling Phenomenal Fudge for 30 years gathering valuable first hand retail and wholesale marketing experience.
15. And best of all, Phenomenal Fudge has a 100% product guarantee.

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Chapter 3

Receiving your fudge order

Phenomenal Fudge ships wholesale orders via United Parcel Service using Regular Ground service throughout the year from our licensed commercial kitchen in Shoreham, Vermont. Each pre-scored six-pound bar of fudge is “sealed” in a freezer bag and then placed in its own storage box. These storage boxes are then stacked together inside a shipping carton.

During shipping in the summer our fudge can become overly soft and in the winter it can be rather hard though neither extremes will adversely affect the fudge. Upon receipt of your order bring your fudge down or up to the ambient temperature of your store before displaying.

Before removing the fudge bar from its freezer bag make sure the fudge is at room temperature as condensation may form on the top of cold fudge. Fudge may get very soft traveling through hot climates so wait until it cools down in your store and becomes firm enough to handle before displaying it.

Phenomenal Fudge is made with real cream and butter and is “shelf-stable” in our facility in Shoreham, Vermont. By “shelf stable” we mean that the un-scored fudge bar, after cooling down in our kitchen, will not immediately droop when balanced on one hand. Interior store temperatures above 80-degrees will cause problems.

Uncovered displayed fudge bars have a three-week shelf life after which they will begin to dry out and become hard.

During very hot weather peanut oils may separate from the peanut butter fudge and form a harmless white layer on top that can be scrapped off. To avoid this condition it might be best to order peanut butter fudge in the cooler months.

Individual fudge bar boxes can be placed in a refrigerator or left out overnight to cool down. Fudge bars can also be safely frozen in a freezer bag for many months. Please let us know if the fudge is still too soft or too hard within 48 hours of receipt. Email us at pfudge2000@yahoo.com or call 802-897-7300.

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Chapter 4

Taking care of fudge bars

Storage

1. Do not open your fudge until it is at least room temperature.
2. Cover displayed fudge at night to keep air from drying it out.
3. Freeze bars in a freezer bag for long term storage.
4. Defrost fudge bars in the freezer bag to avoid surface condensation.
4. Always keep some fudge frozen as back up inventory so you won't sell out.

Displaying fudge

1. Display bars on a long counter top under a sneeze guard.
2. Place wrapped pieces in a basket by the register.
3. Show half-size bars in a multi-tiered Plexiglas display.

Serving fudge

1. Sampling always increases sales.
2. Custom cut, weigh and box pieces of fudge.
3. Pre-wrapped fudge can be sold by the piece or by weight.
4. Always keep your display looking neat and clean.

If you have a counter-top display or fudge cabinet you may display the entire bar or cut it in half and display one while you re-bag and freeze the other half.

The advertising adage "Pile it high and watch it fly!" is especially true for fudge in that a proper display needs a variety of flavors to achieve maximum customer appeal. Be sure to mix up the fudge colors to catch the customer's casual glance. Install as much lighting as possible to fully display the flavors to make a beautiful impression.

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Chapter 5

Displaying fudge bars

Position your fudge display next to the cash register so your staff can give samples and make sales at the same time.

Most county health departments require a sneeze-guard when bars are displayed in the open and you can get a free one from Phenomenal Fudge when you order 12 six-pound bars. Our Plexiglas sneeze-guard kit is easily assembled and sets on top of your counter top. We offer them in four, five or six-foot lengths that come with clips for assembly.

Your health department will probably also require that the surface which the fudge bars sit upon is washable. Buy a Formica board from your local lumber yard that will fit on top of your counter. Fudge bars are displayed on top of the Formica board with the sneeze-guard sitting on top of the board. See our web site for photos of the sneeze-guards.

We ship our fudge all year via UPS Regular Ground service from our business in Vermont. Regardless of the weather, our fudge is made so that it will be reasonably firm in your store in temperatures up to 75 degrees. When you receive the fudge bars bring them down, or up, to room temperature before taking them out of the box.

Each Phenomenal Fudge bar is lined with parchment paper and slipped into its own plastic freezer bag and tightly packed in a box. The individual boxes are then packed together in a second shipping carton.

Keep fudge out of direct sunlight as it can soften. Fudge can be safely frozen in a freezer bag for up to a year but should be thawed within the freezer bag before removal so that condensation doesn't form directly on the fudge.

When displaying the fudge bars tear away exposed pieces of the parchment paper. Use a metal spatula to cut the fudge, food wrap tissue to handle it, a digital scale to weigh it and a "candy" box to put it in for the customer. Don't use a baggie as the fudge will be too soft to handle on a hot day and make a mess.

Every six-pound bar is pre-scored into 24 two-inch squares each roughly one-quarter pound which will make it easy for your staff to cut off quarter, half or full pound pieces. Bars of fudge start drying out after three weeks so cover them with plastic bags when the store is closed. There's no need to actually put a bar in its own bag.

If you have a counter-top display or fudge cabinet you can display the entire bar or cut it in half and display one half while you re-bag and freeze the other half.

As with most store products, a fully stocked display sells more of an item than one of limited choice. Customers appreciate your offering them a wide choice in fudge flavors which may enable them to purchase a variety rather than just one. Display a colorful selection and mix up the flavors to catch the customer's attention. Don't forget proper lighting of the fudge either with small lights on either side of the display or overhead in the ceiling, or both. Only keep fudge in the display to decrease distractions.

The counter-top display

A beautiful fudge display in your store can make a huge difference in helping you to attract customers. Fudge is an impulse item, so if it looks appetizing, you'll increase the temptation for people to buy.

Here are some suggestions:

1. Contact a local sign maker to make a banner or professional looking wooden sign to hang on the wall behind your display. We'll be glad to include a Phenomenal Fudge poster (8 1/2" X 11") with your order. We also have larger color sales posters.
2. Always show the customer that you care about the fudge enough to always have someone there to offer them a sample or answer any questions. A customer shouldn't have to ask for help. Your staff is there to provide excellent customer service with a friendly smile, a welcome greeting and free samples.
3. Always have extra fudge in inventory so you don't run out. Please be aware of the UPS travel time it takes for your next order to arrive from our kitchen in Vermont.
4. Use a digital electronic scale that your customer can read exactly what the weight and price is. Place the scale right next to the display to make it easy for everyone to follow the purchase process.
5. Consider adding a new flavor every two weeks or so just to keep your regular customers interested in the display. Folks always want to know what's new so be sure to mix it up from time to time. This plan works well as you can celebrate holidays throughout the year with a new flavor or color appropriate to the day.

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Chapter 6

Arranging your fudge bars

Whether you have just a few or many fudge bars, we recommend that you mix them up with various colors, textures and flavors on display. For the best looking display, alternate light and dark colors, as well as swirls and toppings. Varying the types of fudge will make the display more interesting and help each type of fudge stand out.

Points to remember:

Always keep your fudge display full. The more fudge people see, the more they will buy.

Keep the fudge display uncluttered with other products or signs. No matter how tempting your fudge looks to you, if your customer can't clearly see it or gets distracted by another product, they won't buy it.

Give customers reasons to buy with special promotions. Offer a special price for the day, or a free piece with a larger purchase. You can easily cross merchandise your fudge with another item in your store and move both faster.

Dress up your display for specific holidays. Be creative with decorations such as cartoon or photo cut-outs and ribbons or bows but be careful not to block the view of the fudge. After the holiday has passed store the decorations for next year.

Give customers ideas on what to buy. Fill a few fudge boxes with a variety of flavors in each one to remind shoppers that they can "mix and match". You can also decorate the boxes with items appropriate for a specific personal occasion.

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Chapter 7

Displaying fudge squares

If you don't have the space for our six-pound bars of fudge under a sneeze-guard then our wire rack display will be perfect for you to sell Phenomenal Fudge squares.

The display rack has three shelves with each shelf containing two angled "slides" which present the fudge squares to your customers. Each shelf holds 12 squares so the entire display holds 36 two-inch wrapped squares, each square weighing around one-quarter pound. Each rack therefore holds 9 pounds of fudge.

The display has a seven-inch front, a 14-inch depth and an 18-inch height so it occupies less than a square foot of valuable front counter space, yet holds around \$125 worth of Phenomenal Fudge. Those quarter-pound squares are just the right size for your customers to quickly pick up some rich and creamy Phenomenal Fudge right by your register; a very sweet impulse purchase!

When we make our fudge bars we pre-score them into two-inch squares so your staff will need to cut and wrap them using the score lines as guides. The squares can be quickly wrapped using our clear plastic fudge wrappers which will keep the fudge moist for many weeks. You can sell them by the piece or by the pound.

The technique for wrapping the fudge squares is to place a square in the middle of the cello-wrap and then wrap it like a present using two small strips of clear scotch tape. Then place a "fresh fudge" label on top and an ingredient label on the bottom.

Our wrapped fudge squares can then be displayed for weeks or safely stored in a freezer bag for up to a year in perfect condition. You can freeze the bars or freeze the squares so you can restock your display at your convenience and not have to wait for a new delivery. After the wrapped fudge squares are thawed the fudge has a shelf life of six to eight weeks before it starts getting hard.

The best part of this deal...is the deal! You can get our wire rack display, valued at \$50, for FREE with your order of 6 six-pound bars of Phenomenal Fudge. Call us to order this display and/or the wrappers.

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Chapter 8

Keeping fudge fresh

Displayed fudge bars will not necessarily “go bad” but will begin to dry out in about three weeks and start to become too hard to sell after about a month.

Follow these simple tips to keep your fudge in great condition.

Fudge bars

1. Practice “First in - First out” meaning you should sell older fudge first.
2. Cover fudge bars at night with large plastic bags to keep them from drying out prematurely.
3. Do not put fudge in direct sunlight which can soften it...or worse!
4. For long-term storage freeze one-half of each fudge bar in an air-tight freezer bag. It won't freeze like an ice cube but when properly bagged and frozen it will retain its moisture for up to a year with no change to its color, flavor or texture. Be sure to bring the fudge up to room temperature before removing it from the bag or else condensation will form on the fudge.

Fudge squares

If you wrap our two-inch fudge squares in our special cello-wraps you will find they will stay fresh much longer than exposed fudge bars. These squares can also be safely frozen in a freezer bag for months so you can conveniently have squares on hand whenever you need them.

Fudge in plastic containers

Fudge pieces can also be placed in clear, plastic clam-shell hinged containers for display at the register. These boxes are very convenient for a quick sale but have limited ability to keep fudge fresh and should be sold within three weeks.

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Chapter 9

How to sample fudge

We have found that the most simple and cleanest way to sample fudge is to use three-inch long, single-use, disposable, plastic sampling spoons. They cost less than two cents each and the sales they generate are measured in many, many dollars. Using these small spoons you can easily provide about 55 samples per half-pound of fudge.

Do not offer samples on the end of a knife because not only does it look aggressive it's also dangerous. Do not put little cubes of fudge on a plate for a self-serve operation because not only is it unsanitary but one person can eat all your samples.

The spoons will allow your sales staff to easily interact with your customers in order to provide them with a memorable visit and phenomenal taste experience.

All your sales people need to say is, "Have a sample of fudge!" or "You're welcome to have a sample of fudge" or "Come on over and have a taste".

Avoid asking your customers "Yes" or "No" questions to sample but encourage them with excellent customer service to give you a "Yes" decision to buy. Just give them a friendly smile and a "sample of the most phenomenal tasting fudge they have ever tasted" and then be ready to explain any promotions, prices or special deals.

Sampling leads to sales

Most customers will appreciate at least some interaction with your sales staff if only just to be recognized with a greeting. A nice "Hello" from your staff will immediately make them feel comfortable enough to simply browse the aisles or ask a question.

When greeting your customer be sure to offer a free taste of Phenomenal Fudge. It will dramatically increase fudge sales, keep the customer in your store longer and increase sales for your other store's products as well!

Our experience in doing retail sales over the past 30 years has shown us that most people, however, won't ask for a fudge sample; you have to offer them one. We also found that a large percentage of people who sampled fudge wound up buying some. That's where hiring the right staff will make a big difference in fudge sales. The sales staff needs to be knowledgeable about Phenomenal Fudge and eager to build sales.

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Chapter 10

How to serve fudge

You might already have a system to cut, weigh and box the fudge but here are a few hints that might make the process easier.

1. Use small, plastic taster spoons to offer samples to customers.
2. Use a metal spatula to cut along the score lines we pre-cut on the top of our six-pound bars to make quarter-pound sections.
3. Scoop up the fudge piece with the spatula and place it on a food service paper.
4. Weigh the fudge on a digital scale that is programmed with your price per pound.
5. Place the wrapped fudge in a candy box.
6. Tear off the exposed paper liners under the bars to keep the display looking neat.

You can also wrap the fudge squares in plastic to sell from a basket or from our wire rack display. Be sure to utilize our easy to use, clear cello fudge wraps. They are pre-cut to completely wrap the two-inch squares and do a better job than store brand plastic wrap to keep the fudge soft and moist.

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Chapter 11

Promotions

Here is where your imagination can shine. Promotions can revolve around anything from holidays to price considerations to local news events. Promotions are a way to keep your store fresh to the public, exciting for you and fun for your sales staff.

Your local craft store or dollar store can keep you supplied with decorations for any holiday. From hats, streamers, posters, inexpensive give-a-way items, price cards, markers, balloons, bows, ribbons, etc. you can find anything to promote any product.

Give your sales manager a budget to buy what will work and then after the promotion store that material for next year's holiday. Offer a gift to the sales staff for reaching a sales goal with each promotion. Have fun and enjoy more sales.

Do not think that promotions have to involve a price discount. They don't and they shouldn't. Most retail studies show that price is never at the top of the list as far as customer interests are concerned.

Much more important than price is excellent customer service, lighting, ability to easily browse the aisles and a good product selection. We highly recommend you read the book [Why We Buy: The Science of Shopping](#) by Paco Underhill.

Holiday promotions

Holidays give you a justifiable reason to decorate your store and be able to tie-in promotions with your merchandise. Practically every day is a holiday somewhere.

Research not only the obvious national holidays but those of your own state and town too! And don't forget to celebrate the day you first started your business! Ask your sales staff to help you out with creative ideas to give customers reasons to buy fudge in order to celebrate the holiday with gift box of fudge.

Price promotions

Promotions which involve price breaks can consist of a discount off the price per pound, or a deal when a minimum weight is purchased. Consider giving a free quarter-pound with every pound purchased. The cost to you is the wholesale price you paid while the value to your customer is the retail price they saved.

Cross Merchandising promotions

Promote your other store products with a deal on Phenomenal Fudge. Tell customers you will give them a free pound of fudge when they buy another item at full price.

Business Gifts

Banks, car dealerships, insurance companies, and lots of other businesses give out holiday gifts and customer appreciation gifts. Here are some ideas to help you promote Phenomenal Fudge to the businesses in your community.

1. Make an appointment with the person in charge of making the buying decisions.
2. Bring to the meeting a copy of your sale's offer listing the flavors and pricing. And don't forget to bring some fudge samples too!
3. Buy a bag of inexpensive "stick-on" bows or find small gift bags to highlight the tub or boxed fudge as a gift.
4. Phenomenal Fudge bars can be cut into bite-sized pieces perfect for the dessert buffet at a company party.
5. Remind your buyer that Phenomenal Fudge makes a great gift throughout the year for favorite customers, employee recognitions, birthdays, etc.

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Chapter 12

Merchandising materials

Fudge is literally a hands-on product and you will need tools to help you move this delectable yet perishable product. Check your local restaurant supply stores, kitchen shops or hardware stores for supplies to help you serve and sell fudge but you can also find most of these items online.

1. Half-pound and one pound white candy boxes can be found at:

<http://www.nextag.com/white-candy-boxes/stores-html>

2. Three-inch plastic sampling spoons can be found at:

<http://www.nextag.com/plastic-spoons/stores-html>

3. Food wrap tissues to handle the fudge can be found at:

<http://www.nextag.com/quicksheets-food-wrap/shop-html>

4. Digital deli type scales can be found at:

<http://www.nextag.com/digital-deli-scale/stores-html>

5. Four oz. clear plastic, clam-shell containers are found at

[http: http://www.genpak.com/shop/product-info/AD04](http://www.genpak.com/shop/product-info/AD04)

Need something else? We also have various other items you can use to help you promote your fudge. Please contact us to discuss your needs.

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Chapter 13

Motivating your staff

Are you interested in breaking sales records? Of course you are and you can do it and have fun at the same time by motivating your staff with contests and rewards.

Three Incentive Plans You Can Implement

1. Motivate your sales staff by rewarding them with money or gifts. Offer a gift card on a weekly basis to the sales person with the highest fudge sales. Create a chart for your staff to track their own and each other's fudge sales.
2. Take a small percentage of your fudge sales to reward your fudge staff each week or at the end of the month
3. If you have been selling our fudge for at least a year and have kept track of your daily fudge sales, you can easily set new sales goals. Base your goals on an actual increase in dollar sales or a percentage over last year's figures.

Aside from generating more sales and profits, you will have a motivated, upbeat staff which understands that the more fudge they sell, the more they will earn. Chances are they will be happier and more motivated to increase their paychecks.

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Chapter 14

Sales tips

Location, Location, Location

The above real estate principle can be applied to your in-store real estate as well. Evaluate each square foot of floor space for sales potential without sacrificing store comfort for your customer. Since fudge is a perishable product keep it in front of your customer and not secluded in the corner or hidden behind signs.

Making a Big Impression

We have experience in retail sales and know how incredibly important it is to move product, especially a consumable and perishable one.

1. Keep your displays full and well lighted to call attention to the fudge.
2. Place posters in windows to attract people on the outside to come inside your store. Then place more posters throughout your store to entice the shoppers already there. Be careful, though, not to create clutter.
3. Place coupons or flyers within the customer's view when they enter the store and then again place literature in the shopping bags when they make a purchase.
4. Always, always, always offer a free sample; it's the best promotion of all.

How to "Upsell" Phenomenal Fudge

The basic premise to this selling method is that many customers will increase their purchase when given a rational reason to do so.

Price breaks increase purchases. Generally speaking we believe that giving away a small amount of fudge for a larger purchase is preferable to giving a discount. While the free piece of fudge represents to you a wholesale cost it is valued at a much higher retail cost by your customer.

Gift boxes, holiday promotions, cross merchandising and of course, samples will increase purchases as well

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Chapter 15

Craft shows and festivals

You can sell Phenomenal Fudge to many hundreds or even thousands of people in just one weekend at a craft show or festival. Here's how you do it.

Scheduling your shows

How much time you can spend at shows and how much money you want to earn is strictly a personal decision and it's your first step to determine the priority of scheduling shows. It can be a hobby, part time job or full time occupation.

Your second step is to find shows. Local newspapers will promote flea markets, school fundraisers or community craft shows. Larger shows are listed in regional craft show magazines. Talk with a local crafter or search the web for "craft shows" in your state.

Your third step is to apply to the shows, usually two to six months in advance. Some shows "jury" your craft before accepting you, requiring you to fill in an application and sending photos or images of the fudge and/or your display.

Designing your booth

The standard booth is 10 feet by 10 feet. Outdoor shows take a slight chance with the weather and a canopy tent is necessary. Some indoor vendors just use the canopy framework to hold lighting fixtures and decorative side curtains while others just utilize display tables to outline their booth.

Design enough elbow room into your booth so that both you and your customer feel comfortable.

Your customer needs to be drawn into your booth within three seconds and ten feet from your booth. Appropriate color schemes and lighting visually attract. Fudge samples arouse curiosity. Signs inform. Keep everything inviting and simple!

Transporting you and your fudge

In essence, your 1000 cubic feet of booth needs to fit smoothly and safely inside your much smaller vehicle. All your stuff will have to absorb a lot of abuse being hauled all over the place so protect it.

Plastic storage boxes from Staples with snap-on lids work well to pack many crafts. Cardboard boxes fall apart in the rain. A light-weight luggage wheelie will facilitate bringing boxes from your car to the booth site.

Use the same sized packing boxes so everything fits like a tight puzzle in your car with enough room for you to drive safely. Use bungee cords to secure the load and blankets to protect the vehicle's interior.

Remember: A simple booth is simple to transport, set up and take down.

Affording the overnight stay

If you can't make a decent profit selling your craft unless you sleep in your car at night you're doing the wrong show. Staying with relatives or friends can help cut costs and make the overnight stay lots of fun but often a motel or hotel room is an unavoidable cost of doing business.

"Expensive" rooms can be affordable if you consider the amenities included: free continental breakfast, indoor pool, exercise room, comfortable lounge, internet connections, etc. The proximity of inexpensive restaurants and access to business supply stores or copy shops can also be a real plus.

Use online discount hotel reservation businesses to get the best deals or get a reference from the show organizer. But a good night's sleep really is...priceless!

Bounce-back promotions

"Bounce back" means "come back to buy some more". Your satisfied customer is more apt to purchase more of your craft if you simply ask them to.

After your customer's purchase give them a discount or free product coupon good only for a limited time. Place in your customer's shopping bag a list of all the shows you'll be attending, especially those in their area so they can find you again.

If you have a retail store drive traffic to it with a special promotion. Encourage customers to visit your web site with a special offer to save money or to discover more of a variety of your craft.

Invite customers to get on your post card or email mailing list for specials offers.

Pricing it right

I once asked a fellow crafter how her sales were going for a particular day and she replied "Well, I made my table!" Whooptidoo, but what does that mean? \$100 in sales does not pay for a \$100 booth fee. Every expense comes out of gross profit, not sales.

Your show sales need to cover all costs such as transportation, booth fees and your labor plus leave you with some net profit for the business to expand. Your marketing ability determines all your income and your success.

The bottom line is to pay you a decent hourly wage. The money that's left over is the net profit to be invested back into the business to do it all over again.

Act the part

If you're selling clown hats you can dress and act like a clown. But don't wear clothing or behave in a manner that distracts from your craft.

Based upon your personal presentation a customer makes an unconscious appraisal of you as a salesperson in a matter of seconds. Are you clean, professional, trustworthy, fun, interesting, and intelligent? You'd better be because if you aren't, your competition in the next aisle is. Listen intently to what your customers say so they know you understand their needs.

Complement your booth in a way that shows you respect your customer while at the same time, promoting your product. Wear a professional name tag and give just enough personal attention to make a friend. Earn the sale in minutes, don't lose it in seconds.

Eating and drinking

Have breakfast two hours before the show. Enjoy a meal after the show. But during the show you need to speak and smile without interference.

Meals make messes while snacks are neat. Crumbs, spilled coffee and strange food odors silently destroy sales. Instead, bring your own mini-buffet.

Choose foods that don't get stuck in your teeth, make you cough or give you bad breath. Snack bars, grapes and yogurt cups work well. Regular tiny sips from a water bottle will keep you hydrated all day long.

Don't drink more than one cup of coffee before the show so you don't have to close down to go to the bathroom during the show. And always remember: you can't make sales with your mouth full.

Lighting your booth

Good lighting attracts customers in three ways: It spotlights your product, highlights your professional attitude and serves as a subtle beacon to passing customers.

Position your lights so they shine on your product but not on your customer's eyeballs. Spot lights frame individual products while track lights work well for well stocked displays.

Study lighting techniques of other crafters because there are hundreds of selections, combinations and prices. Figure out how you can transport fixtures in your car, hang them in your booth and make them unobtrusive to the customer.

Avoid using the bright orange extension cords unless you can hide them. Buying electricity hook-ups at shows can be expensive, but so is a booth hidden in the shadows.

Signing your booth

Let your signs be your silent salespeople as signs can be used to answer those silent customer questions such as:

Who made the craft? Is there a guarantee? Where was it made? Is the craft material hand made with "natural" ingredients? How much does it cost? Can it be ordered online? What are the benefits and features?

Never hand print signs unless you are an artist. Protect paper signs in Plexiglas sign holders. Place signs in front of the customer or high overhead for folks in the middle of the show aisle to know what you've got. Always use large, bold extremely readable font. Let your signs sell the sizzle while you sell the steak, or vice-versa.

Bags, boxes or both

Don't lose a \$20 sale for lack of a 4-cent plastic bag. A customer won't buy what they can't easily carry. Bags don't cost money...they increase sales.

Provide bags which have a hole or handle in the top for the customer's hand. Make the bag big enough to easily hold your average large sale. Plastic bags are lightweight, easy to pack, and don't break down when wet though some "green plastic bags" are being produced that will break down over a short period of time.

Office supply stores sell boxes of "Thank You" bags. Vendors can attach a bunch of them to a table-top with a strong clamp through the hand hold to grab singly as needed. Or custom order bags for the right color and size for your product. Go the extra marketing mile and have your name and/or logo printed on both sides but that can get expensive.

Marketing before and during shows

Your booth looks fantastic. You have a great product. The price is right. Now what else can you do to attract customers in the limited time you have?

Offer an online coupon or ad in the craft show organizer's web site. They're often free. See if they will display your brochure at the front desk. Take out an ad or offer a coupon in the show program or the local paper. Distribute coupons in the businesses surrounding the venue. Give local store managers a discount or free sample if they agree to make coupons available to their customers.

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Chapter 16

Fundraisers

There are three main benefits to your business for offering fudge for a fundraiser.

1. A fundraiser can sell a lot of fudge in a very short period of time providing profits to both you and the fundraising organization using volunteer labor.
2. A fundraiser will extend the reach of your store to customers who may have never been in your store or have never tasted your fudge.
3. A fundraiser creates valuable good will and community awareness not only for your fundraising group but for your business as well.

Your fundraiser can be organized in two different ways.

1. Your store can pledge a percentage of your store's in-house fudge sales over a set amount of time.
2. Your store can supply one-half or one-pound boxes of fudge for the fundraising group's members to sell outside your store in exchange for a commission.

With careful planning and basic oversight of the process a fundraiser can help both your business and the community simultaneously in a big way. And since fudge is a consumable product it can be repeated to the same customer base. We have found that future sales usually increase as more people become not only aware of your business but have personally tasted the quality of your fudge.

You are welcome to use the following "Fundraising Tips" form to distribute to prospective fundraising groups. Contact Phenomenal Fudge for sales order forms and other material that might help support your specific fundraising program.

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Fundraising tips

1. Pick a project

Raising funds for a monumental project can undermine the energy of the fundraiser volunteers themselves. It's sometimes better to break your project into smaller more realistic short term goals and reach the ultimate goal one success at a time.

For example, instead of raising funds for an entire tennis court, first have a fundraiser to buy the net. Then hold another to purchase the fencing. Have a party at the end of each fundraiser and recognize the best sellers. Give out certificates of appreciation to all participants.

With each successful fundraiser finished in a timely manner you will build enthusiasm for the next one. Your members will be more likely to look forward to the next one as nothing breeds success more than success itself.

2. Know your goal

The goal of the fundraiser is obvious. But what is the goal for each individual volunteer? Each sales person needs to know what is expected of them so they can form their own unique plan to make the necessary sales.

Don't forget that your total group's sales goal is determined by how much money is needed to fund your project. Pick a sales goal that, after costs are deducted, there will be enough money left over to pay for your project.

3. Pre-sell or pre-pack

Some fundraising groups have lots of members while others have just a handful. Some groups have members who have lots of time to sell while others can devote only a few hours a week. Which group is yours?

The pre-sell method of fundraising is for groups with lots of members and lots of time. Volunteers collect the orders and money upfront over a two-week period and then order the fudge to distribute later.

Small groups might find it more convenient to purchase pre-weighed and pre-packaged boxes of fudge to re-sell at their own personal convenience. Volunteers can sell them at malls or sporting events.

4. Timeline

The slogan "Better late than never" does not apply to a well-run fundraising program.

Volunteers need to know how long they have to sell and when they need to turn in the money. Organizers need time to double-check orders, deposit all the checks and cash, and then place the order for the product.

The order will require a set amount of time to be fulfilled and transported to the organizer's leader who then needs to double-check the order before distributing it to the volunteers. Volunteers need to know when they'll get the product and the customers need to know when to expect the goods they bought.

Make a timeline of things to be done and avoid compromises. One change can upset the entire plan.

5. Paperwork

Do not even think about doing a fundraiser without the proper paperwork. Order forms, receipts, sales summaries, posters, flyers, ads, name tags for sales people, etc. all have to be in order before you knock on the first door or make the first phone call.

And don't forget about supplying a money bag for each sales person. Your bank can loan you a few or you can purchase some pen/pencil cases for a few bucks. Have an adult assigned the role of treasurer who verifies that every order has been paid for. Have one person assigned the job to distribute the material to the sales people.

With proper planning you'll love the project. Without it no one will want to do it again.

6. Strict rules

A successful fundraiser could involve the handling of countless orders valued at hundreds, maybe thousands of dollars, destined for many customers from all over your town. Your sales staff needs clear direction. The fundraiser leader needs strict control over all the aspects of the project like a captain of a ship.

Organize your crew so that everyone knows what they need to do and who they are accountable to. You almost can't have too much organization because you're often dealing with youngsters who aren't used to handling money, schedules and merchandise all at once.

If the "Dos and Don'ts" are known by everyone right from the beginning your problems will be minimal and your fundraising project will run smooth as silk.

7. Receipts

Receipts often aren't necessary during a fundraising project as buyers and sellers are usually on a first name basis and all the money is going to a good cause. However, it still is a good business practice to supply receipts as it builds confidence with the buyer and professionalism with the seller.

A simple, small "fill-in-the-blanks" receipt can be duplicated many times on one sheet of paper which can be copied and handed out to the sales staff. Inexpensive sales slip pads (with carbon copy) can be purchased at office supply stores too!

A receipt from your fundraiser company is also recommended especially if your group needs to send in a check to pre-pay for the fundraising product.

8. Receiving the goods

When you receive all the cases of product from your supplier be extra careful to provide good security and organization. Before the goods arrive know exactly where the boxes will be safely stored. Boxes left overnight in an unlocked storeroom may disappear by morning.

At this stage less volunteers is best as too many hands can get involved in what could become a free-for-all grab session. Do not open cartons without the original order form available to cross check with the packing slip and your physical count of the contents. Inform the supplier of discrepancies.

Identical products should be grouped together on a tabletop or in a box. Have one person in charge of each table and one person in charge of the operation.

9. Distribution

Be sure to allow enough time to distribute the product to all the sales people at the same time. Instruct them to pick up the product in an orderly fashion one at a time, quietly, etc. Adults should be in charge of distributing product to the sales people.

How are your sales people going to pick up and carry the product they need to deliver? If the provider doesn't supply bags or boxes you can obtain them at an office supply store or grocery store.

Plastic bags with handle-holes work great and stay strong in the rain. Paperwork can be safely carried in pen and pencil bags or inexpensive notebooks or folders. Make

certain that every salesperson delivers the products in a timely manner.

10. Double-checking and oversight

When responsibilities are shared it's easier to find volunteers to help. A sales force confident of the organization will know that the work load will be reasonable and the stress will be minimal.

Work out a simple flow chart consisting of a time-line matched with the stages of the fundraiser. Then delegate volunteers to be in charge of each stage. Hand out a list of volunteers showing who is in charge of what. List the names, addresses, phone numbers, emails, etc. of those volunteers involved so anyone can quickly contact anyone if there is a problem.

If the fundraiser turns into a nightmare of mistakes no one will want to do it again. A well-oiled fundraiser breeds success and brings everyone back for more.

11. Choosing the fudge package

The selection of what fudge flavors you would like to sell and in what sizes is dependent upon four main factors: Desire, affordability, the enthusiasm of the sales force and the speed of final delivery. We suggest you should only sell half-pounds of the most popular fudge flavors over a two-week period covering two weekends. Choose between four and eight flavors to sell and provide delivery within ten days of the end of the sales period.

12. Keeping good records for next time

The team leader must keep good records for the next time a fundraiser is done. Make a list of all the positive things that happened and make another list of all the negative things that might have occurred.

Volunteers who excelled in one area might be just the right person in the same job next time. Those who did not do such a great job might perform better in another slot.

Did you need more bags, better communication, more order forms, better posters, more time, etc.? Could the sales staff use a lesson on salesmanship and responsibility? A thorough history of the fundraiser will make it easy to make positive changes and provide a valuable template for the team leader of the next fundraiser to follow.

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Chapter 17

How to price your fudge

Your customers trust you to charge a reasonable price to make a decent profit sufficient enough to stay in business. Here are a few different factors you need to consider before you set your price:

1. The customer service offered by your sales staff.
2. The looks of your display.
3. The positioning of your display.
4. Your store's customer traffic.

The price of a product is never as important as any of the above items but it should be a price that will allow you to do a few things:

1. Offer "deals" and still make a reasonable profit.
2. Be low enough to sell the fudge before the expiration date.
3. Be high enough to maximize your investment.

For example:

1. Double the cost you pay for our fudge.
2. Add the price for shipping spread out evenly over the tubs or the pounds of fudge.
3. Always offer a price break for the purchase of more fudge.
4. Use signage to tell the customer how much she will save with any deal.

Remember, every item in your store competes with every other item in your store. It's perfectly acceptable to adjust your price to meet changing market conditions. Give preference to your perishable items and any unique products that will promote word-of-mouth advertising to encourage future store traffic.

Helpful hints:

1. Order fudge bars in multiples of five to get the lowest shipping cost per pound.
2. Freeze bar halves in a freezer bag if you can't sell them in three weeks.
3. Order only the number of fudge tubs you can sell in two months.
4. Offer fudge samples to greatly increase sales.

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