

Wood Turning Marketing

Following are some of the many things I've learned about marketing and selling my turnings.

1. EXPOSURE, EXPOSURE, EXPOSURE.

a.) One could be the best turner in the country but if people don't know about the items nothing will be sold. I absolutely knew that turnings would be good exposure at our B&B.

b.) Local craft shows are invaluable in getting the exposure to the public. They are a lot of work and do have quite a cost but always generate sales at the shows AND future sales. You will be amazed of the number of compliment you receive. I am appreciative of this but I never let it go to my head. I've never deposited a compliment.

c.) Always treat potential customers equally. Don't try to mentally decide who is and who is not a purchaser. I've told many people at shows that I'm a wood turner not a salesman. More than one person has said that is the reason they were still there. Remember that it is a fine line between marketing, sales and a pain in the neck.

d.) The most surprising result of this exposure is the amount of commission work that customers ask for.

2. KNOW AND DON'T FORGET YOUR PAST CUSTOMERS.

a.) Occasionally I will do a specific turning with a customer in mind. When done I'll call them and say that I have a piece that they might be interested in. There is absolutely no pressure to purchase although they usually do.

b.) If a customer has me do several turnings (it's usually a gift for other family members) from a tree that have sentimental feelings I'll also turn some ice cream scoops or bottle stoppers. Some time after they pick up the works I'll mail them one of these items as a gift. They will then call to see if I have any more from that tree. Hmm, just so happens that I do.

3. CHARGE A FAIR PRICE.

a.) One has much time and expense in their work. Don't be afraid to ask a decent price for your product. The only complaint I have of other turners is when I see nice work and the turner won't ask a reasonable price. Under pricing is detrimental for everyone.

4. INTERNET.

a.) Jury's still out on this one. I haven't had it too long. I will say that it did help in getting a show at a gallery in Northern Virginia. It's a thirty day show in conjunction with seven other wood artists. Just like everything I've done so far- I don't have a clue where this will go.

Phil Evans

