

Selling More Art: 8 Principles From A Master Fisherman An Art Marketing Metaphor
from B. Eric Rhoads

<http://images.radcity.net/6047/4665120.jpg>

The blowing white snow was blinding, and my cheeks felt like they were about to shatter from the bitter cold. I cannot remember ever being colder than I was as we walked across the ice to my grandfather's ice-fishing shack on Lake Wawasee. My grandfather Walter Melvin Felloews Rhoads was a master fisherman, and this was my first of many annual trips to sit atop the ice, over a hole, waiting for a fish.

My childhood was filled with fishing experiences, and with lessons from my grandfather. Though my brother Dennis got the fishing gene in our family, I think my grandfather, a business owner, would be happy that I've translated his fishing advice to marketing advice that applies to art galleries and artists.

Are your fish biting?

Are you selling enough art?

Try using these eight principles to evaluate your art marketing strategy.

8 Ways To Sell More Art

The 8 principles of fishing and marketing:

1. Fish Don't Bite If Your Line Is Not in the Water A funny thing happens when you don't advertise. Nothing. People who believe the world will beat a path to their door if they have great artwork are simply naive. People who believe their customers will remember them because they used to advertise are also naive. If at any time your artwork is not selling, ask yourself if your line is in the water.

2. The More You Cast, the More You Catch A good fisherman casts the line out and keeps the bait moving at all times, winding the line in, then throwing it back out again. Fishing, like selling, is a numbers game. In marketing, it's repetition. Repetition builds reputation. Repetition has a cumulative effect. Campaigns with repetition work where single ads or e-mails rarely do. Imagine going fishing, casting one time, and going home if you don't catch a fish.

3. Fish Won't Bite Bait They Don't Like

Know the fish in the lake you're fishing. If you're using worms and they'll bite only crickets, you're wasting your time. In advertising, you need bait your audience wants. If you're advertising to an affluent audience, they won't buy low-quality products. If you're advertising to a low-quality audience, they can't buy expensive items. Match the bait to the audience. Targeting can be very effective, but never advertise without understanding your target buyer. Start by looking for patterns among those who already buy from you.

4. If Fish Aren't Biting, Change Your Technique If casting doesn't work, try trolling. If trolling doesn't work, try bobber fishing. If your marketing isn't

working, try something different. Are your ads the same year after year? Are you trying anything new? Are you offering an incentive? Sameness does not get noticed. Are you blending in? Do you look like everyone else? Are your ads boring? Maybe it's time to change.

5. Fish Like Shiny Objects

The little reflectors on lures shimmer just like minnows and attract fish. Effective advertising requires shiny objects to get attention. Most art ads are the same: artist name at the top, an image, and a logo at the bottom. Few advertisers are willing to push the limit with ads that stand out and command attention. Look up the new ad from colorist Camille Prezwodek in PleinAir magazine. She is breaking the rules, and my guess is that it will be more effective if she continues it with repetition.

Effective ads contain a strong, attention-getting headline, a powerful image, copy to sell the reader, a call to action, and a strong incentive to stimulate action.

6. If You've Out-Fished the Lake, Find a New One Some lakes are out of fish. If you've been talking to the same audience for decades and they are no longer buying, maybe you need a new audience. The big mistake is assuming your "A-list" database is still capable of buying. Attrition makes every list 15 percent less effective, every year. And because the economy wiped out a lot of wealth, 50 to 60 percent of your list may not be buying anymore. You should be rebuilding a list of new prospects by advertising to new audiences.

7. Stand in the River of Flowing Fish

Do your homework. Find out who has audiences of people who have the money to buy. These days the ultra-affluent and affluent are still spending. If you're not fishing in that river, there are fewer fish to catch.

8. Fishing Is Not All About the Catch

My grandfather didn't just fish just for the catch, he fished for the quiet, the time with friends, the time to think, and the challenge. Advertising is not all about the catch. There are side benefits that are often more important than the catch itself.

Most galleries put all their hopes on a single advertised painting, but the odds are that only a small percentage of people will like that artist, that style, or that particular piece. That painting might not sell, and the gallery assumes the ad didn't work. But that's not necessarily so.

Every ad should be designed to mine the names of new potential buyers and drive people to your website, where they can browse through a thousand paintings. Just because the phone didn't ring and the painting didn't sell does not mean the ad didn't work. What about new traffic on your site? I highly recommend creating an incentive to get people to your website so you can get their contact information.

Can You Catch New Customers in This Economy?

Many galleries and artists are suffering with reduced sales and blaming it on the economy. Yet other galleries are thriving, selling more artwork than ever. Those who are succeeding today are not doing the same things they've always done,

they're trying new things and tapping new markets. Plus, these galleries are remaining visible when their competitors are remaining invisible to save money, thus stealing the competition's customer list. Historically, a bad economy is when aggressive new companies win by advertising when their competitors are trying to save money.

That's one of the best kept secrets of marketing.

Eric Rhoads

3 Places To Catch More Customers

The Most Ultra-Affluent Art Audience in America:

Fine Art Connoisseur <blocked<http://www.fineartconnoisseur.com>> magazine's audience is made up of the most affluent art collectors in America. It includes the upper 1 percent of wealth in America, including over 300 billionaires and 1,500 deca-millionaires (net worth over \$10 million), 25,000 art collectors, distribution in most private jet ports, in many high-end hotels, and of course on newsstands. This is the audience BUYING today. Fine Art Connoisseur is an excellent audience to expose your brand, build your list, and drive traffic to your site. The magazine is edited by curator and former museum director Peter Trippi.

An Efficient Way to Reach Art Galleries:

Artists wishing to increase their sales need to increase the number of sales agents selling their work, since most galleries are selling less artwork today. If you are an artist hoping to build your art business, you should consider increasing the number of galleries and regions representing your work.

Artist Advocate <blocked<http://www.artistadvocatemagazine.com>> magazine is distributed to most of the galleries in America selling original artwork -- over 18,000 (6,500 print and the balance via digital editions) in all -- and many artists have secured their first gallery representation or additional galleries through Artist Advocate and are selling more artwork as a result. Artist Advocate magazine is also an excellent advertising environment for framers, lighting companies, consultants, shipping companies, insurance agencies, and others who have a product to expose to galleries. The magazine now includes business and marketing articles for art galleries.

Reaching the Artist/Collector Market:

Thousands of art buyers attend events where the artists paint on location and sell artworks. These collectors tend to hop from event to event around the U.S., collecting plein air works and finished studio paintings. As of this week, PleinAir <blocked<http://www.outdoorpainter.com>> magazine has returned, with Editor M. Stephen Doherty. Hundreds of affluent artists use plein air painting as a hobby, and still buy paintings. Over 50,000 artists are estimated to be participating in the outdoor painting movement, all of whom attend workshops and buy paint, easels, canvas, and other studio and outdoor painting supplies.

To learn more about advertising in any or all of these publications in the Streamline Art Network, contact Charlie Bogusz, Director of Advertising, at 970-

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