

A. Ways to Educate Your Customer that Lead to Sales

1. On-line: Today it's hard to talk about sales without addressing the on-line shopping avenue. The competition here is fierce and an undeniable reality for any industry. Whether you offer on-line sales or not, to be competitive you need to show up and stay active with some type of web presence.
2. The most recently published survey of the state of the Needle Arts Industry by TNNA (The National Needleworks Association) indicates that most buyers' journeys begin on-line. The data that we have obtained from our returned warranty cards supports this theory.

One of my primary roles here at Schacht is to open new dealerships. In this capacity, I do my homework to determine eligibility which often has me research the potential dealer as well as current Schacht dealerships. Many shop sites I view, of both types, present a very yarn centric focus. If a shop's website doesn't offer much information, I dig deeper and look at Facebook and Blogs and other social media platforms. Sometimes a shop will have only a Facebook page and no website. Blogs may have posts with the most recent post being months or even years old. The same can be said for class offerings with outdated calendars.

A potential customer is getting the same information about the shop that I am, which in many cases is very limiting. I may question if a shop is active. A surprising number of our current dealers don't have Schacht products featured as a stocked product. Keeping your information current and vibrant lets customers know that you are active and a resource for their needs. Having a strong internet presence gives you the advantage of being part of the buyer's journey.

3. Here are some on-line education fundamentals
 - a. Present Schacht product and all your other product offerings on your website. HAVE a website! Let customers know what you have!
 - b. If you have other on-line presence (social media) such as Facebook or a Blog, keep it current.

- c. Present Schacht/weaving/spinning on those platforms as well. If you haven't already be sure to watch Ben's previous webinars on Social Media Basics and What to Post When
- d. E-newsletters are a popular format where customers get their information. The TNNA survey listed this as the number one place that customers prefer to get their information.

B. Classes/Education

- e. Teaching is a critical component to a shop's success and is important to the success of the fiber industry. Classes help build community and most importantly your business.
- f. I enjoy taking classes to broaden my skills for my long time interests as well as exploring new avenues in the fiber world. I really appreciate when a shop holds my interest with changing the class offerings. The tried and true introductory classes are essential for beginners and new customers but new classes and instructors liven up the mix and support your long-term devoted customers.
- g. We support the Cricket Loom with a lot of material on the Dealer Resources page. You'll find Cricket Club Handouts and curriculum for starting a club, much like a knit night, it can be another opportunity to build or create a new community in your shop.
- h. Yarn tastings are popular with many shops and customers. Try having a weaving and spinning tasting. Have a dedicated presentation of weaving on the Cricket, School Loom, Inkle loom, Zoom Loom. Do the same with spinning wheels and equipment.
- i. Initiate a weave-a long.

4. Product:

- a. The Schacht product line is extensive and comprehensive. There is a lot to offer and in turn – a lot to know about the products and product lines. Whether you carry some or all, there are multiple companion items to most products and these should be presented to your customer. The second most important thing to a customer, according to the TNNA survey, is that the staff is knowledgeable about the fiber arts.
- b. R.H. Small looms remain very popular. The Cricket is our best-selling product.

- c. Add-on sales using the Cricket Loom below
 - i. Kit is fabulous and gives a customer everything they need to go home and start weaving: loom, warping peg, shuttles, 8 dent reed, heddle hook, instructions, project ideas, and even yarn to make ONE project. Everything to keep them exploring their new-found fiber art.
 - ii. What is NOT included (these are great add-on sales):
 1. Additional reeds – desirable for future projects and countless opportunities to explore all kinds of yarn
 2. A stand – which I personally think is an essential accessory. I wouldn't weave without one – unless I was going to a class or Cricket club.
 3. THEN I would need my beautiful (hand signed free trade etc) bag to transport my loom and accessories.
 4. AND, for inspiration and instruction – books and DVDs. We have recently begun to offer more titles to our list of books and DVDs. Reference the current pricelist on our website as a quick reference for all of the available titles and refer back to it for recent additions. We have a Dedicated Books & DVDs category on our website with descriptions.
 5. For the Cricket and Flip looms, great resources are these books: *Weaver's Idea Book* by Jane Patrick, *Weaving Made Easy* by Liz Gipson, *Woven Scarves* by Jane Patrick and Stephanie Sokolov, *Simple Woven Garments* by Sarah Goldenberg and Jane Patrick, *Inventive Weaving on a Little Loom* by Mitchell, and these DVDS: *Weaving on a Rigid Heddle Loom* by Jane Patrick, *Slots & Holes* and *Life after Warping*, both by Liz Gipson.
 6. Other helpful things to have on hand: extra shuttles, pick up sticks, replacement apron cords, and extra heddle hooks.
- d. The same principle can be applied to the rest of our primary products.
 - i. Spinning Wheels

1. Know what comes with each wheel and suggest additional accessories to enhance their spinning experiences, current & future.
 2. Obvious and essential: oil bottle, replacement parts, drive bands, string & springs, threading hooks.
 3. Other desirable accessories: additional whorls, bulky packages (we'll fit all whorls to both flyers at the time of wheel order).
- e. You don't have to be a weaving or spinning expert but you need to have the basic information to support the product and your customer. But, you get the idea... Stock it – be Their Resource, build the trust! For your reference we have created list helpful list of our primary products. These are available to you at the end of this guidebook.
- f. The TNNA survey states that it is important to customers that products are in stock (or they may go online)

C. Ways to Save Money in Ordering and Shipping

1. There are some products that lend themselves to savings on shipping when ordered in specific quantities. We did some sample shipping estimates from Schacht to a Midwest address as examples.
 - a. Crickets. The best product discount is available when you order 3 or more Crickets. There are also savings to be had in shipping. Here is a breakdown that illustrates savings in shipping when ordering higher quantities.

1	\$7.45
3	\$9.76
4	\$11.20
8	\$19.52
 - b. Flip Looms recent cost saving initiative

1 20"	\$9.76
2 strapped together	\$14.92
 - c. Floor Looms (not Pups) 1, 2, and possibly 3 ship for the same price. Here is the current average price in the continental US.

Residential \$208.70

Commercial \$178.80

d. Matchless spinning wheels have quite a bit of extra space for shipping additional accessories. It is wise to take advantage of this and order accordingly.

2. For customer specific orders it is practical to sell and order add-on items at the time of sale. This allows for one shipment and potentially one drop ship fee.

D. Ways to Communicate with your Customer that Engages Them

1. On-line

I've already stressed the need to have a strong web presence. This is crucial for communicating with customers. BUT - the communication obtained from the web goes both ways – it is also a place for you to do research to take advantage of what is going on in your community, area, and to research trends in the industry. The goal is to know who your customers are and how to serve them.

a. Check out local guilds and see what workshops are offered. Is there a class offered where specific supplies and equipment will be needed by customers?

b. Is there a fiber retreat in your vicinity that you can sponsor or be a participant?

c. Is there a traveling fiber “rock-star” coming to your area? Contact them to offer discounts to their participants. Are you hosting those rock stars in your shop?

As an attendee of retreats in various locations, I will absolutely investigate any other fiber shops or opportunities in the area. Not just in the immediate location – I am willing to travel to take it all in.

d. Embrace the power of Pinterest! It has a wealth of visual inspiration. It is a great source to see trends in the fiber world. One

of the current popular trends is weaving tapestries both traditional and more structural on a small loom. Our School Loom sales have increased dramatically over the last several months. They are ideal for exploring these types of woven creations.

e. In addition to Pinterest, Ravelry is another great resource for what's trending in the fiber community – be a part of it and use it to your advantage.

2. Visual Communication

a. Having a strong on-line visual presence is a necessity in communicating to customers. As I mentioned earlier, current and consistent content is key to getting accurate and motivating information to your customer.

b. As a shopper, I appreciate a shop that presents a strong brand identity. I'm not necessarily drawn to one look over another. I just respond the most to those shops that have an obvious positive personality. Admittedly, I am a sucker for a good logo and clear and engaging visuals be they on-line or in-store.

c. In-store – it's extremely important to present a unified front. I appreciate a friendly greeting when I walk into a yarn store – more than any other type of retail experience. I think it goes back to the sense of community I so appreciate as a fiber person. Friendliness is the top answer in the TNNA survey of what is important to customers.

d. Effective merchandising is so important – store wide. “Announce” that you carry Schacht looms and wheels by presenting them in an easy to see location in your shop. Have one or more warped looms with companion finished projects. I have been inspired to purchase from many a sample! A sample AND an available kit? – Perfect!

3. One on One

a. I think one of the most important things to provide is a friendly and knowledgeable staff. The direct one-on-one with customers is one of the most valuable forms of communication.

b. Do not underestimate the buying power of a group of shoppers. They are their own micro community and share the same love of - possibly - all things fiber. Knitters are a lot about community and seek out retailers with a similar sensibility. Personally, I have participated in various group inspired shopping extravaganzas – to various degrees. One of the best was 5 or 6 of us (attending a retreat in another state) in love with a particular yarn and colorway. It was a Manos yarn and we were going to have a Manos challenge. One bought enough for a sweater and the rest of purchased varying amounts of the exact same yarn, same colorway. The beautiful thing was that the shop had the inventory to support our endeavor! I could easily see this same group intrigued by a weaving challenge or introducing a small loom to our repertoire.

c. Aspire to be the best source of information, product, and inspiration with your enthusiastic connections to customers

Rigid heddle looms:

<p>For the Beginner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Loom-Stand-Bag-Variable dent reed-Supporting reeds-Pick up sticks <p>Books/DVDs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Weaver's Idea Book, Jane Patrick-Weaving Made Easy, Liz Gipson-Slots and Holes, Liz Gipson-Weaving on a Rigid Heddle Loom, Jane Patrick	<p>Advanced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-4 ½ yard warp board-9" mini boat shuttle-4" bobbins-Single ended hand winder <p>Books/DVDs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Life After Warping, Liz Gipson-Inventive Weaving on a Little Loom, Syne Mitchell-Woven Scarves, Jane Patrick + Stephanie Flynn-Sokolov-Simple Woven Garments, Jane Patrick + Sara Goldenberg
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Spinning:

<p><u>Spindles and Recommended Fiber:</u> Pear Tahkli – cotton Navajo Spindle - Churro Wool 2” Drop Spindle - Silk 3” Drop Spindle – Alpaca 4” Drop Spindle – Wool DVD: Getting started on a Drop Spindle, Maggie Casey</p>	<p><u>Spinning Wheels and Accessories:</u> Sidekick: -Whorls (all but extra slow) -Collapsible lazy kate -Bag -Bulky flyer package Ladybug: all whorls, LB lazy kate, bulky flyer package Matchless: all whorls, cart, bulky flyer package Schacht Reeves: whorls <u>Other Accessories:</u> Fiber Prep: Carders, Aprons Finishing: Ultra Umbrella Swift, Niddy Noddy, Dizzy Yarn Gauge</p>
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Spinning Books and DVDs:

<p>Beginners: DVDs Start Spinning book and video, Maggie Casey Spinning Big and Lofty Yarns, Maggie Casey 12 Ways to Spin Batts, 12 Ways to Spin Hand Painted Top, Jillian Moreno Books How to Spin, Beth Smith The Practical Spinner’s Guide- Wool, Kate Larson</p>	<p>Intermediate: DVDs How to Spin Art Yarns, Esther Rodgers Gentle Art of Plying, Judith MacKenzie Books Spinner’s book of Fleece, Beth Smith Field Guide to Fleece, Deb Robson + Carol Ekarius Spinner’s Book of Yarn Design, Sarah Anderson The Practical Spinner’s Guide- Silk, Sara Lamb</p>	<p>Advanced: DVDs Spin Flax and Cotton, Norman Kennedy Three Bags Full, Judith MacKenzie Spinning to Get Even, Beth Smith Books Spin to Weave, Sara Lamb The Practical Spinner’s Guide- Rare Luxury Fibers, Judith MacKenzie</p>
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