

"We could not have imagined how much of an impact James Dillehay's advice would make on our business. To our delight we are seeing results on a faster and larger scale than we expected in such a short period of time!"

Ken Kobrick & Angela Geene,
www.Passchal.com,
featured on the Today Show

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Publisher
James Dillehay

Contact
Craftmarketer.com
Warm Snow Publishers
PO Box 75
Torreon NM 87061
505-384-1195

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Working with themes for marketing your arts and crafts is not just a good idea for home parties. Themes work in many other ways. People identify with special ideas and objects like cats or dolphins or sports.

Craft Marketer

NEWSLETTER

Selling Your Crafts at Home Parties

by *James Dillehay*

When I first began weaving, I sent one of my wearable art crafts as a Christmas gift to my sister, she liked the piece so much she set up a home party and invited a dozen of her friends.

I gave a twenty minute demo of how I wove and assembled my pieces while my sister took care of refreshments. To my delight, I sold about \$250 in the two hours and had a great time. As a reward, I gave my sister another piece of her choice.

As an alternative to giving merchandise to the host, you could offer a commission of 10 to 15% of the sales.

Seasonal themes for home parties

The best season for a home show is the month before Christmas, as this is the hottest selling period of the year.

But any special occasion can be a great reason for a home party. The idea is that having a theme creates buzz and excitement. Your prospects are thinking, "what a great idea, I think

I'll go."

Here are a few ideas for creating themes and using special occasions:

- For the upcoming Fourth of July, host a red-white-and-blue home party. Put a collection of crafts together with patriotic themes.
- My Favorite Charity Party: Host a crafts home party to raise money for a charitable organization. Make sure everyone knows some of the proceeds are going to be donated.
- St Patricks Day Party: Got green crafts or Irish art? Bring them out on St. Patty's Day.
- Bridal Shower Party: Weddings are happening year round. Pitch your bridal arts and crafts items.
- Baby Shower Party: Arts and crafts toys and clothing for toddlers.
- New You or New Home Party: New Years is the perfect time to begin redecorating your home with handcrafted items or spiffing up your image with wearable art.
- Open House/Studio Party: Get people into your studio and show them how your crafts are made.
- Wine and Cheese Party: Do people like free wine and cheese? You bet. Lots of galleries serve wine and cheese at artist openings.

Home parties provide an easy, fun atmosphere for selling arts and crafts. You don't have rent or booth fees to pay like at craft shows. You also won't have to stand on your feet the whole weekend.



James Dillehay
Helping You Profit from Your Creativity

James' craft marketing books have been highly recommended by The Crafts Report, Family Circle, Sew News, Bead & Button, Country Almanac, Sunshine Artist, Ceramics Monthly, Working Mothers and many more craft magazines. He serves on the advisory boards of the National Craft Association and ArtisanStreet.com.

Getting people to a home party

Here's some ideas for getting the word out about your home parties. Try all of them and then track which approaches work best in your situation. Then focus on the methods that pull best.

- Create a simple catalog you can print from your on computer. Send your catalog to customers who've bought from you in the past along with a note asking them to host a home party.
- Place your catalog in the teachers lounge at your child's school or in the lunch room where you or your spouse work.
- Get a booth at your kid's school fair.
- Place a calendar of events listing in your local newspapers.
- Drop off catalogs in the reception area of your doctor, chiropractor or dentist's office.
- Hire a local teenager to place your catalogs along with a discount coupon in your neighbors' doors.
- Place an announcement for your home party in your church newsletter.
- Schedule your party before or after your school's PTA meeting.

- Ask your relatives to host a crafts home party for you.
- Make friends with local realtors and create a "welcome to the neighborhood home party" for new families moving in.
- Offer to do a demonstration of your crafts at a craft supply store.
- Create your own crafts bridal registry and wish list. Get a booth at bridal shows.
- Use postcards to follow up with existing customers. Mention your home party plan.
- Always have extra catalogs to pass around wherever you go throughout the day.

Another way of profiting from craft home parties is becoming a direct sales representative for an arts and crafts party plan business or partnering with a rep who has already developed a network. For a list of craft home party companies, see www.homepartyplannetwork.com/homepartydirectory/artsandcrafts.htm

If the idea of doing craft home parties appeals to you, check out Louise Longworth's site with great articles all about creating a home party business at www.craft-selling-parties.com

Learn more about creating a successful crafts business from home with ***The Basic Guide to Selling Arts and Crafts***, (Warm Snow Publishers). Everything you'll need to know to start your own business; succeed at craft fairs and trade shows; sell to stores, interior designers, and corporations; pricing tips, extra income ideas and more.