

# Starting Your Own Small Art Business

By Maggie Thompson

*So you want to start your own small art business! Good for you! Here are a few pointers for getting you started.*

## Create an "Identity"

The single most important thing you can do when starting your business is to decide "who" you are artistically and what are you offering for sale that's unique. Coming up with a logo is the best way to sell yourself and your creations so spend some quality time doing this. It'll make a huge difference in your marketplace "presence" by helping your customers remember you.

You'll need some business cards to hand out too - preferably with your logo on them. I've been using Vistaprint for over 10 years and have been very happy with their service.

## Get a State Sales & Use Tax Number

This is the first step to legalizing your artistic business and is a **MUST**. This number gives you the ability to sell your designs, items, creations, etc in a particular given state. You'll need one for each state in which you choose to sell.

It also gives you the ability to purchase supplies from wholesalers at reduced wholesale prices and without paying sales tax on them.

When you sell your goods and/or services you'll be collecting sales tax from your customers and will have to pay those taxes to the State of MN (or wherever your home state is).

Once you've received your Sales & Use Tax ID be sure to check out how your particular state expects payment - some states have a quarterly system while others only collect annually. This might also depend on your total annual sales.

Additionally each state requires you to renew your tax ID at varying intervals. Be sure to check each state's requirements so your number is always up to date.

I personally have tax IDs in MN, AZ, PA and WI because I do vendor and/or teaching shows in these venues.

Since most of you will be starting your businesses here in MN or WI here are the links to the MN & WI websites where you can apply for Tax ID numbers.

**Minnesota:** <https://www.revenue.state.mn.us> highlight "Businesses" at the top, then click on "Register for a Tax ID Number"

**Wisconsin:** <https://www.revenue.wi.gov> click on "Businesses" then click on "Online Registration"

## **Get a Point of Sale System**

In addition to getting a Tax ID you're going to need a way to keep track of your goods and services for sale.

If you're going to sell at bead shows, bead society meetings, etc. then you'll need to get a Point of Sale (POS) system. There are quite a few out there so research which one you think will best suit your needs. I have Square and have been very happy with them for the past 10 years. Visit their website [www.square.com](http://www.square.com) to see if this system might meet your requirements.

## **Get an Online Website Platform**

If you're looking to sell online then you'll need a website platform. Again, there are numerous ones out there so you'll have to do your research. I set up my website through Square since my POS was already through them - this made for a nice seamless integration for my business.

Even though I now have my website through Square I did begin with an Etsy shop 10 years ago. At the time it was fantastic for a small seller like myself. Unfortunately they've been gradually increasing their overhead fee rates. At this time their fee rates range from 15-25% of your sale price on any given item. When I began my shop the rate was around 2%. Needless to say Etsy has now become one of the most expensive ways to sell your goods. Just for comparison purposes, my Square website fee rate averages around 3%.

Since I've had quite a large following on Etsy for several years and didn't want to lose these customers, I decided to keep my shop but migrate all my physical items over to my Square website. Currently my Etsy shop has all my downloadable PDF patterns, the most inexpensive items to sell.

## **Sell On Facebook**

This is another way you can choose to sell your goods and services. There are no overhead costs involved which makes this the most inexpensive option. Another advantage is you can take your time deciding which POS and/or website you prefer while still getting your name and brand in the public eye. The biggest drawback to selling on Facebook is you can't sell in person at shows and/or events.

There are also many FB groups that allow you to sell your goods. Each group has its own particular rules and set up so do your research and see which ones best fit your needs.

You'll also have to decide how you want to accept payments. PayPal is a great way to handle this for your Facebook sales. If you don't have a PayPal account consider getting one.

I'm sure there are a lot of other options available - these are just a few that I'm familiar with. Please feel free to email me with any questions you may have - [maggie.t.designs@gmail.com](mailto:maggie.t.designs@gmail.com)

Happy Creating my Friends!

Maggie Thompson

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