

RIDGEWOOD MARKET VENDOR'S GUIDE

The Ridgewood Market is a rich community of passionate and talented creators. Participating in the Ridgewood Market is an exciting opportunity to share your hard work with the world. However, for first-time vendors, preparing for your first market can seem frightening and daunting. Below are some tips that can help make the experience fun and easy.

SET-UP

Arrive at least 2 hours early. This will give you time to try out different layouts, see what works best for your products, and leave plenty of time for clean up (and breakfast too!).

Don't forget to bring change! Try to have at least \$50 in singles and \$150 in fives.

Some other items you'll want to have handy:

- A spreadsheet of your inventory to keep track of sales
- Pen and Paper
- A notebook for collecting mailing list emails
- Calculator
- Scissors
- String
- Tape/glue
- Markers/crayons/color pencils

BRANDING

A brand is the identity of your product. A strong, cohesive brand establishes a relationship of trust and quality with your customers. It gives your product a distinct story and personality. Good branding allows for your product to stand out among competitors. Take advantage of every opportunity to reinforce your brand, such as:

- Packaging: Bags/price tags with your logo, stickers, labels; make sure you include a business card or have your contact information available with every purchase.
- How you dress: If possible, wear your product. Help your customers visualize how they can use your product to improve their lives.
- Business cards: Make sure these are readily available. Someone who is not quite ready to make a purchase today may want to get in touch with you later.
- Mailing-list/Social Media: Customer interaction shouldn't end after the market is over. Keep customer engagement by maintaining active social media channels. Providing meaningful content will give your customers a reason to keep coming back.
- Freebies: This may not apply to every business, but if you can, it's always nice to have something small you can give away to potential customers. Be sure to have your logo and contact info on your giveaway!

DISPLAY

A well designed display helps to reinforce your brand, attract customers, and helps you to stand out in the crowd. You should put as much attention into your display as you do your products. Your display is a chance to create an atmosphere and story for your product. Some ideas to get you started:

- Signage: Having some type of signage will allow customers to immediately identify your brand. Even if you don't have the resources for more elaborate signs, you can consider alternatives like printed fabric to drape over your table, smaller table signs or you can wear T-shirts printed with your brand's logo.
- Depth and dimension: People won't buy what they can't see. Make sure all your products are highly visible and easily accessible. Prop-up products at the back of your table. Consider keeping smaller items closer to the front.
- Rearrange: Don't be afraid to experiment with your layout. If something is selling really well, consider moving it to the front.
- Bundles: Customers love bundles! Instead of a buy two get one free sign, consider pre-packaging the items together.
- Use props to display your products and help reinforce your brand's personality. For example, if you're selling vintage goods, you can use old books or boxes to prop-up items. Use picture frames to display artwork. Colorful, ceramic dishes can be used to display smaller items like buttons or rings.

PRICE

When considering pricing, keep in mind the time, labor and money invested in your product. Only you can decide the value of your work. That said, it's always best to have a few options for different budgets. Consider offering a few tiers of products. Lower priced objects are good for an immediate sale. Customers not ready to spend on higher priced items may be prepared for a future investment. Be sure to share your contact information, and encourage potential buyers to sign-up for your mailing list.

SELLING

Smile! Be friendly! Try to avoid eating, playing with your cell phone or talking to friends. Make your customers feel special. Don't always go for the hard sell, but instead talk to your customers. Get to know their stories and share your story. Let them know what makes you and your product special. You've put a ton of hard work and passion into your product. Share that experience with your customers.

A final piece of advice in regards to vending: above all, treat this as a marketing opportunity. This is your chance to meet with your customers face-to-face. You have a first-hand opportunity to see what works and what doesn't, who your target audience is, how people are engaging with your product. Even if you don't make a sale today you've widened your network and given a potential client base the opportunity to meet with you in person. Hand out business cards, have a mailing list sign-up sheet ready and follow up with social media. We spend most of our time working alone. Take advantage of the market as an opportunity for real, human interaction and feedback. Remember to have fun and be creative!