

Q: How will you know that your business is successful?

- Sales exceed amount invested
- Name recognition/word of mouth referrals
- People starting to contact me rather than me contacting them
- When I don't have to rely on other sources of income
- (If you can answer positively the question): Are you happy?
- You are producing the kind of art you want to be producing
- (If you can answer positively the question): Do you sleep well at night?

Q: What needs do you have as a business owner?

- Health insurance. One of my biggest fears is getting sick.
- More venues to show locally (beyond coffee shops, 3rd floor of the hospital, etc.).
- More opportunities to teach.
- Studio space (like in Brattleboro and Peterborough) for art projects that require large equipment or messes
- A studio space where I go to find community, not just space.
- The community is spoiled...there are so many artists, but not much support.
- The flip side view of this is my experience with the Walpole Artisans group. Some of our biggest sales have been to people from Keene. And, at the same time, the group spends the least amount on marketing in Keene.
- This region gets forgotten. We have to go somewhere else to get what we need.
- We need some sort of collaborative focus between all the groups that want to do something for the arts—Arts Alive, Hannah Grimes, Small Business Development, Keene State College. These efforts are currently disparate.
- Everybody needs to work together in downtown community.
- Newspapers need to promote arts better, more.
- Find a balance between running business and making art. The business takes all energy away from making art. I often don't know what I should be doing and am just treading water.
- Need advice about how to make business more business-like.
- Problem with website is that don't have time to maintain and when come back to it two years later have to relearn everything. I'm not marketing guy, web-designer, grant-writer, or accountant, but I have to be. This way I have to relearn stuff constantly; it's inefficient to be teaching myself skills again and again.
- How could I make money to do art? I can't quite make both the same thing. I know how to run a business and wanted to offer my services for how artists can

run business, but nobody (no artists) can afford to pay me. There should be grants to support someone who has those skills so that they can provide them.

What resources, programs or people have helped you strengthen your business? Why do you think they've work for you?

- Received entrepreneurial grant from NH Council of the Arts that helped set up website. Also attended workshops—helpful.
- Work with Anna Conner as business coach. Good to use someone outside of the circle that gives me a reality check and helps keep me on task. But expensive.
- Lucky to have relationships with established artists. Good for asking questions and getting feedback.
- A place like Sharon Arts Center...that helps to have people who take care of selling art.
- Getting my art to good galleries provides a support system.
- SBDC invaluable with business loan.
- BAEN Program in Brattleboro is a bi-monthly dinner that costs \$10 for anybody to attend. Artists submit proposal for grant and people vote on which artist the money from the dinner goes to.

What keeps your business from supporting you and your family?

- Amount of sales
- Time (sometimes)
- The business is seasonal
- Economy
- We have a perceived value problem not so much an economy problem.
- This area is “rich in us.” Lots of people in the area are interested in buying art. We just need a good marketing campaign.
- Character challenge to Keene. People go to restaurants, but don't support art.
- We need to look at success stories, like Brattleboro and Burlington, which turn around perception of downtown to a place where people really want to go.
- I don't think it's the consumer (who discourages the support of art). It's the people who open restaurants, businesses, etc. When the YMCA was built they wanted to use our business, but the architects from Boston didn't support that.
- There is no mandate from the community, contractors, builders, and others to use local people in building projects.

What long term goals do you have for your business? And how will you finance these projects? Where do you see yourself in 3 years?

- Be a part of a community space.

- Developing something like the Torpedo factory in Alexandria, VA—open studio space.
- 180 Emerald bldg. by Carpet Clearance Warehouse tried to get a concentration of artists on one section of bldg. Need to get those who own those spaces to buy into the concept into the concept of community.
- Space to work, exhibit, walk across hall from other artists and network.
- A place to teach art; provide part-time job income.
- More help from community.
- Would an artist cooperative be an appropriate model?
- Doesn't have to be a cooperative. Wool Mills in Lowell, MA is a successful model. It was a political initiative from state and city.
- Brickbottom Artists Cooperative in Summerville—100 artists agreed to build in vacant A&P bakery and cannery space. It's a model that's successful—they've been in the building over 20 years, with open studios once per year. Only thing is that the artists don't have much business sense. They need help from a financial planner.
- Studio space. Know that Hannah Grimes has space, but that isn't what we want. More of an artist community with 4 white walls, bare floor with laundry tub sinks.
- It's not just a building I want; it's community. People don't even know where I am.
- There are not return costumers in this area.

Other than things out of your control...weather, economy...What's your greatest challenge to being profitable?

- Exposure
- Health care...Even after great year, still know won't have health care
- Don't have business head.
- Advertising. Always taking chances with which route to take. Don't have frame of reference for what's successful.

What aspect of marketing do you feel you need to know more about?

- Social media...not hooked into it
- People need to see art and feel it rather than just websites
- Building the brand. Make the brand conjure up something for people.
- Pricing issues.
- Important for artist to have simple one page webpage...need help with back-end part of it (not just design).
- Resume-building.

- Artist bio help.
- Grant writing.
- Need step-by-step help with grant writing. How do you match what you do with grants out there?
- Residency or fellow-ship would be ideal. It would allow me to focus on art without worry about family and support...just having focused time for showing body of work. Struggling finding who to talk to about this or if I am even qualified or of interest for residency or fellowship.
- Brattleboro and Peterborough art walks good model.
- Weekend event in Portsmouth good.
- Percent for Art program—Where does that exist in this region?
- Need marketing about Keene as destination.