

How to Organize and Run an Artisan Display

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The first thing to remember, with any large project, is to start organized and stay organized. Before you begin setting up and running an artisan display, make sure that you dedicate one file folder, note pad, Excel document or whatever you prefer to keep track of all of the people that you speak with, what they say, what decisions were made, as well as an updated list of follow-items to be complete. This will not only help to keep you on top of everything and be responsive to those with which you are working, but it will also be a great reference to learn from after the event.

Below, is a list of steps that should be followed, in general, to organize and run a successful artisan display at nearly any event. Keep in mind that you should always check for any unique circumstances that may exist for each event at which an artisan display is held and make adjustment accordingly. Every event differs in size, layout, attendance, etc., so it will be necessary to take all of these things into account.

Most importantly, remember to always be as considerate as possible of the event stewards and all those involved in the organization of the event. Make sure to keep communications relevant and purposeful. Each person involved in the event has a number of responsibilities and everyone's job will be much easier if the lines of communication are kept open and gracious.

- 1.) Begin by contacting the event steward for the event to inquire if they are interested in having an artisan display. Often, as with baronial events, arrangements for some sort of artisan event may have already been made. If the stewards are interested in having an artisan display, then inquire as to whether they have someone that they would like to run it to whom you could offer assistance or if they would like for you to organize the display.
- 2.) Once the decision to hold an artisan display has been made, the logistics of the display must be addressed by asking a number of questions:
 - How much room are the stewards able to provide for the display?
Make sure that there is a specific location set aside for the display before the event. The attendance and level of the event will play a big part in how much room you will need. A Kingdom level event will likely have much more traffic coming through the artisan display area, as well as a larger number of artisans who will want to participate in the display than a shire or some baronial events.
 - Where will the artisan display area be located?
Ideally, you will want to accompany the event stewards on their walk through of the site so that you can both confirm the location of the artisan display and get its dimensions in order to map its layout ahead of time. It is preferable that the location also be easily accessible by event attendees. At the same time, it is also important to ensure that the display will not be

in the way of the normal flow of the event. This is why it will be important to speak with the event steward and gather their input. For outside events, it will also be important to keep the weather in mind. If it will be hot, the display will need shade. If it is predicted to be windy, the display area will probably need to be held in a walled tent so display items are not damaged or blown away.

-Will the event stewards be able to provide tables through the site?

If tables are not available on site or if there will not be enough tables on site, then you will need to request that the artisans bring their own. If it is likely that there will be a large number of artisans participating in the display, then you may want to designate the amount of table room that is available and possibly have the artisans pre-register with you – of course, making sure to leave some room for those who forget to do so.

-What time does set-up begin for the event?

Ask the event stewards if you may show up with the early set up crew in order to arrange the artisan display space well before the event begins.

-Who can help?

You will also want to ask for the help of a few people to help with set-up and break-down of the display. There are always cases in which the person running the display may have to leave or cannot attend at the last minute. It is also advisable to have an extra person or two to sit at the display while it is running for the same reason – you also want to allow those sitting at the display the opportunity to take and break and/or participate in other parts of the event.

- 3.) Once you have established what space or room will be used for the artisan display, you will want to develop a map for it in order to ensure that there is enough room for all of the artisans who would like to display. Again, remember to leave a little extra room for who do not pre-register with you, but would still like to display – you never want to turn any artisan away, it may be the one time that they worked up enough courage to show their goods.

When making the map, try to organize the space in order to catch attendee's eyes and interest. For instance, if you organize the tables into a u-shape, then you will want to decide whether or not to have the artisans facing the outside or the inside of the u-shape – this will depend on the room size, the size of the u-shape. Other options might be to have a rectangle with all artisans facing out or a winding shape around the room where you would have attendees begin at one end and finish at the other. Also remember that you will want to place yourself at an obvious and easy accessible place in the room so that both the artisans and attendees can find you.

- 4.) Arrange for table clothes to be available to cover each of the tables. This can be accomplished in a number or a combination of ways. You may be able to ask the event stewards or the hosting barony or Kingdom for table clothes to use, but you will most likely need to ask the displaying artisans to bring their own.

- 5.) Be sure to advertise the artisan display to all of the lists, as well as make announcements at events held beforehand. Let everyone know when the display will be, at what event and give them your contact information so they can get in touch with you regarding any questions that they may have.
- 6.) All of the artisans should also know what time they are allowed to begin setting up their displays, as well as the latest time by which they need to pick up their items. Be sure to let them know that you cannot be held responsible for any items that they leave after the site closes. Post this information in your advertisements on the lists and also make sure to let each of them know as they check in for the event.
- 7.) When the event finally happens, ensure that those at Troll know where the artisan display is and who will be in charge of it so they can direct people to the right place. It is also a good idea to have an announcement made in opening court with this information. You can also ask a herald to make an announcement anytime during the event.
- 8.) As displaying artisans check in, keep a list. If you do not have a chance to do this as they check in, then arrange for you or one of your helpers to go around the display and make a list. Part of the reason for the list is so that you can contact them, if needed, or in case someone else such as a Peer or the Crown would like to contact them. The main purpose of the list is for record keeping and so that they may be thanked for participating in the display.
- 9.) When it is all over and done with, remember to thank the event stewards for allowing you the space for the display, as well as any other help they may have offered. Also be sure to thank everyone who helped in any way and the artisans who displayed their items.
- 10.) Lastly, you will need to make a report to the Kingdom Arts and Sciences Office. Write up the information that you recorded for the event, how well it did or did not go, and any lessons learned so that you and future artisan display organizers can learn from them.
- 11.) Always remember that it is okay to ask for help. There is a wonderful support system at the Kingdom level, as well as all others, for artisan displays. There are always people who are more than willing to lend a hand whether it be through advice and their own experiences or by moving chairs and setting up tables.
- 12.) Be creative and have fun! Remember that artisan displays are not only learning experiences, but can also be a lot of fun for those involved. Creating new or different ways in which this can happen can help to enrich the experience for everyone involved.