

CraftBusiness

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BEST FOR NEWS, COMMENT & BUYING IDEAS FOR CRAFT RETAILERS



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Discover expert advice and industry secrets in the May issue of Craft Business Magazine with the following features!

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COVID-19 BUSINESS ADVICE

Whether your company is large or small, you'll find some incredibly helpful advice from industry experts in our Coronavirus advice section



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PAPIER SALES OF NOTE CARDS, WRITING PAPER AND GREETING CARDS UP BY 300%

Notebook and stationery supplier Papier has seen unprecedented levels of card and notecard sales over the last month, thanks to crafters looking for lockdown inspiration. Sales of notecards, writing paper and greeting cards have increased by 300% since the UK started its lockdown period, and those figures show no sign of slowing down.

The number of people sending cards on the company's site outstripped Mother's Day, Valentines Day and the peak Christmas period. According to Papier's interview with Stationery Matters, the biggest group of buyers for correspondence stationery are aged between 25 and 35, with millennials leading the way on handwritten communication and proving this demographic isn't only inspired by online avenues such as social media platforms.

It seems that the lack of face to face communication has sparked a refreshed need for written notes with consumers

who are looking to connect with loved ones that they currently can't speak to in person. According to Google Trends, searches for 'What to write in a thinking of you card' have increased 180% over the last few weeks, searches for thank you cards up 107% and birthday cards are up 400%. This rise is also connected to closure of high street shops, causing consumers to go online to meet their needs.

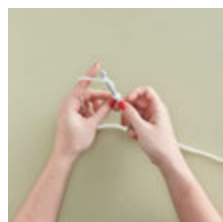
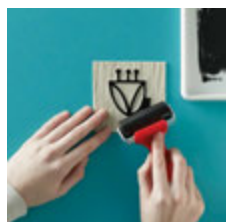
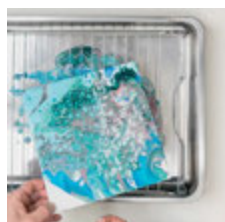
The demand for personalised greeting cards and notebooks may also have played a part in Papier's recent success. The company let customers have the ultimate control over their designs. It is possible to add individual names and sentiments into the majority of the company's stationery range, and there's a variety of colourful patterns to choose from. This fantastic news for the craft industry shows that customers are still willing to spend out on sentimental items. To find out more about the Papier range go to www.papier.com



HOBBYCRAFT SUPPORT NEW CRAFTERS WITH 'GET STARTED IN' SERIES

Hobbycraft is committed to teaching brand new crafters the essential skills needed to create beautiful projects, thanks to their new 'Get Started In' series. The arts and crafts superstore retail chain has seen an increase in traffic to its online Ideas Hub, suggesting that customers are looking for new creative ideas and projects during this time. Overall searches for children's content has also risen.

The Hobbycraft 'Get Started In...' series includes beginner step-by-step guides on how to start a range of crafting techniques, as well as video tutorials to help along the way. The retailer has seen increased interest in knit and stitch projects in particular on its website, with the knitting section seeing a 43% increase. Macramé and crochet have continued to



be popular with searches up 134% and 140% respectively as people look to take on new hobbies and projects.

There are 16 Get Started In programmes with everything from knitting and sewing to

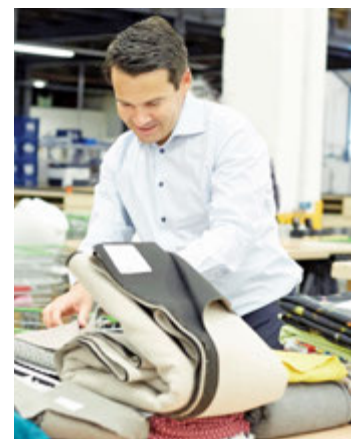
floristry and pyrography. Other projects include crochet, cake decorating, macramé, fluid art, and clay modelling. For further details about these insightful guides go to www.hobbycraft.co.uk/get-started

Creative Platform fabfab Acquires Online Marketplace, Makerist

Fabfab, Europe's leading digital creative platform in the online do-it-yourself market, is the new majority owner of Makerist, a destination site for crafting and creative hobbies. The acquisition of the leading online marketplace for digital patterns and Europe's largest crafting communities is the first step in building the world's largest digital platform for crafting projects.

"With this move, we are, now more than ever, the driving force and pioneer for the digital awakening of the DIY and craft sector", enthuses fabfab CEO, Dr Andreas Seifert. "With the solid backing of our private equity investors we can further accelerate growth in this market, together with the Makerist team."

The acquisition of Makerist makes fabfab the largest



international online DIY crafting player – with a combined product offering covering the entire range of do-it-yourself needs; from inspiration via user projects to thousands of patterns and tutorials combined with the largest selection of fabrics and materials. Go to www.fabfab.com/en

EDITOR'S
LETTER

With the COVID-19 lockdown stretching out in front of us, it certainly is a challenging time for craft businesses big and small. Adaptability and innovation will be the key to success as we see an increasing number of first time crafters turning to knitting, crochet and more to engage their minds and cure boredom.

This issue of Craft Business includes plenty of ideas that you can capitalise on over the next few weeks, including the top knitting titles on page 36 and sustainable craft products on page 24. We also have reliable pointers from leading industry experts, including delivery advice from ParcelHero on page 12 and clear guidelines for managing staff conduct on page 11.

Now is also the time to take inspiration from other companies who are ahead of the curve, and our sustainability section highlights innovative brands who are truly eco-conscious with their products and packaging – head to page 18 where you can start with noissue's simple tips that all businesses can follow to become more environmentally friendly. You'll also find a selection of brands who are providing irresistible subscription schemes on page 32, providing customers with creative ideas through the post or online.

Don't miss some insightful interviews from leading craft authors Tanis Gray (page 34) and Wendy Gardiner (page 31), who delve into their latest craft titles. I hope you enjoy this issue!

EMILY PEAGRAM

CB Editor
emily.peagram@aceville.co.uk

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DOING THE BUSINESS...

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NEW VENUE ANNOUNCED FOR KIRSTIE'S HANDMADE FESTIVAL

The Handmade Festival, with Kirstie Allsopp, has today announced that its full line up of creativity and handmade inspiration will return for 2020 at a new venue, Evolution at Battersea Park, London.

The festival will take place from Friday 11th to Sunday 13th September, celebrating all things handmade and giving visitors the chance to get hands-on and learn a new creative skill, as well as meet the brightest minds in craft, wellbeing, food and gardening.

For the first time in the festival's seven-year history, it has moved location to allow greater accessibility for guests and makers across the country. The event's Shopping Village, skills workshops and VIP area will all be hosted inside Evolution, with the Super Theatre for exhibitors and experts to host Q&As and the Festival's popular artisan food stalls taking place outside in the festival's now iconic marquee tents.

Kirstie Allsopp said: "The Handmade Festival was

launched seven years ago out of a passion for bringing together creatives, skilled makers and lovers of all things handmade. I couldn't have imagined how quickly we'd grow and it's all down to the enthusiasm of our visitors and network of exhibitors, who bring new and exciting things to our festival each year."

Georgina Krstic, show manager at Brand Events, adds: "After six fantastic years at Hampton Court, we're excited to be moving The Handmade Festival to our new home at Evolution, Battersea Park. Situated a short hop from Central London, Battersea Park is easily accessible by public transport and means even more creative people can join us for a hands-on weekend of making."

TICKETS

CB Tickets for The Handmade Festival are on sale now, for more information and to sign up for the latest line-up and ticket information, please visit www.thehandmadefestival.com



PRODUCT PROMOTION

MADHATTERS CRAFT KITS

Madhatters is a family-run business that designs and makes laser cut craft kits. All of these kits are made from good quality 3mm MDF, which is a very smooth surface to paint on to. Everything is precision cut so that the final project fits together perfectly.

The toadstool village box kit has a very whimsical design which is great fun to make. These products come flat packed, ready to be glued together and then decorated. The dimensions of the kits are 320 x 240mm and a tab on the back is included for hanging on the wall. Suitable for all ages, but adult supervision would be required for children. RRP £13.99. Go to www.madhatterscrafts.com



London Stationery Show Announces New Date for 2020

The greatly anticipated London Stationery Show has been moved from its original date in April to 11th September 2020 in order to protect exhibitors and visitors from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The show has released the following information:

"Due to the ongoing situation with Coronavirus (COVID-19), we have taken the difficult decision to postpone the London Stationery Show.

"The new date is 11 September 2020, and the show

will still take place at its usual venue, the Business Design Centre in Islington, London.

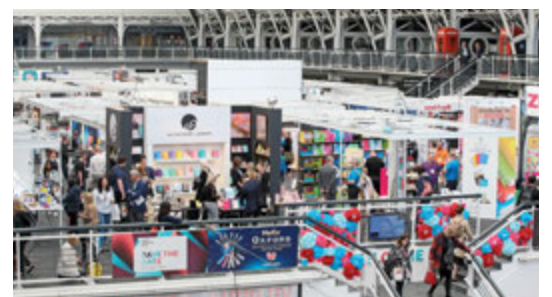
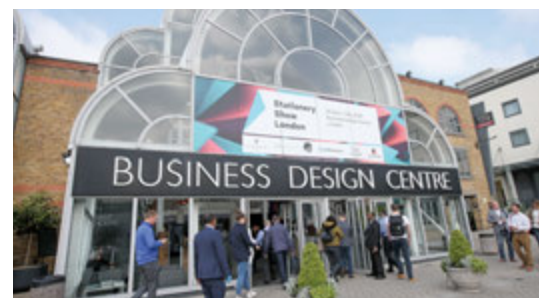
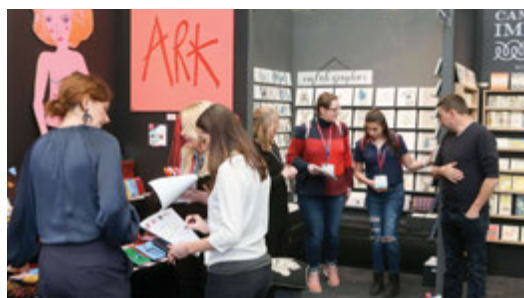
All existing registrations will remain in place for the rescheduled date and pre-registration will stay open to enable visitors to register for fast-track entry on arrival at the event.

"Whilst we would have loved for the show to take place in April, at this present time our number one priority is the health and well being of our visitors, exhibitors, staff and their families. We are very

sad to have to postpone but in light of the current pandemic and clear government guidelines rescheduling is the best course of action.

"From the team here at London Stationery Show and Ocean Media Group, we would like to wish you good health and look forward to welcoming you to the show in September."

To find out more about the changes made to this show go to www.stationeryshowlondon.co.uk



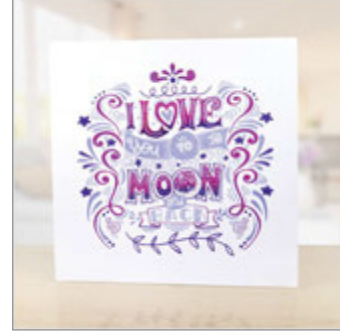
MULTI-CHANNEL CRAFT RETAILER CREATE AND CRAFT INTRODUCE AMAZING OPPORTUNITY FOR RETAIL STORES



Create and Craft have announced a brand-new trade opportunity for craft retailers, distributors, and wholesalers to stock a huge range of their bestselling brands, including officially licensed Disney and Warner Bros. products, and exclusive products not previously made available for trade customers.

Ideal Shopping Direct CEO, Jamie Martin said: "All retailers will have the chance to buy into many of our bestselling brands, giving them an exciting new chance to stock the most innovative and recognisable names in the crafting industry. We feel it's essential to give high street sellers and smaller independent businesses an available source of cutting-edge product and help them to support their own customers."

This new venture from Ideal Shopping Direct's crafting



division is unique in its approach to aftersales support. Trade customers will have access to demonstrations designed to inspire and educate them on their purchases, enabling them to show their customers how to get the most out of their products. Create and Craft hopes that this will further empower smaller retailers as independent sellers.

Create and Craft are also planning demonstration days, in which dedicated experts will meet with the retailers and answer

their questions and queries, and can even promote the local retailers live on Create and Craft's television channel. Create and Craft can also promote retailers in their house magazines to a subscriber count in excess of 70,000 crafters.

Stephanie Weightman, I-Hub Managing Director commented: "I've always been passionate about inspiring and educating the customer and am so excited to be launching this in-store demonstration program. We have a great variety of on-air celebrity crafters with a wealth of knowledge about many crafting techniques, and we are sure that both retailers and their customers will benefit hugely from these demonstration days".

For further information on the available brands and to register as a trade customer, please visit www.crafting.co.uk/trade to arrange contact.

CREATIVELAND SEES STRONG REGISTRATION FIGURES FOR 2020

Over 320 manufacturers have so far registered for Creativeworld 2021 in Frankfurt, following the postponement of craft fairs across Europe and beyond due to COVID-19. Michael Reichhold, Creativeworld Director at Messe Frankfurt Exhibition GmbH, said: "We were very fortunate with Creativeworld 2020. Since it was one of the few trade fairs to be held in the first half of the year at all, once again we were able to offer the creative community a

platform to exchange ideas and experience. We hope we shall have profited from this exchange until our lives have become normal again. In these times it is particularly important for high-street retailers to gain an online presence as well and to continue offering their customers an opportunity to purchase." To register for a stand at Creativeworld 2021, head over to the website.

FOR MORE DETAILS
 www.creativeworld.messefrankfurt.com



British Knitting & Crochet Awards Are Underway!

Now in their thirteenth year, the British Knitting & Crochet Awards are widely recognised as the biggest and most important in the industry, rewarding companies and individuals from the biggest players to the smallest independents. They are run every year by *Let's Knit* and *Let's Get Crafting* magazines, and have previously been entirely voted for by readers. This year, for the first time, a separate expert-judged component has been opened up to the trade, and entries are welcomed in five distinct categories prior to the shortlisting stage. The categories are Knitting/Crochet Product Of The Year, Best New Business, Sustainable/Eco Product Of The Year, International Brand Of The Year and Knitting/Crochet Kit Of The Year. The entry stage was open until 8th April, and once the

entries have been shortlisted a panel of five expert judges from the knitting and crochet industry will review the entries and choose the winners. The inaugural judging panel comprises author Christine Perry, blogger Julie Williams, *Great British Sewing Bee* winner Charlotte Newland and designers Karie Westermann and Jiminez Joseph. This year's British Knitting & Crochet Awards are sponsored by Stitchtopia Craft Holidays. More information and an entry form can be found at letsknit.co.uk/awards/trade



Let's Knit Magazine Unveils Let's Knit Together

Let's Knit magazine is thrilled to announce the brand new launch of the highly anticipated Let's Knit Together membership website.

Launched on Wednesday 1st April, Let's Knit Together is the ultimate hub for knitters of all abilities. From just £4.99 a month, members will have unlimited access to over 1,000 patterns, including branded and designer content, an exclusive and brand new online knitting course, member-only discounts and competitions, a private Facebook group and much more.

Membership starts from £4.99 per month for an annual subscription, or £5.99 per month for a monthly subscription.

One of the key benefits to joining Let's Knit Together is the exclusive video course, presented by Julie Peasgood and Neti Love who explore

and demonstrate a range of techniques that every knitter will find useful. There are five sections to the How To Knit course, and each video comes with additional details and printable PDFs. New videos are added onto the website every week, and users will have the opportunity to choose which videos are filmed next.

Let's Knit Together is proud of the extensive pattern library which contains over 1,000 designs, including patterns from Rowan, Bernat and DK Books. Paying users have unlimited access to all of the patterns on the website, whilst free users can download one free pattern every month and access four videos at the launch.

Community is at the heart of Let's Knit Together, and members have exclusive access to the private Facebook group where they are encouraged

to share progress, chat about all things knitting-related and make friends. Knitalongs play a key role in this community, giving members the opportunity to simultaneously knit a new section each week, helping each other along the way.

"To say I'm excited about working with Let's Knit Together would be an understatement, and I'm over the moon that my patterns will be enjoyed by thousands of knitters. Combined with all the other brilliant benefits and content, Let's Knit Together is a fantastic hub for the community."

Val Pierce, Let's Knit Designer

"We've been working on the launch of Let's Knit Together for over a year now, and we're so excited that the website has finally launched. We hope for it to become the ultimate



online destination for knitters of all abilities to indulge in their hobby and meet like-minded crafters in the process."

Elena Thompson, Membership and Paywall Content Manager, Let's Knit Together

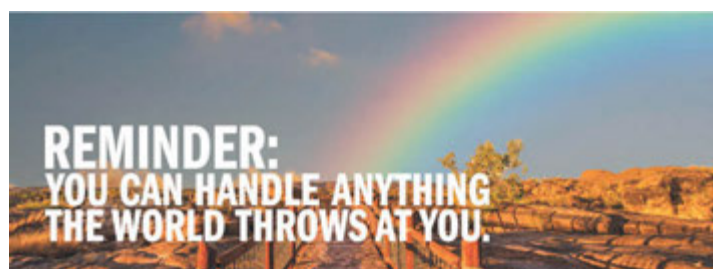
"The launch of Let's Knit Together is a very exciting moment for everyone on the Let's Knit team. This fantastic members-only knitting club has

been months in preparation, and we're delighted to finally introduce our readers to all the amazing content and benefits it offers."

Sarah Neal, Editor of Let's Knit magazine

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THIS NEW SERVICE

CB Go to www.letsknit.co.uk/together



TINY BOX LAUNCHES WELLBEING AND BUSINESS HUB TO SEE CRAFTERS THROUGH LOCKDOWN

Ethical packaging company Tiny Box has launched a wellbeing and support hub, Bored? on its website to help business owners, crafters and their families stay strong during the coronavirus outbreak.

Features include caring for your mental wellbeing and a fully loaded page with a variety of ideas to help entertain the kids. There is also a range of DIY art and craft ideas and printables to help kids stay creative.

The page is packed with useful tips for established craft companies to boost their sales during quarantine, as well inspiration for start-up businesses. From tools and tips for getting started to branding and distribution, Tiny Box Company's Business Bootstrapping will provide invaluable support.

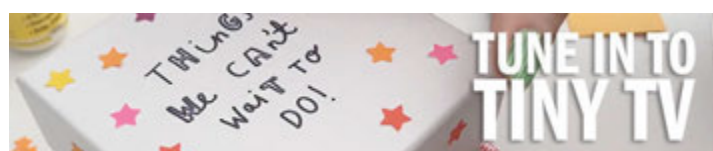
Consumers can also keep up to date with the latest industry trend and receive a daily dose of uplifting quotes, laughs and fun facts.

Tiny Box CEO Rachel Watkyn said: "This is an incredibly tough time for everyone. We can make all our lives better by working together, and sharing what works. Our hub can help you keep creative and focussed at home, whether you're entertaining the kids, running your business, rethinking your working life or even starting up a new venture.

"We'll be rolling out more help for designers and makers in the coming days – watch this space."

FOR FURTHER DETAILS

CB Go to www.tinyboxcompany.co.uk/bored



Sharp Rise in Crafting Hobbies Sees Craft Buddy Adapt to New Demand

Leading arts and crafts manufacturer and distributor Craft Buddy Ltd, has seen a recent surge in demand in both B2B and across its B2C digital platforms. Reacting to Government guidelines, the company has taken the decision to close their warehouse and headquarters to all but two staff members per day in order to limit the exposure of staff to COVID-19.

The recent surge in sales shows that the popular Crystal Art range is proving to be in high demand with customers as consumers search for new hobbies that can be done during isolation. Likewise, the newly launched Forever Flowerz range continues to excite crafters.

Craft Buddy is continuing to accept trade orders from retailers, with a lead time of up to a week, due to their current implementation of safety measures that are in place. Craft Buddy are also offering to promote stockists on their social media channels where they have a following of over 30,000 engaged followers, whilst also making available their marketing images and videos to help businesses grow their channels. In addition to this, they are offering smaller Crystal Art products to retailers for free, so that they can run online competitions during this time. Contact trade@craftbuddyltd.co.uk for further details.



ALTENEW REACT TO WATERCOLOUR TRENDS



They're trendy, they're hot, and they're taking the paper crafting world by storm! Whether it's paper crafting, painting, colouring, and even calligraphy, watercolour is a staple supply in an artist's stash. While there is a high demand for this trendy item, it might be difficult for consumers to choose the best product from your online store.

AlteneW's specially curated watercolour collection has something for everyone. Their wide range of watercolour products makes it easier for anyone to choose one that suits their needs. From beginner-friendly to budget-friendly to artist-grade, AlteneW

has it all! The colours in their watercolour sets (Watercolor Essential 12 Pan Set, Watercolor 36 Pan Set, Metallic Watercolor 14 Pan Set, and Artist Watercolor 24 Pan Set) are intensely pigmented, vibrant and creamy. Plus, they coordinate with AlteneW's fabulous line of inks, too – something that makes this company stand out from the rest of the competition.

To learn more about how to become a trade partner email support@alteneW.com. Once accepted as a trade partner, you will have access to their exclusive trade partner website and enjoy other exciting content. Go to www.alteneW.com

The Festival of Quilts postponed until 2021

Upper Street Events and The Quilters' Guild have announced the postponement of The Festival of Quilts, Europe's biggest patchwork and quilting event, until 29 July – 1 August 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Festival of Quilts was due to take place on 30th July-2nd August 2020



at the NEC Birmingham with 26,000 visitors expected to attend from all over the world. The Festival features 800 hung competition quilts, Textile Galleries by acclaimed international artists and groups, The Fine Art Textiles Award, hundreds of workshops, talks and lectures, practising artists at work and 300 retail exhibitors. Headline gallery artists were to have included Danny Amazonas, Sheila Frampton-Cooper, Noriko Endo and Sarah Hibbert, with collections from the International Quilt Museum, the 7th European Quilt Triennial and Art Textiles: Made in Britain.

Anna Baptiste, Event Director for The Festival of Quilts, said: "We are passionately committed to the quilting and textile art communities and are devastated to be making this decision. We appreciate how disappointed the quilting community, Festival sponsors and partners will be but the safety of our staff, exhibitors, visitors, artists, workshop tutors, stewards and contractors is of the utmost importance. We are working with the NEC to plan a bumper Festival next year."

Tickets for The Festival of Quilts were due to go on general release in April. The Festival organisers are working on a virtual competition and other online activities. Information is available at www.thefestivalofquilts.co.uk

CRAFTER'S COMPANION RELEASES NEW NATURE'S GARDEN BEAUTIFUL BUTTERFLIES COLLECTION

Crafter's Companion is launching a new Nature's Garden collection, Beautiful Butterflies.

On sale from April 2nd, the newest collection to join the popular Nature's Garden range has been inspired by delicate butterflies and beautiful florals. It features a stunning vintage colour palette with dusky pinks, sage greens, ditsy florals, pretty roses, lace and much more.

All of the elements in the Nature's Garden Beautiful Butterflies collection have been signed to work together and the launch includes an assortment of dies, stamp and die sets, a 3D embossing folder, clear acrylic stamp set and a 12x12 paper pad. Prices start from RRP £4.99. For retail enquiries go to www.crafterscompanion.co.uk



British Fashion Council Announces Launch of BFC Foundation Covid Crisis Fund



British Fashion Council (BFC) has announced the launch of the BFC Foundation Covid Crisis Fund, supporting creative fashion businesses and individuals to survive the Coronavirus crisis. The BFC, through its charity the BFC Foundation which brings all BFC charitable initiatives under one umbrella, is making £1,000,000 of emergency funds available with the majority supporting designer businesses and with a portion of funds also allocated to students, underpinning the future generation of creative talent.

This has been made possible through pooling the BFC talent support grants that would have traditionally been awarded for either early stage showcasing support or business growth and promotion.

While £1 million is a great start, the scale of the need is much greater, and BFC has called on both the Government to step in to work with them on significant industry stimulus, and on the industry and individuals to support the Covid Crisis Fund through donations, so that more businesses can be supported at this time.

As a not for profit, the BFC can act as a vital resource during these uncertain times. Since the beginning of the crisis, BFC has worked tirelessly to brief the Government on the challenges facing the industry, but also to keep all stakeholders up to date through letters, social media updates, digital Town Hall meetings and newsletters. With this new fundraising campaign, the organisation

seeks contributions that will be crucial to the survival of designer businesses led by creative talent who inspire the global industry.

The crisis has seen creative businesses fighting on several fronts. BFC calls for support for liquidity in the form of grants or long-term low risk loans that address retail cancellations and sell through guarantees, and in turn, will help businesses address disruption to the supply chain and a potential domino effect of failure. BFC also asks for rent holidays for office and retail stores to further protect employment. As a member of the Creative Industries Federation, BFC has also campaigned for additional financial measures to protect the income of creative freelancers who play such a significant role in the fashion industry.

Caroline Rush, Chief Executive BFC said: "Now more than ever, we are committed to support the businesses and people that make up our industry. With the BFC Foundation Covid Crisis Fund and the donations raised, our hope is to support those British businesses that need additional subsidies, beyond Government stimulus available, to address their most urgent challenges."

ARCH & HOOK, British Vogue, Browns, Burberry, depop, GQ, JD.COM, INC, Label/Mix, Paul Smith, Rodial and Value Retail have all been contributing partners to the scheme.

To find out more go to www.britishfashioncouncil.co.uk

IRRESISTIBLE YARNS FROM RICO DESIGN

PRODUCT PROMOTION



Rico Baby Dream DK is an extra-soft yarn that creates wonderful pullovers, jackets, tops, trousers, overalls, cuddly toys and many more. Rico Baby Dream DK guarantees an amazing cozy experience for the little loved ones. The yarn is available in modern colour options in plain and print that combine perfectly in beautiful knitting and crochet projects. It is also easy care – you can

machine wash your garments at 30 degrees. **RRP £4.39.**

Discover the amazing **Creative Pompon Print Yarn** by Rico Design. The yarn is made up of small pompoms linked together, giving the fabric a unique look and super soft touch. The yarn is best known for baby blankets but is also ideal for cozy accessories, such as scarves, hats or

cushions all set off with the amazing 3D effect. **RRP £9.99.**

The Rico Design **Creative Silky Touch DK** impresses with its gentle sheen. This yarn quality is 100% vegan, and the composition of 100% premium micro acrylic makes any garment incredibly comfortable to wear combined with its weight delivering a lovely drape and fit. **RRP £4.79.** www.rico-design.de/en/home

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8

WORKING FROM HOME TIPS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Become a master of online marketing in these uncertain financial times with these innovative ideas

1 OUTLINE YOUR BUSINESS STRATEGY

Now more than ever, consumers will welcome information about your business and what business plans you will be making over the coming weeks as the majority of the UK and beyond practises self-isolation. Consider sending out letters or emails to outline your ideas which may include some of the suggestions below. It might also be a good idea to set up a weekly newsletter so that you can stay in touch with crafters and alert them to any news you may have.

2 CONSIDER YOUR MARKETING ANGLES

Now more than ever, it's crucial to think long and hard about the angle of your marketing plan.

Try to be a source of uplifting and inspirational content which will draw in customers who may be worried about the current state of affairs. Sharing projects that promote mindfulness and mental wellbeing is a great way to market your products, as more and more people self-isolate due to COVID-19, these ideas will be a valuable source of positivity to your customers. Crafters are a thrifty bunch all year round, but in the coming months it's likely that this type of consumer will be even more cautious with their money due to limited income. Think of projects that make use of supplies that your customers may already own, with embellishments or accessories that they can easily purchase from you. Flash sales that focus on essential items is another good way to convince consumers to part with their cash during these uncertain times.

3 SPRUCE UP YOUR WEBSITE

Consider supporting a fellow small business by paying a web developer to improve your website. Online sales will be crucial over the next few months as customers become unable to visit you in store,



and will rely on online orders. Therefore it's so important to provide a highly-functional and easy-to-use website where potential customers can find everything they need and checkout quickly.

4 HONE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA SKILLS

With extra time spent working from home and away from your bricks and mortar store, you may have a chance to invest more time into communicating with your customers via social media. Remember to consider the fact that Facebook posts are more likely to target an older audience, while younger crafters will favour Instagram. Try to tailor your content to appeal to that specific audience. For example, you might post polls and quizzes on your Instagram Stories to get an insight into the wants and needs of crafters, while Facebook is a great opportunity to invite customers to share what they're working on via comments and photos. It's also a good idea to look into the best times to post on the respective platforms. For example, many studies have shown that mid-week Facebook posts between 1pm and 4pm receive the most exposure, while Thursdays between

3pm and 4pm are particularly successful for Instagram.

5 PUT YOURSELF IN THE SPOTLIGHT

If you have previously interacted with your customers in-store and engaged in lots of face-to-face conversation about crafting advice and recommended products, then why not keep that relationship going online? Write blog posts in your own voice and make it clear that you are writing them, or check in with customers via Facebook and social media stories by updating them on your business plans and any exciting news you have to share. This will build on your brand's personality and these efforts may also help to increase your followings.

6 CAPITALISE ON VIDEO CONTENT

Without a doubt, video content is one of the most engaging types of content that appeals across all ages. It's an ideal way to explain crafting techniques, personally speak to your audience and to make your new products appear utterly irresistible. There are plenty of free online resources which will help you to brush

up on your filming and video editing skills if you fancy making your own content. Alternatively, the brands that produce some of the products that you sell online may also have videos which you can share.

7 BE GENEROUS WITH YOUR CONTENT

If you want to build a positive relationship with potential and existing customers online, one fantastic way to do this is to be generous with your time and content. Reply frequently to any questions and comments posted by crafters on your social media platforms, and freely provide tips and advice in your replies. Share free craft projects that you think your audience may enjoy

or set aside an hour or two for a free online Q&A session with your followers. These actions show you as a business owner you in a positive light, but they will also cement an impression in your customers' mind that you are an expert in your industry who knows their sector well. This in turn could help give your product promotions more value.

8 CREATE AN ONLINE COMMUNITY FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS

If you're concerned that some of your older, more isolated customers may suffer from the temporary closing of your bricks and mortar store, why not consider starting up an online community to allow your loyal crafters to socialise and share ideas? It's easy to create a Facebook group and invite customers to get involved. This is a good opportunity to check in with your consumers, ask how they're doing and give them a chance to enjoy some human interaction. Live craft-alongs are another good way to encourage your online audience to get crafting, use Facebook or Instagram Live to film yourself completing a craft project to help inspire others. Make sure you give a week's notice to your online community so that they can make time to join in. These projects may take some time, but they will be valued and greatly appreciated gestures that will keep you and your brand in the minds of your customers. [CB](#)



CORONAVIRUS ADVICE FOR EMPLOYERS

Tina Chander, head of employment at Wright Hassall law firm, explains the key ways that employers can navigate their business through COVID-19



WHAT WILL THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK MEAN FOR BUSINESSES?

The serious health concerns brought about by the Coronavirus outbreak (officially COVID-19) have been well documented, and now, the uncertainty surrounding businesses raises even more questions.

To slow the spread of the virus, the Government recently confirmed that sick employees will receive statutory sick pay from the first day off work, not the fourth, to encourage those experiencing symptoms to self-isolate and not spread the virus in the workplace.

Whilst the number of UK cases are relatively low compared to other parts of the world, it's crucial that employers take steps to protect their employees, especially if they have a globally connected workforce.

REDUCING THE RISK TO EMPLOYEES

Firstly, employers should take the official advice given and share it with workers appropriately, using emails or team meetings to get the information across.

Where possible, employers should encourage staff to work from home to prevent the further spread of the virus.



Other steps to take include:

- Ensure that the contact numbers and emergency contact details of all members of staff are up to date
 - Ensure that managers are aware of the symptoms of the virus and how to spot them
 - Disseminate information across management on issues such as sick leave and sick pay and the procedures to follow if an employee develops symptoms of the virus
 - Ensure that facilities for regular and thorough washing of hands are in place, including hot water and soap
 - Dispense hand sanitisers and tissues to employees
 - Weigh up the pros and cons of supplying protective face masks to employees who may be working in particularly high-risk scenarios
 - Designate an 'isolation room', where sick employees can retire to before calling NHS 111 for further medical advice
- Handwashing has been identified as one of the best ways to slow the spread of Coronavirus, so organisations should encourage workers to take their time when doing so, without the fear of being penalised for taking longer than usual.

WHAT TO DO IF AN EMPLOYEE BECOMES UNWELL

If an employee exhibits the symptoms of the virus, they should be completely removed from the proximity of other employees and encouraged to follow precautions.

To avoid placing unnecessary strain on NHS resources, employees can take an online test at 111.nhs.uk/covid-19 to help them decide if calling 111 is appropriate.

Uncertainty over the seriousness of the virus, the



exact nature of the symptoms and concern about the situation regarding issues such as sick pay may lead to some employees coming to work despite having contracted the virus. If this does happen, then an employer should contact the local Public Health England (PHE) health protection team and they will discuss the details and outline any precautions which should be taken.

THE POSITION ON SICK PAY

If an employee is off sick with the virus then the legal situation regarding sick pay is the same as it is with any other illness, however the employee is now entitled to statutory sick pay from the first day of work, not the fourth.

The Government has stated that if NHS 111 or a doctor advises an employee or worker to self-isolate then they should receive any statutory sick pay due to them, or contractual sick pay if this is offered by the employer.

In some cases, employees may be able to work from home while in self-isolation.

However, in some cases, if an employee cannot attend their place of work, they will be unable to work.

If employees have laptops and tablets, then they should be encouraged to work from home, especially as the Government encourages people to practice social distancing.

Currently, there is no bespoke advice for specific industries, but as the impact of Coronavirus spreads, we may see more advice and contingency plans develop to ensure essential and core services continue to operate.

Ultimately, there is no obligation on an employer to allow an employee to stay away from work and, if the non-attendance causes issues or extends beyond an emergency precaution, then an employer is entitled to take disciplinary action.

NO TIME TO BE DIVISIVE

While much of the focus is on the health risks associated with Coronavirus, it's crucial that employers ensure staff, customers or suppliers are not

discriminated against based on their race or ethnicity.

Even jokes and banter can sometimes cross the line to become unlawful harassment and/or discrimination, for which an employer may be liable.

This liability can be avoided if an employer proves they took 'all reasonable steps' to prevent employees behaving in such a manner.

Taking reasonable steps can include having well publicised diversity and harassment policies and training all staff on the issue. Meanwhile, managers must be trained about their responsibility to identify and prevent discriminatory behaviour.

About the firm: Wright Hassall is a top-ranked firm of solicitors based in Warwickshire, providing legal services including: corporate law; commercial law; litigation and dispute resolution; employment law and property law. The firm also advises on contentious probate, business immigration, debt recovery, employee incentives, information governance, professional negligence and private client matters. [ca](#)



THE BUSINESS DOS AND DON'TS OF HOME DELIVERIES:

SURVIVING THE CORONAVIRUS UPHEAVAL

ParcelHero's head of consumer research, David Jinks MILT, looks at the delivery issues facing small craft businesses

A brief glance at the Craft Business website highlights the sheer number of fairs and festivals that have been cancelled or postponed following the outbreak of the Coronavirus.

Footfall into stores of all sizes dwindled to virtually nothing even before the Government eventually announced the closure of all non-essential stores. The only way to reach customers today is through deliveries.

The good news is that the Government has recognised delivery drivers as one of the group of key workers whose children will continue to be cared for at school now the majority have closed, enabling them to carry on working. The vast majority of UK courier services continue to be available; ParcelHero shows a wide variety of next-day, two day, and timed delivery are services still available from a wide selection of couriers. Be

aware, however, that some usual service conditions and money back guarantees will not be valid during this period.

ADAPT TO CHANGING CONDITIONS

Some of your orders are likely to be of quite a high value, and there is considerable concern for some sellers about proof of delivery in these changing times. Couriers and postal services introduced new procedures at the doorstep to replace the usual signature. There was a brief period when smaller items seemed to be dropped through letter boxes with no proof of delivery at all, but quickly couriers established new routines. Most mail companies are now leaving items by front doors if they are too large for the letter box, standing back two metres and confirming delivery when the customer accepts the parcel. Some take a photo

of the delivery while others make sure the customer acknowledges receipt before confirming delivery.

Be aware that not everyone is behaving honourably in this crisis, so pay close attention to any claims for items that were supposedly never delivered. If this seems to be a pattern with certain customers, you are within your rights to refuse to serve them.

Obviously, if you use the traditional Post Office to mail your items, you may want to choose an alternative to queuing with other people. This is where courier services come in handy. They continue to pick up from domestic addresses, offices and pick up points. If the products are small and light, say under 5kg, and low value, this will unfortunately raise your costs compared to mailing at the Post Office. On

ABOUT DAVID JINKS:



David Jinks MILT is head of consumer research for the online parcel broker ParcelHero. He is lead author of *2030: Death of the High Street*, and appears regularly on national radio and in the national press discussing the impact of e-commerce; as well as topics such as the potential consequences of Brexit for exporters, and music festival logistics. He regularly presents masterclasses and webinars for the Department for International Trade's Exporting is GREAT initiative. David has over 20 years' experience as a transport journalist, and was publisher of *The Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport's Logistics & Transport Focus* magazine.

the other hand, for larger items over 5kg, couriers may well work out cheaper than the Post Office.

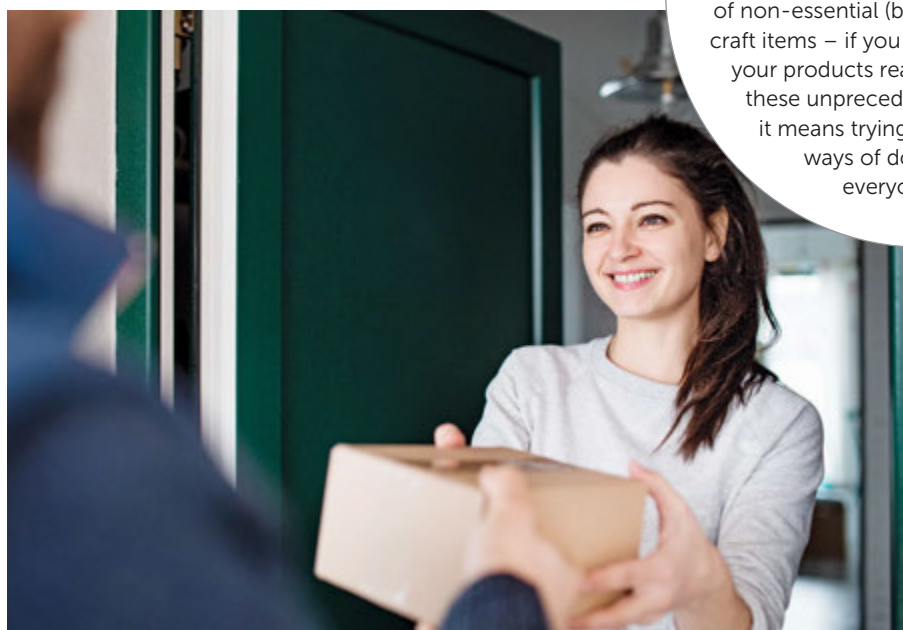
If you sell to international markets, be aware of significant potential changes, for example, transit times to the USA and parts of the EU have been extended by 24-48 hours.

If you run your own website and organise your own deliveries through a favourite courier, don't forget to keep customers updated on the possibility their orders may be delayed; but reassure them that it's very much business as usual in terms of your product availability.



“Most small craft traders got into the business not to make a fortune, but because they enjoy their hobbies as much as their customers.

So, now we have the Government’s official ‘blessing’ behind the continued online sales of non-essential (but hugely appreciated) craft items – if you can find a way to keep your products reaching buyers during these unprecedented times, even if it means trying new entirely new ways of doing business, everyone wins.”



ONLINE MARKETPLACE FULFILMENT

If you use Etsy, eBay or Amazon to sell your products, what steps will you need to take to ensure you can continue to get your products to customers, and don't incur bad feedback for delivery issues largely outside your control? Etsy's advice to sellers is to make sure you have the time and resources to manage your shop before making commitments to buyers. Communicate with customers about potential shipping delays. If you don't think your orders will be delivered on time for any reason, let your buyers know and keep them updated with information from shipping carriers. Good news for Etsy sellers came as the site announced it would defer billing for all sellers 'in good standing'. It rolled up sellers' March statement balance into their April 2020 statement balance, so sellers need not make a payment until May 2020.

eBay is informing sellers that it is continuously engaging with carriers and has seller protection measures in place to ensure Seller Performance is not impacted in case of delays or interruptions of postage services.

It says accounts were protected from being downgraded from the 20th March Seller performance standard evaluation until the 20th June evaluation.

If you or your staff do fall ill and are unable to fulfil orders, eBay advises you can leave your listings active and manually increase the handling time. Your buyers can still shop with you, but the overall delivery time will be longer and reflected on your listings. For a longer


suspension of service, activate the "Out of Stock" option: Once you set the stock of your 'Good 'Til Cancelled' listings to 0, your listings will disappear from eBay searches and you'll protect your sales history for when you're ready to start trading again.

Most recently, eBay has offered to suspend fees for business users for 30 days. Doubtless you will see full details in your usual eBay news channels.

Amazon suspended its Fulfilment by Amazon (FBA) service used by many small sellers to manage their deliveries until April 5th at the earliest. The service remains open for key products related to the fight against Coronavirus, but that's not likely to be many craft products. Sellers can either step up the main Prime service if they qualify, or arrange their own delivery fulfilment. A number of couriers, fulfilment companies and other shipping platforms

offer varying degrees of integration with the e-commerce giant. FBA suspension is an issue that looks unlikely to be going away soon. So other options may well be worth investigating.

Many thousands of people enjoy hobbies as a little escapism and relief from the pressures of the world around them. With so many people isolated in their own homes, such hobbies become even more important in peoples' lives. Most small craft traders got into the business not to make a fortune, but because they enjoy their hobbies as much as their customers. So, now we have the Government's official 'blessing' behind the continued online sales of non-essential (but hugely appreciated) craft items – if you can find a way to keep your products reaching buyers during these unprecedented times, even if it means trying new entirely new ways of doing business, everyone wins.

Information is correct at the time of publication. The ParcelHero UK courier services pages will keep you updated on all available current services, and other services such as ParcelCompare are available. 



10 TIPS FOR Managers Leading a Remote Team

Keep your staff motivated and content while working from home with these conscientious ideas

1 BE MINDFUL THAT STAFF ARE ADAPTING TO CHANGE

As we all adjust to remote working, it's important to remember that your staff members will be dealing with a massive change in their working environment. They may have to be focusing while there are shouting children, demanding pets and many other distractions that they wouldn't normally have to face during their regular working day. Your employees may also be feeling concerned about the health and safety of their family during this uncertain time. As a manager, it is your job to be mindful that your team members may not be working at full capacity straight away when working from home.

2 CONNECT WITH EACH TEAM MEMBER REGULARLY

It's easy to get wrapped up in your own individual tasks while working from home, but the team members you manage will appreciate regular catch ups from you to discuss how they're finding this new challenge and to talk through any issues they may be having. Just because you aren't having face to face meetings with staff, doesn't mean that you should lose the connection and positive working relationships that you've worked hard to build. Now more than ever, you should do your best to maintain an open level of communication. This can be done with a simple daily email or phone call, which isn't designed to take up lots of time, but instead lets your team members know that you haven't forgotten about them.

3 ARRANGE 'CUP OF COFFEE' CALLS

Following on from maintaining good working relationships, it's a great idea to give your team members a call to have a quick chat, just as you would if you were both making a cup of coffee in the kitchen. This kind of small talk at work is instantly lost when everyone is working from home,

and staff members who live alone or in quiet surroundings may find this change of routine very lonely. You should also encourage team members to do this with each other to keep connections strong, which will in turn motivate staff to work hard for each other.

4 LISTEN WELL AND COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

Making time to listen to the concerns that your employees have is key when you can't have meetings with them in person. If you have deadlines and objectives that you'd like your team to meet, then make sure that you outline this clearly, with regular reminders of dates that work needs to be finished by.

5 ENSURE EVERYONE HAS MEANS TO WORK REMOTELY

It's crucial that each member of your team has access to a working computer or laptop and a secure internet connection if this is necessary. You should also be sure to have all of their contact details to hand, including their mobile number and address. It may also be a good idea to connect their office phone to their mobile so that customers can still connect with your business in the usual way.

6 REMIND YOUR TEAM MEMBERS OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

The line between relaxing at home and working in a focused way can become blurred when employees begin working from the sofa. To avoid a slump in motivation, it's helpful to regularly remind team members of what you expect from them, the tasks that need to be completed and the manner in which they deal with customers and any unexpected issues. This will let your staff know that you're keeping a close eye on their productivity, and encourage them to set up a separate working space at home to avoid a lack of concentration.



“Update staff with your ideas and opinions on how you feel they are doing while working remotely”

7 CLOSE EACH DAY WITH A REVIEW

Update staff with your ideas and opinions on how you feel they are doing while working remotely. Remember to keep this content uplifting and motivating. Praise productive work and breakthroughs with sales and customer services. If there's anything you'd like your staff to improve on, set them small and achievable targets so that these changes to their workload feel manageable.

8 ENCOURAGE REGULAR BREAKS

Without the need for face to face meetings and


training events, employees will spend a significantly larger amount of time in front of their computer screens while working remotely. Therefore, it's important to remind staff to take regular breaks to make a drink, stretch their legs and even get some fresh air. This will in turn increase productivity and your team members' sense of wellbeing at work.

9 ENSURE YOUR TEAM STAY WELL CONNECTED

Organise group video calls once a week or so in order

to solidify your team's relationships with each other. It's easy to feel isolated in these current circumstances, and a catch up with all of your staff in a communal way will boost morale and remind employees of why they are working for your business.

10 LET YOUR TEAM MEMBERS KNOW THAT YOU ARE THERE FOR THEM

A good manager makes all staff members feel comfortable and cultivates an environment where honest and sometimes difficult conversations can be had. During the lockdown period, it's likely that at least some of your team members will be suffering from mental health concerns when everything feels so uncertain. The best way to navigate yourself and your team through this period is to encourage these discussions, and make sure that your staff feel valued and listened to. 



*Content written in collaboration with DC Thomson Media

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CAPITALISE ON

KIDS' CRAFTING

With schools across the UK closed and lockdown restrictions in place, a huge number of parents and other family members are on the hunt for activities to do with their children to alleviate boredom and learn new skills.

Crafting is an essential part of developing a young person's imagination and problem solving skills, and this is firmly part of the school curriculum, especially for younger children. If you currently stock crafting products designed for parents to do with children, or have stock that can be marketed in this way, then now is the perfect time to push forward with online promotion. Here's some top tips for marketing to proactive parents.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Not only do you want to convince children that your product is fun and exciting to play with, but you'll also want to leave parents feeling confident that their child will gain worthwhile benefits if they decide to invest in your brand. In any marketing content that you produce, whether that's videos, photos or online tutorials, you'll need to keep those two very different types of audiences keen to give your product a try. Don't forget that parents are likely to be feeling bored in the lockdown too, so if your craft product or range can provide entertainment for all ages then you're on to a winner.

With demand rising for fun, yet educational activities for school children who are learning from home, we show you the best ways to market your products to proactive parents

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Now is a good time to explore the market of kids crafting and decide if the stock you currently have will work, or if it's worth investing in something new. Do some research on your competitors, what are they offering their customers right now? Or search for kids crafting

brands that you admire, think about what you like about their website and promotional content, look through their social media channels and see how they are exposing their audience to these kinds of products. After taking these elements into consideration, you will then be able to create a

marketing plan that pushes your company forward, but also fits with the ethos of your brand.


VIDEO CONTENT IS KING

There are plenty of free online resources to help you brush up on your filming and video editing skills if you don't feel

very confident in this field. You won't necessarily need expensive equipment, either. A smart phone can produce great quality videos that can be uploaded to your social media stories or on IGTV to give your customers a good idea of the qualities of your product. If you purchase the stock of your kids crafting supplies from a manufacturer, then why not enquire about video content that they may possess? This will save you having to create something yourself, and once you receive the video, this can be posted on your website and across all social media channels instantly.

“Statistics looking into the mental benefits of crafting for children could be used to appeal to the adults, while a demonstration of the amazing projects little ones can create with your product is sure to convince kids.”

GAIN APPROVAL FROM PARENTS AND TEACHERS

For even more promotion, why not offer free samples of your product to parents and teachers in return for an honest review? Be sure to include a questionnaire when you send samples out so that you can effectively collect this data and use it in your promotional material. It's also a good idea to ask individuals to leave a review on one of your social media channels, or even create a post or video explaining what they like about it. This kind of testimony is a powerful way to convince other parents to invest in you. By offering this up to teachers as well, your product may also be used in lessons when children are allowed to return to school, creating even more exposure. 

PEAKDALE PRODUCTS PROMOTION

FAMILY CRAFT PACK:

Explore this big box of endless crafty ideas. This box is filled to the top with arty must-haves and crafty essentials to stimulate minds young and old into a world of crafty ideas. RRP £9.99.

MACRAMÉ PLANT HANGER KIT:

Macramé is the ancient craft of knotting lengths of thread together. In recent years it has seen a revival and is used to create beautiful home décor such as this plant hanger.

This do-it-yourself kit is perfect for beginners and uses just 3 simple knots. We have used 100% cotton cord and natural wood to make it both environmentally friendly. RPP £10.99, go to www.peakdaleproducts.co.uk



HOT PRODUCTS FOR KIDS' CRAFTING

1. Organic Knitting Kit for Children, £15.45 www.consciouscraft.uk

This beautiful kit includes organic plant dyed yarn in a variety of different colours, as well as size 5 bamboo knitting needles. This is a great introductory kit for your child to start knitting with, and it's eco-friendly, too! Age: 7+ years.

2. Rainbow Fish Weaving Kits, £6.95 for a pack of 6 www.bakerross.co.uk

Each colourful kit includes two self-adhesive foam templates, foam decorations, coloured ribbon and wiggle eyes. Create a colourful character from under the sea! Get nimble fingers ready and your creative cap on - these fancy swimmers are about to get a serious makeover. Children will enjoy creating their own little fishy, feeding the rainbow ribbons in and out of the precut slots. Age: 5+ years.

3. Ceramic Piggy Banks, £8.95 for a pack of 4 www.bakerross.co.uk

Have fun with these traditional piggy banks for children to paint and decorate. For the best results, use acrylic paints to decorate (sold separately) and let your children's imagination run wild. Height 7.5cm with removable stopper. Parental supervision is required. Age: 5+ years.

4. My First Craft Play Book, £4 www.theworks.co.uk

Encourage children to be imaginative with crafts and its endless possibilities with this delightful book. It includes everything needed for little ones to make their own decorated projects and pictures, giving young ones the freedom to express themselves. Age: 3+ years.

5. Sew Your Own Mythical Creatures £9.99 www.therange.co.uk

This enticing kit is an ideal way to introduce children to sewing. With the included needle and thread, sewing up these mystical creatures will help teach children new skills and improve their dexterity and hand-eye coordination. Potential projects include a unicorn llama, a mermaid, and a narwhal. Age: 6+ years.

6. Make a T-Rex Wood and Clay Modelling, £15 www.hobbycraft.co.uk

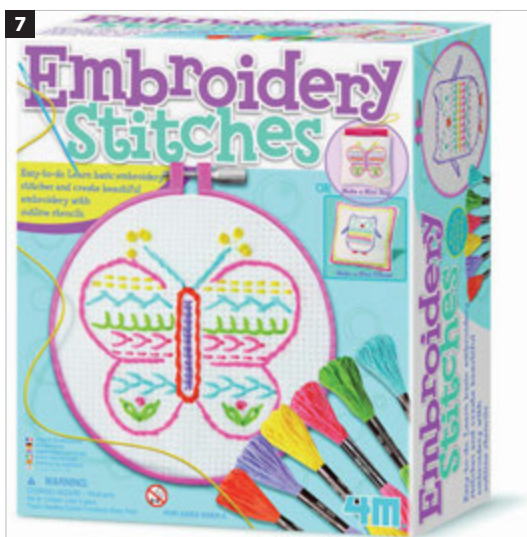
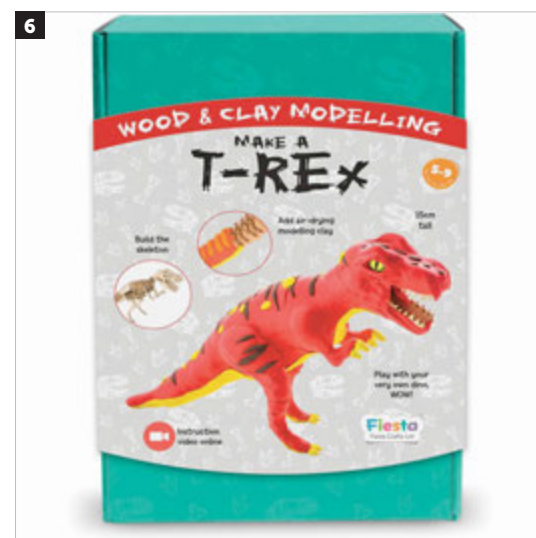
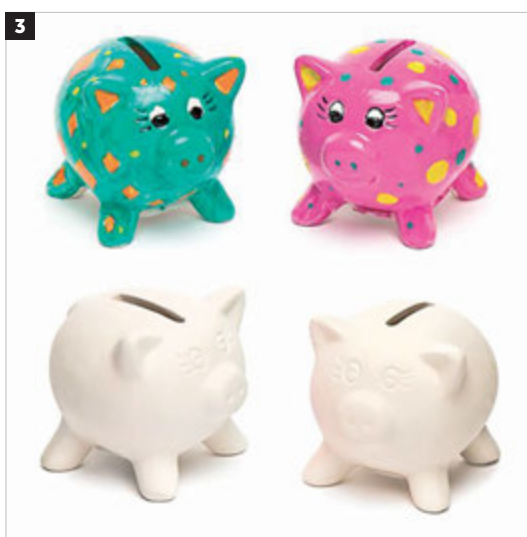
Make a T-Rex Wood and Clay Modelling brings a unique two-step project to your crafting collection. With this kit, you'll be able to construct the dinosaur's wooden 3D skeleton before you use special air-drying clay to add the coloured flesh to the outside of the model. Great for developing fine motor skills and encouraging imaginative play, the set includes push out wooden pieces, modelling clay in different colours, shiny eyes and a fact card with loads of information. Age: 5+ years.

7. Embroidery Stitches, £13 www.hobbycraft.co.uk

The Embroidery Stitches kit helps children to create beautiful designs as they learn basic embroidery stitches. Make a mini pillow or a bag, perfect as a gift for a loved one, and use the outline stencils provided to stitch an owl, butterfly or whatever your heart desires! The set includes an embroidery hoop, six spools of coloured embroidery floss, three sheets of embroidery canvas, two outline templates, two plastic needles, pillow stuffing and detailed instructions. Age: 8+ years.

8. 24 Sealife Self Inking Stampers for Kids, £8 www.littlecraftybugs.co.uk

Stamping is a very simple and fun way to encourage kids to create their own pictures! These self-inking stamps reduce the likelihood of mess and can be used from a very young age. The head of these stamps is 25mm wide, and designs include a turtle, jellyfish, starfish and pufferfish in various colours of ink. Age: approx 3+ years.



GO GREEN WITH PLANET-FRIENDLY PACKAGING

Bespoke packaging company noissue explain why you should make the change to a sustainable solution

Just about all of our retail interactions involve some kind of packaging.

We receive shopping bags with our clothing purchases, takeaway cups from cafes, or boxes containing our latest eCommerce delivery. This has made packaging so ubiquitous in our daily lives that we literally don't notice it. That's exactly the problem.

It's no secret that our current packaging methods are wreaking havoc on the environment. The abundance of single-use plastic, polystyrene and other non-renewable materials is quite literally drowning our planet in waste. It's forecast that by 2050, plastic in our oceans is going to

outweigh marine life, with devastating consequences.

After being forced to produce their own sustainable packaging for a previous business venture, noissue's co-founders Josh Bowden and August Guar started thinking about the lack of affordable eco-friendly packaging options on the market. The result of their efforts is a select range of custom-branded sustainable alternatives which prove that being green doesn't have to mean compromising on quality or brand presence.

After launching with their FSC-certified and acid-free custom tissue paper in 2017, noissue has followed this up with 100% compostable mailers, custom stickers and packaging tape. Today, they

offer businesses of every size a full eco-friendly packaging toolkit at some of the lowest MOQs on the market.

WHY SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING?

It's easy to feel as a small creator that your packaging habits will make little difference to the big picture. But it's exactly this thinking that has perpetuated a widespread 'throwaway' culture. If roughly 23% of our landfills are made up of packaging waste, reducing this by even a few percentage points is a difference that equals millions of tonnes each year.

As society grapples with the destructive impact of our retail habits, businesses are reckoning more and more with a rise of eco-consciousness in their customers. According to Global Webindex, the number of consumers willing to pay more for sustainable/eco-friendly products has grown from 49% in 2011 to 57% in 2018.

Within this increase, packaging itself is becoming a serious consideration. As many as 62% of consumers say that they are more likely to purchase from brands that use sustainable packaging than those that don't. Recyclable packaging in particular is on the rise because it places a much lower burden on the consumer.

What does this tell us? That in an extremely crowded online marketplace like



@samjayne_design (https://www.instagram.com/samjayne_design/)

arts & crafts, eco-friendly packaging is an asset just as much as it's a concession to protect our planet.

WHAT KIND OF SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING IS BEST FOR MY BUSINESS?

This bottom-up shift is creating some serious demand for eco-friendly packaging alternatives. But it's important to think carefully about what design is best for your business.

For example, glass, some forms of plastic, and biodegradable substances such as sugarcane are all technically renewable. But these options each have pros and cons. Glass is fragile, while plastic can contaminate recycling streams if disposed of incorrectly. Plant-based

packaging can involve more complex disposal processes, which means taking the time to educate your customer base.

The bottom line is that your supply chain ends with the customer. If your packaging doesn't protect your goods in transit, or is difficult to dispose of, your sustainable efforts can go to waste (quite literally!)

Cardboard and paper-based packaging are both great options for small businesses because it's versatile, relatively inexpensive, and consumer knowledge is widespread about its recyclability.

Moreover, research shows that cardboard and paper has a greater high-end perception amongst consumers. A recent survey by the Paper



and Packaging Board found that 63% believe paper and cardboard packaging makes a product seem premium quality. It's a good example of how packaging reflects on your brand at the moment of delivery – and it's important to make a good impression!

For craft retailers especially, packaging also provides an excellent branding opportunity to tell your story. To really get bang for your buck, it's worth considering what custom options are available at your price range. While custom boxes are at the more expensive, custom stickers or tape are much more affordable packaging accessories that will really set you apart.

WHAT SHOULD I CONSIDER BEFORE CHANGING MY PACKAGING?

Before hopping online and ordering a new packaging

supply, it's important to evaluate your current design and what parameters your new packaging will need to meet. We always make a point of saying that sustainability isn't just about eco-friendliness; it's also a measure of whether something can meet both cost and performance standards. If your preferred packaging is zero-waste but lacks protective capabilities or is otherwise outside your budget, then it simply isn't sustainable for you as a business owner. For example, if you are a company with a lot of international customers, postage is already going to be one of your bigger expenses. You don't want to add to this by choosing packaging which is heavy or bulky, thus increasing those costs. So you may want to think about more lightweight options such as mailers for your smaller items.



@stefanieshank (<https://www.instagram.com/stefanieshank/>)



Likewise, compostable packaging is gaining a lot of popularity as a replacement for single-use plastics, but the success of this strategy relies on customers having ready access to these facilities. If you take your carbon footprint seriously, it's no longer acceptable to see responsible disposal solely as a problem for your customer. If you are heading down this route, think about how you can best serve your customer base. Perhaps you could share some home composting guides online, or information about community sites in the areas you serve. Not only this does ensure eco-friendly disposal, it also encourages sustainable habits more broadly.

WHAT ARE SOME QUICK TIPS TO HELP 'GREEN UP' YOUR PACKAGING?

If you aren't currently in a position to order new packaging, there are still a lot of practical steps that you can take to increase the sustainability of your design and service:

- **Remove single-use plastic and cellophane wrap** – swapping to a recyclable alternative to protect your products, such as tissue

paper, will result in far less waste being discarded. Many illustrators on Instagram have embraced this idea by adopting the so-called #nakedcardspledge

- **Are there any ways you can encourage reuse?** We all know how convenient it is to keep a few cardboard boxes around, but cloth pouches or pretty containers can easily be reused for gifts or storage. Making customers aware of these possibilities will help create a more circular economy.
- **Minimize paperwork** – Consider giving customers

the option of having receipts and packing slips emailed instead of printed. This is an easy way to save on resources!

- **Do you actually need the amount of packaging you are using?** Over-packaging is a widespread problem in eCommerce (as many an Amazon order can tell you). This usually results from merchants using boxes that are too big for their items, thus needing large amounts of packing filler. Keeping a range of different-sized containers in stock is an easy way to deal with this problem.

FIND OUT MORE

To discover the range of eco-friendly packaging options available from noissue, go to www.noissue.co or follow them on Instagram @noissuesco



SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MOVES THAT INSPIRED US

With pressure mounting on brands to operate in an environmentally-friendly manner, we're highlighting some of the very best eco initiatives from the craft industry and beyond

Pentel Acts Positively on Sustainability

Writing instruments and art materials manufacturer, Pentel, has taken positive action to promote the sustainable credentials of many of its products, including quick-drying EnerGel X, one of its key pens for use in the office, retail environment, school or home.

A special promotion is currently in place, featuring boxes of 12 EnerGel X pens (made with 84 per cent recycled materials) with 12 free refills, to encourage users to refill their pen rather than dispose of it when the ink has run out.

Marketing manager Wendy Vickery said: "There really is no need to throw away a perfectly good pen, and no excuse to do so, when we all appreciate the importance of reducing waste by using refillable products, as well as products made with recycled materials."

Many everyday products in the company's range of writing instruments can be refilled, including most of the EnerGel family, which is perfect for both



right and left-handed writers, thanks to its quick drying ink which reduces smudging on hands and paper. All of Pentel's mechanical pencils, including the highly popular P200 series (favoured by artists and illustrators) can be refilled with both leads and erasers. They therefore not only deliver a constant, reliable lead diameter, but also last indefinitely, making them a sound investment for drawing, sketching or writing.

Long before the current soar in demand for recycled products, Pentel had been manufacturing and promoting a wide range of stationery made using recycled materials, under its brand Recycology. Such products include pens, pencils, markers and fibre tips and a range of display books and presentation files – all made using a minimum of 50 per cent recycled materials. The company is committed to ensuring that as many products as possible are made using recycled content, including the recently launched 12 new colours of Brush Sign Pen, made from 81 per cent recycled plastic and ideal for hand lettering.

To encourage consumers to act responsibly and reuse products where possible Pentel has created a special logo for customers to use, to help end-users identify easily Pentel products that can be refilled. "If You Love It, Refill It" will be available to download shortly from the Pentel website, www.pentel.co.uk



Packaging Solutions from Envelopes Ltd.

Providing envelopes and packaging to B2C and B2B worldwide, Envelopes Ltd. has a vision to become a renowned provider of eco-friendly and plastic-free solutions. With its ever-growing range of environmentally friendly products on offer, the brand is also developing existing ranges to fit into the sustainable category. The "Envirolopes" brand includes products such as award winning Flutelopes – a plastic-free alternative to the traditional plastic bubble bag, and our Boardlopes – a completely compostable and biodegradable rigid mailer, as well as many more. Having been in the industry for over 20 years, Envelopes Ltd. are well aware of the devastation single-use plastic does to our delicate planet, and the company has become a market leader in postal packaging. The business' belief is that if people can be provided with an affordable solution, we as a planet can eradicate a huge part of daily plastic waste. To find out more about the work being done by Envelopes Ltd., including their eco-friendly blog posts, go to www.envelopes.co.uk



Wool and the Gang's New Wave Yarn

Made from discarded plastic bottles, Wool and the Gang's New Wave Yarn provides crafters with a material that has a clear conscience. Each ball has been made with three whole plastic bottles, making this product sustainable. The plastic is blended with cotton to create a light and soft texture that can easily be used by beginners and experienced crafters alike. It's possible to create sweaters, cardigans, bags, beanies, scarves and more with New Wave Yarn, providing fantastic versatility. The company have also set up the hashtag #changemaker to encourage consumers to post about their use of this eco-friendly yarn on social media, in order to inspire others to turn plastic pollution into a beautiful project. www.woolandthegang.com

Holly & Co's Sustainability Initiatives

Holly Tucker MBE, and her founding business Holly & Co is cheerleading the small business revolution in the UK. The organisation creates a range of events to support small businesses, including workshops, podcasts and a free community of online resources that will motivate and inspire. Holly & Co care passionately about the environment and are constantly reviewing and making changes to the way the company works, understanding where products are sourced from and how to manage waste. Working closely with First Mile, the organisation is able to recycle all of its general waste. Used coffee grounds are made into fire logs, balloons we used in events are 100% natural latex, created by tapping rubber trees and are compostable. In workshops, paper straws, takeaway containers, napkins and cutlery from Vegware are used, and the in house coffee cup lids are made from a plant based recycled, compostable material. Takeaway coffee cups are 100% biodegradable, compostable and recyclable from Scyphus. To work with Holly & Co to improve your business, go to holly.co

Blue Tit Felting Kit



Sleepy Koala Felting Kit



Sleepy Fox Felting Kit



The Crafty Kit Company

Founded in 2013 by Jo Lochhead, The Crafty Kit Company design and manufacture award winning craft kits just outside Edinburgh.

They were a highly commended brand in the Best Sustainable Craft Company category of the Craft Business Awards 2020. The company's needle felting kits contain Corriedale wool fleece, which is a 100% natural material, lovely to work with and fully biodegradable with no plastic content. All kits contain everything you need to complete the project, including materials, tools, trimmings and of course full colour instructions. Each kit is attractively packaged in a beautifully illustrated cardboard box – perfect for storing all your bits and bobs while you're working! The company's growing range of needle-felting, knitting and sewing kits, are all designed for either 'beginners' or 'improvers'.

Jo Lochhead said: "Our connection with our suppliers is always important, and as most have had to quickly adapt from physical shops to online platforms over the last few months, we have tried to help them to make this transition by providing images and artwork. We make all of our kits to order, so we can adapt quickly to changes in the market, but we have found that the type of kits ordered haven't really changed – a lot of our kits

are nature-based, and I think connections with nature are so important to everyone at this time. On days when we can't get outside we can bring a little bit of nature inside! For spring, our Blue-Tit, Sleepy Fox, Hedgehog and Bee Hive needle-felting kits have all been nature 'top-sellers'! Also proving popular are beginner sewing and knitting kits, which are perfect for young crafters learning new skills while they stay safe at home.

"We are heartened by how many people are looking for positive things they can do for others during this difficult time. We have had a lot of orders for our best-selling starter needle felting kits like our "Baby Bunny" from lovely customers sending them to friends who are self-isolating on their own – some are ordering a kit for a friend and one for themselves, so they can do it 'together' over social media which is such a lovely idea! We also had lots of orders for our Sleepy Koala needle felting kit after the Australian bushfires, where people were making up the kit and auctioning it off to raise funds for the Aussie rescue centres."

The Crafty Kit Company will be launching their new trade website in May, along with an exciting new product range. Go to trade.craftykitcompany.co.uk

Bee Hive Felting Kit



Baby Bunny Felting Kit



Baby Hedgehog Felting Kit



Pentel Arts

Brush Sign Pen

Fresh new colours

Perfect for hand lettering and modern calligraphy

www.pentel.co.uk



New shades



Maped Helix Packaging Changes

Maped Helix, the Black Country-based global stationery giant, has pledged to make significant reductions to the use of single use plastic in its packaging as part of its ongoing commitment to education and the environment.

Combining tradition with innovation, Maped Helix produces over 25 million units of home, school and office stationery each year which is distributed in more than 80 countries worldwide. One of the company's top selling products, the Oxford Maths Set, has for many years been packaged in a plastic free sleeve and the company has now ensured that the Oxford products are in a plastic free wood casing.

Gray Richmond, UK Managing Director at Maped Helix, said: "It's really important for us to create packaging that does not use single use plastic and is recyclable, whilst still properly protecting and displaying our products during the distribution and sales process. Our short-term aim is to

remove single use plastics from at least 50 per cent of our products by 2021."

As part of Maped Helix's new product development process, special attention is paid to the packaging components involved and options to be plastic free, but it's an additional challenge finding alternative packaging for long-time products.

Gray added: "Our Oxford pen range has been carefully designed to feature only plastic free packaging and includes ballpoint pens, fountain pens, gel pens, rollerball pens and ink cartridges.

"Many of our office products and colouring packs are also in 100 per cent cardboard packaging, but it's a trickier task for multipack stationery sets, erasers and pencil sharpeners which are currently in blister and clamshell packaging for display purposes.

"The industry as a whole must embrace change in the way we package products. Over many years' infrastructure has been developed that is focused towards using plastic in packaging. This will need to be

revolutionised at great pace to hit our short and long term targets but we are very much committed to doing so.

"While forward thinking retailers are embracing the concept of becoming plastic free, inevitably some will be late adopters, perhaps maintaining a focus on price points and margins. But Maped Helix is hopeful that by working together with both manufacturers and retailers on alternative solutions, the company can work towards single use plastic packaging for stationery becoming a thing of the past.

"Our role in plastic reduction is not only environmental but educational. It's important for us to inspire our customers and communicate the importance of being environmentally conscious and socially responsible purchasers. We want to lead the way in eradicating single use plastic packaging and it's essential to garner the support of manufacturers and retailers to do this." To view the full range go to www.mapedhelix.co.uk



Backstitch Turns to Brown Paper Parcels

In early June 2018, Backstitch, a fabric, yarn and haberdashery store based online and in retail premises just outside Cambridge at Burwash Manor, announced a new policy which banned all use of plastic in their haberdashery parcels.

As part of a commitment to reducing waste and environmental impact, the company's online customers will now receive their orders of fabric, yarn, patterns and haberdashery in recycled brown paper, 'tied up' with brown paper tape. The move has been welcomed by many customers, and feedback is positive that the brown paper is not only strong and practical but also looks great.

Specialising in modern products for knitting, quilting, dressmaking and home stitchers, Backstitch has always used paper packaging for in store customers at the Burwash Manor based Haberdashery, but like many businesses, had for many years used plastic parcel bags for posting out their online orders.

Alice Synge of Backstitch said: "The attitude towards packaging has taken a real shift recently and we are really behind this move. We have noticed a very clear change in behaviour in our Burwash Manor store with customers usually refusing even a paper bag for their purchases. Like so many people we are really worried about the impact of single use plastics and know that postal packaging is a contributing factor. We are proud to have made this move to eliminate plastic from our packaging."

Backstitch is encouraging people to share their views on the no-plastic topic using #backstitchnoplastic. For more information on Backstitch's packaging policy, visit www.backstitch.co.uk/content/packaging-policy





Levi's Jean Repair Tutorials

A recognisable brand across the globe, Levi's is committed to the make do and mend initiative, by encouraging customers to repair jeans and wear them for many more years to come. The brand has provided a number of Youtube video tutorials, teaching customers how to do simple correctional stitches that will mend holes and rips. There's even the opportunity to customise jeans to make them more personable and adaptable to changing fashion trends. In store experts are also available to repair clothing for another sustainable avenue. Alongside this campaign, Levi's Better Cotton Initiative has changed the way in which the company produces clothing items, focusing on material that needs significantly less treatment in the manufacturing process, and in turn reducing up to 96% of the water involved in making jeans. Go to www.levi.com

Timberland Report Back on Eco-Friendly Schemes

Boot and shoe manufacturer Timberland are proving to consumers that they are committed to reducing their company's impact on the environment with several sustainability schemes in place. Goals include the 100% use of sustainably sourced cotton, certified Organic, Recycled or Fairtrade – in 2018 the brand announced that they had already managed 75% of this goal. Another one of Timberland's aims is to ensure that 100% of their footwear is PVC free (Polyvinyl chloride), in the same year 97% of this goal was achieved. From 2001-2018, the footwear giant planted 10.2 million trees across the world, surpassing this 2020 goal two years early, with a renewed goal of planting 50 million within the next five years. Renewable energy is another eco-friendly resource that Timberland wants to take advantage of, this year the brand is working towards reducing its use of energy by 10%, sourcing 50% of its energy from renewable sources. To find out more about these fantastic sustainability schemes go to www.timberland.co.uk/responsibility

The Green Crafts Initiative Inspires Scotland

The Green Crafts Initiative (GCI) is a sister initiative to the established Green Arts Initiative and a joint project between Craft Scotland and Creative Carbon Scotland. The project aims to enable the craft sector to contribute green actions within Scotland's cultural industries.

Makers and craft organisations based in Scotland are able to become members of the Green Crafts Initiative, which provides support and advice for crafts individuals and groups committed to reducing their environmental impact.

The initiative asks members to pledge to improve their environmental actions over time through a series of simple commitments:

- Reduce their environmental impact each year
 - Strive to improve to their monitoring and management of environmental impacts each year
 - Send an annual informal report about their actions relating to the environment
- Members have access to an extensive range of website resources and case studies to aid in their fulfilment of these commitments, as well as the ability to contact CCS for one-to-one advice as they work together to put culture and the arts at the heart of a more sustainable Scotland. If you are your business are eligible for this support, you can sign up by going to www.creativecarbonscotland.com

TOP SUSTAINABLE CRAFT PRODUCTS

Be inspired by these eco-friendly products that will help crafters to create beautiful projects without harming the environment



OkoNorm Eco Modelling Clay, £5.49

www.consciouscraft.uk

Get creative with this fun, colourful eco modeling clay that can be enjoyed by crafters young and old. Easy for children of all ages to use, it does not dry out or harden. The clay is also washable and does not smear or stain. As with all OkoNorm products it is made from non-toxic materials.

Duckling Crochet Kit,

£14.49+ www.etsy.com

Create your own cute little duckling with this eco crochet kit. Typically made from environmentally friendly materials including a bamboo hook, recycled paper, and organically farmed wool, every element of this product has been designed with the environment in mind. The 20 page fully-illustrated pattern is printed on recycled paper and bamboo-cotton blend yarn is included for making eyes, a beak and feet.



Sewing Thread Organic Cotton 100m,

£2.75 per pcs www.stoffstil.co.uk

Eco-friendly stitchers will love these 100% organic cotton threads, available in a range of colours including powder, blue and mint. This high-quality product is durable and will last the test of time.

HiyaHiya Bamboo Circular Needles 16"/40cm,

£5.29 www.lovecrafts.com

These study yet stylish Fixed Circular Needles are made from 100% bamboo material. They have a natural strength, combined with slight flexibility, allowing experienced crafters to produce wonderful knitted projects.



All Purpose Liquid Dye Aquamarine, £6.49

www.ritdyestore.co.uk

This versatile, easy-to-use and non-toxic liquid dye is ready to deliver vibrant colour to almost any type of fabric or fabric blend, including cotton, linen, silk, wool or nylon. Perfect for rejuvenating faded clothing, changing the color of apparel, shoes or accessories. It's also the ideal tool to create an ombre, dip dyed, marbled or shibori pattern. A wide array of colours are available.



Organic Wool Felt Sheets (Pack of 10),

£26.95
www.consciouscraft.uk

Made from 100% organic wool felt, these sumptuous sheets are plant dyed with various natural colours. This large pack is ideal for all craft projects, including face masks, dolls clothing and decorations. Individual sheet size: 20cm x 30cm



Biodegradable Glitter – Pastel Mix,

£6
www.dustanddance.com

Dust & Dance's biodegradable glitters are beautiful mixes of specially selected eco-friendly sparkles, made up of gorgeous colours and sizes to create the best chunky combination for the consumer's individual needs. Made from plant cellulose, Pastel Mix combines all of the pastel glitters in three sizes – fine, chunky and super chunky. 18 different types of biodegradable glitter have been specially selected and hand mixed to create this pot.



Skein of Recycled Yarn, £8 www.weareknitters.co.uk

Recycled Yarn from We Are Knitters is composed of 95% cotton and 5% of other fibers, available in a +/-100 gram skein. Thanks to the recycling process, the fibres are treated and have been spun into a single strand, which gives a great rustic appearance. The material is a truly resistant, sustainable and vegan yarn.

2 Brand New Kits for Summer



Metal Embossing Kit - Flower Press



Metal Embossing Kit - Plant Tags

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MASTERS OF CRAFT: A SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION

Founder of Avec UK Becks Beere delves into her new range of craft kits that are a masterclass in brand collaboration



What inspired you to create the masters of craft range?

"We at Avec have been leading the category for licensed brand and private label craft kits for the last seven years – which is the heritage of our company. It has been my background and passion to create easy, accessible and affordable kits for crafters to pick up and try. I spent a few Handmade Fairs on the Hobbycraft stand demonstrating our early Kirstie Allsopp kits, and showing crafters how easy it was to try a new technique and create something they were proud of. I loved being that hands on. As we have grown the business and the category diversified, I am naturally drawn back to those roots. So when I started re-looking at craft trends, I could see it wasn't about one person owning the message – the diversity of messages and methods made it intriguing and engaging, and I wanted to capture that. I started talking to all the creative talent I have worked on and off with over the years, both in Avec and in my time as head of product at the now disbanded Design Objectives, and we all had the same ambition – let's make it better! We wanted to make the kits more sustainable, reinvent the education and the quality, take it further and start to embrace really cool techniques that seem utterly enchanting and daunting."

How did you choose your 'Masters'?

"Anyone who has a specialism, also has a passion. Ever heard Patrick Grant get upset about the amount of clothing already produced that can clothe the next five generations (at least) and the need to love and elongate the life of the clothes we already own? Well until you have experienced that up close, you do not know what passion for patching and darning is! That



kind of authentic care is what we wanted to harness. It is unbridled creativity – and it is not about selling a kit, it is about sharing a joy for a craft. If you have visited Jenny Muncaster's studio then you know what acrylic paint can do! Our local hero that is Kathryn Coyle has been the warmest, kindest watercolour artist, making personal prints for birthdays for the team and just sharing her love with such generosity. She is a master of her craft. These masters want to show crafters how to use the tools and tips and create something they love. The credentials were all about being true to their skill, and being utterly joined to the journey of engaging with crafters."

How were you able to collaborate with so many influential figures in craft?

"When I make friends I like to keep them. Some of the masters are new friends I am making – and we have had some fun developing branding with them. For some of them this is the first time they have seen their passion translate into a product. I am incredibly honoured to be part of that process. I love what I do and I attract and admire those that also share passion and purpose. So when it comes to benefits and challenges, I think it is simply about sharing a vision

and realising that even for the mainstream (on the TV) talent like Kirstie and Patrick – there is a wonderful humility and love to be part of something that connects craft with someone you may not have heard of before now."

Why do you believe the personal touch from these popular influencers will draw in consumers?

"I think we all thrive on connections with people – you can see this through how we now engage with brands and each other. Craft is no different, we don't want our brand to be faceless. It needs to feel part of a community, now more than ever. I think that is why I love being a crafter – we all have our micro communities and support networks. We lean on each other, ask each other's advice, swap fat quarters and tips over a coffee. Our influencers are human beings – all wonderfully warm, hilariously imperfect, and approachable. I think that each of our Masters captures community and expertise without ego."

How were you able to portray the different styles and personalities of your chosen Masters of Craft within each box?

"We approached every brand uniquely and worked with each



master specifically on their message, their unique voice and way of expressing their passion. We want each person to be different – that was the whole idea. So from branding, to content, to how they teach and share and QR codes that link to their work and words it is all bespoke and tailored and perfectly them. We then brought it under our banner and created a collective approach that we could share with retailers to create a clear story for shelves. What we have found is that retailers have honed in on their specific themes, and selected kits and masters that match their audience. How perfect is that? One size, one story, one kit does not fit all. The Masters of Craft range is about creating a forum for specialism that is commercial and supportive. We craft and we personalise, so why wouldn't we do that with this product?"

How important was it for you to create a product with strong sustainable and eco-friendly credentials?

"Creating a product that has strong sustainable and eco-friendly credentials was fundamental.

"As a business we champion sustainability, it's not just as a buzzword, but a way of operating daily as a team. Using these considerations, we then reflected on how we source, develop, produce and support.

"We have a zero single use plastic policy for our product and have reduced the packaging size. We are one of around 3,000 companies in the UK that are FSC certified and we operate to the strictest

social, environmental and ethical standards – even if our competitors do not. Our internal compliance team are passionate advocates for raising the bar when it comes to sustainability."

What were the main sustainable considerations that were implemented when creating the boxes?

"We have a zero single use plastic policy and have reduced the amount of packaging used. We have also done all we can to make sure that the product and tools inside are high quality that perform well and are not disposable."

What are the key ways that you plan to market the range?

"We fly under the radar as a business, that has been our MO for the last eight years. We market directly to our select retailer base, working on bespoke ranges and solutions for them. This concept felt bigger than one retailer solution – which is why we have opened it out to our multiple retailers in the UK, AU and USA. We have then done what we do and created bespoke solutions and compositions that marry their audience with the right themes and price points."

What's next for Avec UK?

"We are really excited about our exclusive global partnership with TheDadLab® and Sergei. The concise capsule range launches AW20. It is sustainable, and exciting. We have a range of other sustainable products across skincare, craft, home and stationery for our customers. Some of the products we develop include bamboo toothbrushes, bamboo and cotton face pads that replace disposable ones. We have a massive portfolio – it really is about the conversations we have with customers, about finding their challenges, and providing easy solutions. We have creative Advents for 2020 – and a rather exciting project and brand collaboration that I will have to fill you in on later in the year... it is top secret!" To find out more about the Masters of Craft range go to www.avecuk.com





Craft BUSINESS AWARDS

ENTER NOW FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN!

We're excited to announce the launch of this year's Craft Business Awards!

Entries officially opened on Tuesday 21st April, and these awards truly highlight the cream of the craft industry crop.

With an online reach of over 200,000 over the entry and nomination period last year, it's clear to see the huge benefit of exposure that comes with associating with the Craft Business Awards.

From new products and emerging craft brands, to big businesses and popular craft books, if you work in the craft industry, we have a category (or more) that you will be eligible for. Most of our categories are free to enter in the Reader Voted section, while the Elite Industry Awards gives you the opportunity to pay to have an industry expert judge your entry, and if you win, enjoy extra publicity as a result. Cost per entry is £100 + VAT.

HOW IT WORKS: ENTER YOUR PRODUCTS

Simply complete the entry form on the Craft Business Website. If you enter an Elite Industry Award, we'll let you know what we'll need from you next. If not, we'll let you know in due course if your product, brand or

campaign has been shortlisted for an award. Entries for both the Elite Industry and Reader Voted awards close on 18th June 2020.

Once you've entered into the Reader Voted categories, you can encourage fellow businesses and readers to vote for you to win! Shout about the awards on social media, in newsletters, in future issues of Craft Business magazine and on your website to work hand in hand with the promotion that we will be giving you, and watch your exposure grow!

THE JUDGING BEGINS

If you've entered an Elite Industry Award, your entry will be sent to that category's judge or panel of judges. If

you've entered a standard Craft Business Award and if your entry has been shortlisted, public voting will open on 24th July and close 2nd October 2020.

THE WINNERS ARE ANNOUNCED!

All the winners will be notified on 27th November and sent their awards. We will be highlighting all of the winning brands in our press pack, on the website and on all of our social media platforms.

Entry forms, more information and frequently asked questions can be found on the Craft Business website – www.craftbusiness.com/awards. Good luck!



TAKE A LOOK AT OUR STAR STUDDED PANEL OF JUDGES:



JULIE PEASGOOD

Renowned actress and presenter Julie Peasgood has an extensive background in craft and is now the founder of Supercraft Cruises



DAVID JINKS

Head of consumer research for online parcel broker ParcelHero, author and former editor of a number of hobby magazines such as *Model Collector*



BECKS BEERE

Founder & Managing Director at Avec UK



JAMES BOARDWELL

Co-Founder and CEO at Folksy



HOW TO ATTRACT FIRST-TIME CRAFTERS

With craft sales booming and consumers of all ages on the hunt for a fun new hobby, make sure that you cash in on this newfound popularity in the industry

You might have grown an audience of loyal customers who know your brand well and are always on the hunt for the latest innovative craft product, but now is a great time to branch out with your investments and marketing campaigns to appeal to a wider demographic. With many individuals under the new furlough arrangements set by the Government, consumers are looking for a brand new hobby, which means that popularity in a range of different crafts has grown steadily over the last few weeks. With a different kind of consumer in mind, here's some great ways that you can convince first-time crafters to part with their cash.

SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Being generous with your time and content will go a long way to cementing you in the minds of new crafters. Offer free Q&A sessions on

your social media channels where beginners can ask you any craft related questions. If you can provide solutions with your products then your business will become an invaluable resource.

MAKE YOUR WEBSITE USER FRIENDLY

Your website is the window to your brand, and if you've managed to entice new customers to take a look around then it's important to keep them on your pages for as long as possible. Perhaps dedicate a whole section of your website to beginners? You could include some of your top products for novice crafters and some handy tips for those who aren't experienced enough to anticipate setbacks when making various projects. It may also be a good idea to include hints for customers to buy certain products together, for example, if a consumer

places a watercolour set in their basket, then your website could show links of 'frequently bought together' products, such as an artist's pad and extra paintbrushes to make sure that the order contains everything a first-time crafter might need.


PROVIDE HELPFUL RESOURCES

If you haven't already set up a blog section of your website, now is the perfect time to do so. Step-by-step blog posts covering how to make simple projects using the products you supply is an excellent way to inspire beginners. You could also cover common mistakes that new crafters make so that your consumers feel ahead of the game. Video content from the suppliers of your products is also handy for crafters who aren't sure how to use certain materials and tools, and will save you from taking the time to explain these details yourself.

KEEP YOUR PRICES COMPETITIVE

First-time crafters are less likely to invest in more expensive craft supplies because they might feel an uncertainty that this hobby will be longstanding. Therefore it's key to make sure that your products for beginners are good value for money and compete with rival brands in order to secure those sales. You might also consider flash sales and discount codes for that extra push of encouragement.

GIVE THE CONSUMER OPTIONS TO PROGRESS

Your website should create a clear pathway for crafters to invest in more advanced products as they become more confident and skilled. If beginners can see that your business can provide them with all the tools they make need to take on their new hobby, then they are much more likely to return to you in the future. 



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HOW TO PROVIDE OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE

Create and Craft's head of customer service Jo Jenkins believes that a positive consumer experience should be a top priority for all businesses

When multichannel retailer Create and Craft won the Best Rated Customer Service category in the Best of Craft Awards 2019, it was a validation of a big internal strategy to future-proof the business. It is why the company's head of customer service Jo Jenkins believes treating your customers right – before, during and after a purchase – should be the top priority for any business.

"Customer service is so important," she says. **"It's often thought that cost and price is always the most significant aspect for a customer to take into account when buying from you, but service and overall experience are what consumers remember about you.** It's what keeps them coming back! It's also what gets them talking positively about you on social media to others and recommending you to friends and family."

Create & Craft's customer contact centre is based in Mumbai, India, where around 100 multi-skilled agents for both Create & Craft and its sister shopping channel Ideal World handle more than 14,000 queries every week across both brands.

Jo explains: "This group is passionate and loyal to Create & Craft. That is why they deliver exceptional service to our fabulous customers, whether that is on the phone, via email

or using web chat. We spend time sharing results and product knowledge with them so they have a clear understanding of the business. We also have a small team in Peterborough of 10 who provide support with specialist queries and concerns. They work on any communications for customers about changes to products."

Jo believes good customer service is particularly crucial and critical to a TV shopping/online business because it can foster a greater sense of community: "We know our customers already feel part of the C&C family. They love our presenters and getting involved with our shows. So when customers want to speak to us or email us if they have a problem, they need to have the same kind of feelings

from that experience and interaction. A vital part of this success is the fact that our customer service team feels like a part of our family, even when they are thousands of miles away. As a company we make a real effort to connect with them and provide vital feedback. In turn, they make sure our customers feel part of the family too, wherever they are in their buying or returning journey with us.

"Our employees strive for first call resolution so customers don't have to contact us multiple times to resolve any query. We also share best practice. We have a coaching culture and learn from mistakes, which involves listening to calls and reviewing emails together. After this analysis we are able


to agree on ways to improve the customer experience.

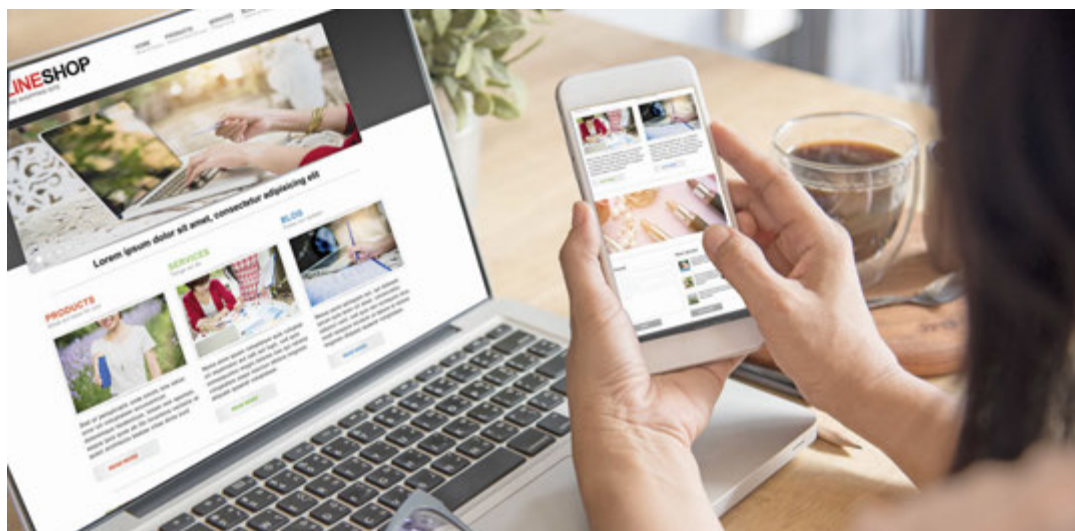
"But our customer service team doesn't only exist to respond to complaints. **We place orders for customers who can't/don't choose to order online and handle all contact from customers with any kind of question or query after ordering.** This provides yet another incentive for consumers to keep an open dialogue with us, and place a lot of trust in our services. It's this level of dedication that breeds loyalty."

For an TV-based online brand, Jo believes it is all the more important to show customers that you care when they aren't able to physically interact with you.

"A big difference for us when it comes to the

customer service approach taken by bricks/mortar retail is the lack of any face-to-face interactions. We know it can often be hard to build a rapport with customers when they aren't ever visiting you in a physical premises. So whether it is over the phone or in written communication, we have to work hard to make sure our customers are happy with the service they're given. You don't get to see their smile but if you do it right, you can hear their satisfaction and this makes the difference for us!

"The most important thing is to think customer-first every time. We always want to do what we can to support our customers. We listen to their needs and try to resolve it, not just for the individual involved but for future customers, too. If you do everything you can to help them and acknowledge how they are feeling, you can usually solve most things. The outcome may not even be what the customer originally wanted, sometimes you might not be able to completely resolve the issue. My view is that a customer wants to feel special and know and see that you'll do everything you can do to help. By doing this you are proactively solving new issues for your customers before they can even encounter them. That's the essence of true customer service." 



8 WAYS TO GET INTO EDUCATION



With the annual school budget at £49.9bn, craft businesses can tap into a profitable audience, says The Teach Company's Richard Stebbing

With huge numbers of the UK's children currently being homeschooled by parents and grandparents, now is the time to take your craft product into an educational direction. Once schools are up and running once again, this gained insight from children and parents will make for invaluable feedback as you branch into the world of education. Here are eight factors that will steer you towards success.

1 PRODUCT SAMPLING & DATA GATHERING

The best way that teachers will understand the impact of your product is by putting them straight into the hands of teachers, pupils and parents, allowing them to engage with the product and asking them to give real world feedback. How can this be achieved? Using a variety of marketing channels promote a landing page where teachers can input their details, from which you can build a marketing list. Advertising with teaching platforms such as *Teach Primary* magazine will bring you, your brand and your product to the attention

of people who are looking for ways to make education more exciting for young people.

2 BUILD A COLLECTION OF TESTIMONIALS

Before committing to a purchase, teachers and parents need to be sure of the learning outcomes that a product will deliver. Within education, the power of case studies, testimonials and feedback is huge. Why not consider speaking to local schools about using your product for free in their classrooms in exchange for teacher and pupil feedback? Or consider sending it to parents who are homeschooling their children during the COVID-19 lockdown.

3 CREATE ADDED VALUE

Teachers love ready made lessons, activities and ideas that they can adapt and make their own. Consider creating some simple step-by-step ideas on how your product can support specific curriculum goals and share these with teachers for free. You could host these on your website, perhaps behind a

free membership wall helping you build that all important marketing database. Not sure where to start? Consider creating ideas around key events in the school calendar such as Easter or World Book Day. Or research the most popular classroom games and see if you can create your own twist that makes your product an integral part of the activity. Parents will know their children better than anyone, and if you can convince them that their child learns and develops in a more efficient way thanks to your product, then this kind of approval will be invaluable.

4 FIND AN EDUCATION SPECIFIC DISTRIBUTOR

There are many distributors selling into education that schools use as their go-to place for new resources, such as Findel, TTS and The Consortium. See what they're already selling and how they are marketing similar products. Once you can demonstrate demand, make contact and offer to send free samples – back this up with your teacher

and parent testimonials and case studies.

5 KEYWORDS, SEO AND CONTENT

Before you even sell to schools or market to parents who are currently homeschooling, you could build dedicated pages full of content that will bring teachers to your site, positioning yourself as an established brand within the sector. SEO builds over time, the earlier you take this step the sooner you will feel the benefit. Consider using a consultancy to identify keywords, phrases and questions that teachers and parents are already searching for that you could build your content around.

6 SOCIALISE WITH TEACHERS


Teachers love to share ideas, and there is a huge sense of

community amongst the profession – most notably at primary level. Become engaged with Twitter conversations, share lesson activity ideas and ask questions on online forums such as Facebook groups. You could also speak to parents in your own local community who might be happy to answer any questions you may have. There are plenty of free resources available to you.

7 THE POWER OF INFLUENCERS

Social media gurus who are proud parents could be the perfect partners to help you promote your craft product. Try to arrange free samples to be sent to them, and ask them to take photos and videos of their children enjoying your products. This kind of inspiration will appeal to parents who are looking to entertain and educate bored children who are currently stuck indoors.

8 BUILD A MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Using established channels such as *Teach Primary* magazine, you can reach a ready-made audience en masse, the key consideration should be your call to action. What is going to make their readers open their laptops and go to your website? Consider product trials, free content in exchange for an email address, and teacher testimonials. Display advertising is a great way to demonstrate visually exciting craft projects. Consider content marketing to tell the wider story. Gain access to large email databases, social media followings and web traffic to build a measurable multi-channel campaign. 

CONTACT THE TEACH COMPANY

For commercial opportunities in the education sector, contact Richard Stebbing via email richard.stebbing@theteachco.com or call 01206 505 957.

To find out more about The Teach Company go to www.theteachco.com

We Are Knitters Releases Free Patterns Following Huge Sales Increase

In order to provide consumers with plenty of crafting opportunities during lockdown, We Are Knitters has launched an online collection of free knitting patterns to inspire and uplift. The four patterns create practical

makes that are perfect for use around the home, including a laptop sleeve and a plant pot. The company has also seen a massive increase in the sales of their craft kits, with best sellers including the Pangolin Sweater, Dill Tee, Dragonfly Blanket and Clyd Blanket. The kits provide

customers with everything they will need to get knitting, including yarn, needles and easy-to-follow instructions. According to Vogue Business, over the month of March the annual sales growth of the business spiked to 235 per cent, fuelled by the increasing desire by the public to learn new skills and pass the time while under COVID-19 restrictions. With a variety of products that can be picked up by crafters of any skill level, it's clear to see that We Are Knitters are capitalising on the rising popularity of old school crafts.



FOR FURTHER DETAILS
Go to
weareknitters.co.uk



STYLECRAFT LAUNCHES NEW SPRING SUMMER YARN RANGE

Stylecraft has recently announced its third launch for the Spring Summer season, which focuses on their special family of yarns with new colours and patterns to tempt knitters and crocheters. Fans of Special DK will be delighted to see five vibrant new colours added to the palette due to popular demand – Dandelion,

Clementine, Proper Purple, Apple and French Navy. To celebrate the new shades, the company has created a fantastic mother and daughter collection of captivating garments including jumpers, cardigans, hats and scarves to reflect the current trend. In the Special Aran section there are three pattern leaflets which feature the new shades that

were launched in Autumn 2019. The designs are a modern take on traditional garments majoring on beautiful cables. Stylecraft are also delighted to be working once again with Helen Boreham. The latest crochet blanket and cushion design, her fourth with the brand, is called Playful Posy and is a bright and optimistic

project using Special Aran in nine colours including Sage, Teal, Fondant, Mustard, Cream, Magenta, Duck Egg, Spice and Plum. Finally, Stylecraft is offering three new pattern leaflets in Special chunky including cardigans with a Fisherman's rib, a honeycomb cabled jumper and a cosy knitted blanket with matching cushion. The DK weight for each ball is 100g and the composition is 100* premium acrylic. The new products will be available from 13th April 2020, with an individual RRP of £2.25. For trade enquiries go to www.stylecraft-yarns.co.uk



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FOCUS ON FAT QUARTERS

Best-selling author, TV presenter and sewing teacher Wendy Gardiner explains the key elements of her two newest titles that crafters in lockdown will love

The response to the first book I wrote, *Fun with Fat Quarters*, has been phenomenally successful, with lots of sales in Russia, China, USA and of course the UK. This then prompted the two new books *Take Two Fat Quarters: Gifts and Take Two Fat Quarters: Home*. By their very nature, fat quarters are cost-conscious to buy fabric as they are small pieces and all the projects in both books use just that – two fat quarters. In fact, many of them use only a portion of a fat quarter, such as the Sleep Eye Mask, Tea Cup Pincushion and Cosmetic Caddy in *Gifts* and the Cafetiere Cosy, Hanging Hoop Organiser and Dotty Notebook cover in *Home*.

Any of the projects would be ideal to start during this lockdown period as they use minimum haberdashery and of course, very little fabric!

They will make great gifts for friends – readers could make up a stash of presents to give when you can meet again!

The reversible placemats in *Home* is a great example – take time to play with different decorative stitches, use up those little bits and pieces of ribbon and trims you keep because ‘they might be useful one day’ and create personal placemats. The reverse is a simple patchwork, so if you are new to this technique it is also a great chance to have a go. In *Gifts* I must admit my favourite is Two Tone Teddy – if you have two coordinating fat quarters, a length of ribbon and toy stuffing you can make one easily (and if you don’t have toy stuffing, wash an old cushion and use that instead!).

The books are aimed at anyone with a stash of fat quarters and fabric remnants. Each title includes 16 easy-to-follow projects, with clear instructions, illustrated with step-by-step photography. There is also a pattern sheet in the back of each with full size patterns making it super easy to follow the projects.



“Each title includes 16 easy-to-follow projects, with clear instructions, illustrated with step-by-step photography.”

I have tried to make sure there is something for everyone in each book.


I’ve also used fabrics from Visage Textiles and the Craft Cotton Club which are vibrant and colourful. In *Gifts*, the Cosmetic Caddy and Brush Roll will probably

appeal to younger crafters, the Two Tone Teddy, Super Summer Shorts, Tots Trapeze Dress to young mums or grandparents making for their grandchildren. In *Home*, the Cafetiere, Oven Glove and Two Bottle Bag will appeal to all ages while the Cable Tidy Roll and Top Tech pillows should appeal to younger crafters.

I come up with different ideas for projects all the time, by seeing what is in the shops and what I then think is, “I could make something like that!” I also teach regular workshops and so need to create projects for them – I am constantly developing ideas. For instance, my niece had a cable roll she’d bought for quite a lot of money. My cables

were all scrambled together! I then saw several versions and thought, I can design one that has the benefits of others I’ve seen, plus the pockets to keep cable ends in place and the detachable zipped purse that can be used separately. The slippers in *Home* came about as a result of having those hotel/spa slippers that actually never really fit. I decided to use the sole as a base for my pretty home-made version.

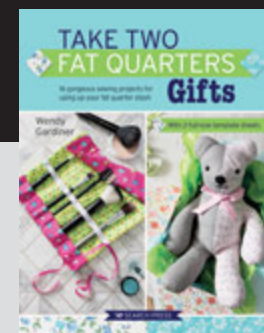
I haven’t got another book on the go just yet (the two *Take Two* books were my 20th and 21st books!). But I do have one or two I’d like to do in the future which focus more on dressmaking. I am also busy organising workshops for the Autumn Knitting & Stitching Shows – we have over 220 workshops at each and I organise them all, working with so many very talented tutors from around the

country. I also work as Brand Ambassador for McCalls Pattern Company, writing articles for a couple of magazines each month and answering any pattern queries, and then I am a consultant for Hemline on their product ranges, testing them out and making suggestions for additional instructions etc. I have also just bought myself some studio lighting and intend to do some videos for YouTube. I have done many already for Hemline, Simplicity, Makower Fabrics but would like to do some for myself. And finally, I need, and intend to, update my website! 



ABOUT THE BOOKS

Take Two Fat Quarters: Home and *Take Two Fat Quarters: Gifts* are available from good book shops and online resources such as [Amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk) with an RRP of £9.99. Available from www.searchpress.com



SUBSCRIPTION SCHEMES:

A WAY TO REACH NEW AUDIENCES

While the UK is going through lockdown and consumers are looking for a new craft hobby, now is the perfect time to launch a subscription initiative

Convenient, fast and exciting, online and postal subscriptions are soaring in popularity throughout the UK, and there's no reason why craft businesses should miss out on this fantastic idea. We take inspiration from some of the UK's most successful schemes in various sectors, and highlight ways in which their ideas could work for your brand.

THE ARTFUL BOX

Ohh Deer has launched a quarterly stationery subscription box that works alongside established artists to give creatives new tools and skills. The first Artful box,

which was released in March, was designed by illustrator Mike Lowery who also hand-picked its contents from the tools he uses in his everyday work. The next box is expected to be sent in June, with its contents currently being kept secret in order to entice customers with the mystery of new and exciting products.

Alongside tools from prominent brands POSCA and Tombow, the most recent box includes a 73-page magazine



detailing things such as career advice, interviews, and creative projects. The first Artful magazine features interviews with creatives Marzia Kjellberg, Ira Sluyterman van Langeweyde, Oliver Jeffers, and more. Every Artful box also partners with the UK charity

Create, who aim to empower people through creativity who have been disadvantaged, deprived or marginalised.

A three-month subscription to the online learning community Skillshare is included with the first box, giving subscribers access to thousands of creative lessons and projects, including a lesson with Mike Lowery using the tools inside the box.

Artful is a quarterly subscription box delivered every three months. It currently retails at £35 and ships exclusively to the UK.

You can find more information by heading to www.artful.co.uk



THE STRENGTHS OF THE ARTFUL BOX

- Box is sent through the post for convenience
- Made in collaboration with artists in order to make the product feel more personable
- Helpful documents are included to add extra value, such as career advice and ideas for how to use the products inside
- High quality products are included to make the box feel valuable

BUDDYBOX

Mental Health charity The Blurt Foundation started the BuddyBox subscription in 2015 as a means to ensure the brand's sustainability, and now they are a vital part of the organisation's income. The BuddyBox contains various products that are all designed to bring a sense of calm and wellbeing to the consumer, in turn creating some small relief from mental health issues. Previous products include comfy socks,

positive affirmation stickers, warming hot chocolate and so much more. Blurt works with an illustrator on a different theme each month to keep the box fresh, and regularly seeks feedback from customers on what they'd like to see from the BuddyBox, incorporating their feedback into future planning. Blurt creates a lot



of BuddyBox products in house, this means that the charity can create helpful products that will truly benefit customers, delivering a high-value experience. Other products are sourced from suppliers that get in touch because they think they'd be a good fit, or from companies hand-chosen by the business. Boxes cost £21.50 per month. To find out more about BuddyBoxes go to www.blurtitout.org



THE STRENGTHS OF THE BUDDYBOX

- Box is sent through the post for convenience
- Many products made in house to achieve a high-quality box
- Each monthly box has a theme which will draw in new customers
- Consumers may buy a one-off box or purchase a rolling or 12 month subscription for ultimate flexibility
- Boxes are encouraged to be bought as an act of self-care, or as a kind gesture to a loved one



GLOSSYBOX

GLOSSYBOX is the UK's most trusted beauty box subscription brand, providing its subscribers with five beauty products each month worth over £50, delivered in iconic pink boxes.

GLOSSYBOX works with beauty brands across the world including Huda Beauty, Clarins and Tarte, and is famous for limited edition box collaborations with brands such as ELEMIS, bareMinerals and Sunday Riley.

The company sources products by building really close relationships with beauty brands all over the world. GLOSSYBOX promotes products from these brands to their 1.2 million followers across social media, as

well as including them in monthly boxes and/or limited edition collections. This is great for building brand awareness and introducing new products to thousands of beauty enthusiasts.

Boxes are kept fresh and exciting by creating different themes each month and sourcing products that fit this. Five different brands are included in each box, which keeps customers engaged and gives them the chance to try something new. Priced from £8.50 a month (plus P&P), customers see their monthly GLOSSYBOX as a real 'treat' for themselves, sent straight to their door. Go to www.glossybox.co.uk

THE STRENGTHS OF GLOSSYBOX

- Considered to be one of the UK's most successful subscription box schemes
- Subscribers can collect GLOSSYCredits that can be redeemed on future limited edition boxes or spent on online beauty retailer lookfantastic
- Reasonably priced to appeal to a younger audience, highlighting great value for money
- Consumers also have access to The GLOSSYLounge which is full of exclusive offers, giveaways and competitions with major beauty and non-beauty brands every month for subscribers only
- Fantastic photography and marketing campaigns are a hit with consumers



LET'S KNIT TOGETHER

Let's Knit magazine have very recently launched the highly anticipated Let's Knit Together membership website. Let's Knit Together is the ultimate hub for knitters. From just £4.99 a month, members will have unlimited access to over 1,000 patterns, including branded and designer content, an exclusive and brand new online knitting course, member-only discounts and competitions, a private Facebook group and much more. Membership starts from £4.99 per month for an annual subscription, or £5.99 per month for a monthly subscription.

Consumers will be treated to an exclusive video course, presented by Julie Peasgood and Neti Love who explore and demonstrate a range of techniques that every knitter will find useful. There are five sections to the How To Knit course, and each video comes with additional details and printable PDFs. There's also a fantastic interactive element, where users will have the opportunity to choose which videos are filmed next.

The extensive pattern library contains over 1,000 designs, including patterns from Rowan, Bernat and DK Books. Paying users have unlimited access to all of the patterns on the website, whilst free users can download one free pattern every month and access four videos at the launch.



Community is at the heart of Let's Knit Together, and members have exclusive access to the private Facebook group where they are encouraged to share progress, chat about all things knitting-related and make friends. Knitalongs play a key role in this community, giving members the opportunity to simultaneously knit a new section each week, helping each other along the way. To find out more visit www.letsknit.co.uk/together



THE STRENGTHS OF LET'S KNIT TOGETHER

- Subscription is online – crafters can access this at any time and enjoy its benefits
- Resident presenters provide the brand with a personality and make the consumer feel part of a community
- Community aspect is continued with social media groups
- Accessible video content makes information easy to understand and follow
- New videos are added onto the website every week, providing great value for money
- Customers have a say in what content they want to see on the site



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HARRY POTTER KNITTING MAGIC

Knitwear designer and author Tanis Gray explains why the world of witches and wizards is the perfect platform to inspire crafters across the nation

The US publisher Insight Editions approached me and asked if I would write and create *Harry Potter Knitting Magic*. I have written nine books prior to this one and have almost 600 published designs. I also worked at Vogue Knitting and in publishing for many years, and prior to that I went to RISD to study film, animation, and video. It was this magical combination of having a film background and a publishing background with all of the connections that I would need to do this book justice that made them reach out to me. Originally, I thought the email was spam, because I have been waiting for so many years for someone to do an official Harry Potter book. Year after year I would think, "I really hope that I get asked to be a part of that and be asked to design something for it". When that email landed in my inbox and after the phone interview, I was bursting with excitement and anticipation of getting started. I was honoured to be given the task of making this book.

There are so many fantastic and obviously handmade items in the Harry Potter film series. In addition to knitting there are lots of other crafts as well. I remember watching all the films for the first time and immediately looking at all the hand knitted things and thinking, "I wonder if I could make that?" I remember sitting in line for the first film (back when you had to camp out to get a good seat) knitting away and hoping there would be some knitting in the films, as there are in the books. I have no doubt that all the other knitters in the audience felt the same way!

I am a massive Harry Potter fan! Some of the items we decided to put in the book were obvious choices like the Weasley sweater, or some of the creatures. Being a huge fan of both the films and the



A Cornish Pixie



AT A GLANCE

Harry Potter Knitting Magic is the first official Harry Potter knitting book that is licensed by Warner Bros.

So far, it has sold over
6,000
copies in the UK and is available
in multiple languages.

According to figures collected by Statista, the Harry Potter franchise has made an estimated
\$25 billion
US dollars since 1997.

books, I already had the history of reading and watching them multiple times and was kind of rifling through the library in my brain of what we could possibly put in this book. Like any good researcher, I also re-watched all of the films for homework. **This book is special for so many reasons, but one thing that was very important to us right from the beginning was that we had all skill levels represented.** We have a handful of projects for each skill level in the book, and the idea is that a beginner knitter can start with one of the easier projects, then work their way through the skill levels until they can make everything. **I have heard from so many people that even though they do not knit, they bought this book with the anticipation of learning how and working their way through the projects.** That makes my crafty heart so very happy! I teach knitting all over the world, and my goal is to always help every knitter reach whatever level they desire in their crafting.

Just like any series, everyone has their favourite Harry



PUBLISHER'S PERSPECTIVE

Helen Lewis, Publisher at Pavilion, discusses the reasons behind the unrivalled success of *Harry Potter Knitting Magic*



Why have Pavilion decided to publish this book years after the Harry Potters films were released?

"The Harry Potter films are classic, with new generations of fans discovering the enchanted world of Harry, his friends and foes. We are very thrilled to publish what is the first official Harry Potter knitting book, something many knitting fans have been waiting a long time for."

Do you have any statistics regarding how many copies this book has sold so far?

"*Harry Potter Knitting Magic* has been hugely popular and went straight into the UK Non-Fiction Top 20 charts. The book has been published in several countries and it's great to see knitters from all over the world coming together and sharing pictures of their creations from the book on social media under the hashtag #harrypotterknittingmagic."

What qualities does Tanis Gray bring to the table as an author and a designer?

"Tanis has a long-standing reputation in the knitting world with over 500 published patterns to her name and brings her amazing design skill to several projects in the book. The book features patterns from a range of world-class fibre artists, so there's a really nice mix of pattern designs to suit all tastes."

What advice would you give to retailers who are looking to stock this product?

"There's a perennial interest in Harry Potter. Fans of the films will immediately recognise the Harry Potter logo, so keeping the book visible in the shop or in a window is a good start. It's also a good idea to have yarn available for making the projects so that knitters can buy the book and materials all in one go."

Potter character. My favourite character has always been Luna because I see some of her in myself, especially as a fellow Ravenclaw. The nice thing about an entire universe being created for the series, is that there is someone for everyone to relate to. **Whether you find common ground with a wizard, a Muggle, one of the professors, a creature, a main character, or a supporting one, I wanted to be sure that everyone found a project inspired by their favourite that they would want to cast on for immediately.**

Harry Potter is loved worldwide, and non-knitters do not realize how many of us knitters there are. We are everywhere! Combining these two loves of Harry Potter and knitting was already a magical combination. There were also a few things that I've noticed are

lacking in some of the books that I made a priority to include in this title. Size inclusivity was a big one. Not everyone is the size of a model, so it was very important for me to have a bust circumference all the way up to 70 inches. I also wanted our models to look like regular people, with multiple ages represented. We also have a wide variety of yarns, from yarns that every yarn snob like me will love, but also some affordable choices. I had also mentioned earlier the skill levels and that was really important to me as a knitting teacher.

I am incredibly proud of the group of designers that I hand-picked to be part of this book. They all have such incredible strengths and came up with such clever and wonderful projects, I was absolutely honoured to be in their company. I think we also

have a really great collection of ideas in this book. **We have things directly inspired by the film, we also have custom replicas, creatures, and home décor. There's such a wide array of content that you could knit for years out of this book and never be bored.**

Harry Potter is such a worldwide phenomenon and there's this pressure of doing it justice, to not only the fans of the films and the books, but also the knitters. Things have to be knittable and interesting and fun, and you want people to need them. I have been blown away by the staggering amount of love and enthusiasm that this book has received.

Like any good fantasy series, I think Harry Potter is all about escapism. Even though they are wizards and we are Muggles, there's a lot

of similarities that we share.

There is a reason why these films are still watched so frequently. I don't think they will ever go out of fashion.

Everyone finds a character they can relate to and love. I think you see something or realize something new each time you watch them. Now with my own children, I am seeing these films through their eyes for the first time and that has been such a delight as a family to pile onto the couch and watch them together. My oldest is nine and is really getting into it.

I have curated what I think is an amazing collection with an absolutely talented and fantastic bunch of designers, and have my personal favourite projects.

I think I know which will be most popular, and I'm usually pretty accurate in my predictions because this is my 10th book. But sometimes things surprise me that I think may have been truly popular and are not, or vice versa. One of my favourite things during

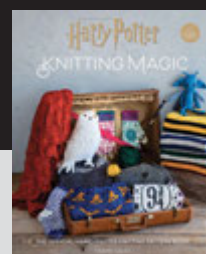
the release of a new book is seeing what rises to the top.

One thing that was difficult during the creation of this book was to keep it such a top-secret project. With myself and so many designers involved, we are all pretty active on social media. To not be able to talk about what I was working on for over a year was a challenge, and a challenge that I passed on to the designers as well. Getting to finally talk about it on Instagram and Facebook and all of the social media outlets was amazing to watch how quickly it blew up. **The sheer excitement and pre-orders for a book that no one outside myself and my publisher had seen completed had me speechless.** Yes, I am the author of this book and I have my hands on every single page, but there is no way this book would be as special as it is without my incredible publisher and all of the designers who worked on it. It truly takes a village and they will always be my Potter family. 🍷



ABOUT THE BOOK

Harry Potter Knitting Magic by Tanis Gray is published by Pavilion. RRP £22.99. Photographs by Laura Flippen.



Bookshelf

A collection of inspiring knitting titles that consumers will love

WEEKEND MAKES: STASH KNITTING BY EMMA OSMOND

RRP £14.99

ISBN-13: 978-1784945121

Publisher: GMC Publications

No-waste crafting gains even more support from this fun and friendly title from Emma Osmond. Each project makes use of leftover yarn to create a range of creative knits. The speedy patterns in Emma's book will also appeal to impatient crafters who are looking to make something beautiful in one weekend, rather than dedicate lots of time to a singular project. Each fun project uses between two and four balls of yarn to create something delightful for the home, to give as a gift or just for the consumer to enjoy. Suitable for different levels of knitting expertise, there's something to suit every knitter and every stash. Projects include a beanie hat, baby booties, blanket, mug hug, scarf and hot water bottle cover.



COLOR BLOCK KNITS BY NICKI TRENCH

RRP £12.99

ISBN-13: 978-1782497127

Publisher: CICO Books

By capitalising on the cake yarn and colour wheel trends, Trench has created a stunning collection of vivid throws, shawls, scarves and more that would brighten even the dreariest winter day. It explains to the reader about the power of contrasting and complementary colours, as well as how to create wonderful visual effects such as stripes and splashes of colour. The 35 specially designed projects included in this title cover all kinds of makes, such as homeware essentials, accessories, makes for babies, and things to wear – many of which will only require one ball of yarn to make. Focusing on various styles from subtle to vibrant, crafters will find plenty of products that suit their preferences for themselves and for their loved ones who will receive these wonderful makes as presents.



BOLD BEGINNER KNITS BY KATE DAVIES

RRP £15

ISBN-13: 978-1916503212

Publisher: KDD & Co (Kate Davies Designs)

A wonderful title for crafters looking to delve into the world of knitting. Davies' easy-going and friendly approach, paired with simple instructions and links to detailed online tutorials make this book an incredibly useful resource. It's ideal for customers looking to make do and create their own clothes from scratch, which is a source of motivation for many people who are completely new to this craft. Useful new techniques and different construction methods are carefully explained, with links to relevant video tutorials. From the straightforward pattern-writing style to the visual page layout, every element of *Bold Beginner Knits* is designed to be clear and easy to follow. Use the enticing photography that features in this book to appeal to knitters who are looking to hone their skills and make something they can be proud of.



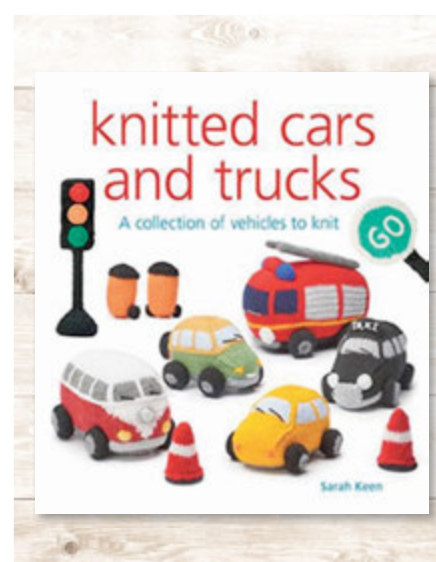
KNITTED CARS & TRUCKS BY SARAH KEEN

RRP £14.99

ISBN-13: 9781784945381

Publisher: GMC Books

This inventive book will push the skills of knitters to exciting new heights. Live life in the knitted fast lane with these super-cool, super-sized knitted cars and trucks for children to enjoy. Crafty parents can wave goodbye to little metal vehicles being driven into furniture and painful feet from treading on small plastic parts, and say hello to these wonderfully soft, squishy four-wheelers. Complete with a knitted road playmat to drive them on and accessories such as traffic lights and cones to add to the fun, children will get many hours of playtime from these fabulous projects. Vehicles include a 4 x 4, London bus, fire engine, police car, bulldozer, racing car, London black cab, articulated lorry, tractor, tanker, crane, ambulance, recycling truck, limousine, camper van, a car with a caravan and a car breakdown rescue vehicle.



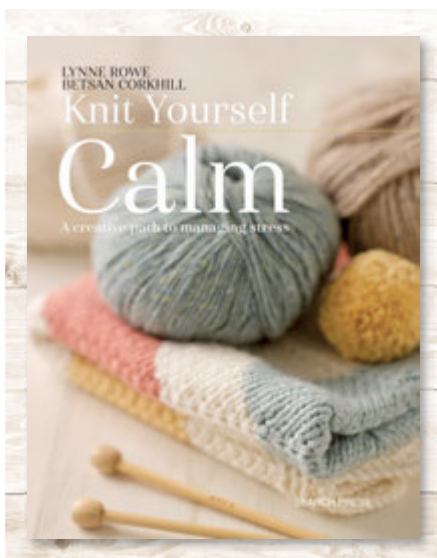
KNIT YOURSELF CALM BY LYNN ROWE & BETSAN CORKHILL

RRP £9.99

ISBN 13/EAN: 9781782214939

Publisher: Search Press

This inspiring title helps consumers to create beautiful projects designed to calm and soothe. Knitting is well-known as a relaxing and therapeutic pastime, and while crafters are staying at home during the lockdown period, it's the perfect time to promote knitting as a way to improve mental health and general wellbeing. Whether you choose a portable project to knit on the go, a group project to do with friends, or one that introduces new skills to stimulate a creative mind, this title is the perfect path to keeping calm. The projects are split into five sections: Quick and Easy, Portable, Group, Big, and New Skills. Within these sections, you can choose to make things such as a washcloth, a hat, a blanket, a shawl and an evening bag, amongst others. Every pattern has been designed with mindfulness in mind, accompanied by beautiful photographs and clear, simple instructions.



200 FUN THINGS TO KNIT BY LESLEY STANFIELD & JESSICA POLKA

RRP £14.99

ISBN 13/EAN: 9781782215202

Publisher: Search Press

This imaginative book boasts patterns featuring decorative flowers, leaves, bugs, butterflies and more! This irresistibly cute collection of small knitting projects inspired by nature is suitable for knitters of all abilities, meaning that experienced crafters can make alongside complete knitting novices. Readers will find a mix of beautiful, three-dimensional projects inspired by nature – flowers, birds, bugs, leaves and even creatures from the sea, as well as a collection of charming floral square motifs. Ideal for using up scraps of yarn, the 200 mini projects are quick and easy to make, both at home and on the go. Compiled by top knitting designers, they make stylish embellishments to give or to keep. The created knits would make perfect toys for young children, or to create decorative scenes.



CRAFT STORAGE SOLUTIONS

Crafters up and down the nation will be using their extra free time to organise their stash of supplies. Consider stocking some of these handy products which will make this process a breeze

MULTI PURPOSE Q-BOX - 9 LITRE, £12

www.aplaceforeverything.co.uk

A sturdy clip close multi-purpose box with removable divider tray. This product makes a great place to store all kinds of arts and craft materials, including sewing essentials. The pull out tray keeps compartments neat, allowing consumers to store materials for different types of crafts. Height: 22cm, width: 30cm, depth: 20cm.



PAPERMANIA MINI CRAFT ORGANISER - BLACK, £9.99

www.therange.co.uk

Consumers can keep belongings safe whilst increasing the space in their home or office with this fantastic Mini Craft Organiser from Papermania. This container is a great addition to any craft room with the 70 interior compartments – great for storing embellishments, beads, gems, buttons and much more! Complete with individual lids that clip securely shut on each compartment and the exterior zip, this folder will keep craft items safe and dust free. Height: 8cm, width: 30cm, depth: 30cm.



THE CRAFT TABLE SITTING HEIGHT - 1 LEAF, prices from £624

www.storage4crafts.com

Provide crafters with a dedicated space to work on their projects with this neat sitting height table. The product offers a workspace, storage and allows customers to increase the workspace even further with the storeaway workstations. There is also an adjustable shelf allowing for storage of a sewing machine or die cut machine. Height: 705mm, width: 490mm, table top length: 905mm. Total working area space measures: 905mm x 1070mm.



CUTE POLKA DOT BEAUTY ORGANISER COSMETIC STORAGE TRAY TRAIN CASE, £19.95

www.creativeoptionsuk.com

This Charmed 4 Tray Train Case is the perfect travel case for any hobbyist. Designed exclusively in the USA, it features four rectangular cantilever trays which pull out from opposite ends. In these, crafters can store away treasured supplies. The product boasts a spacious base area and comes with aluminium locking latches with keys. Length: 28.5cm, width: 17cm, depth: 22cm.



PINK GLITTER CADDY, £6.50

www.hobbycraft.co.uk

Add some organisation with this fabulous Glitter Caddy, perfect if a customer's craft collection is getting a little out of control! Functional and spacious, the caddy is ideal for storing all of the little accessories thanks to its handy compartments and layered trays. The product shuts securely and is easy to carry by its broad handle. Height: 33cm, width: 20cm, depth: 15cm.



PASTEL ROLLING ORGANISER 9 DRAWERS, £43

www.hobbycraft.co.uk

This Pastel Rolling Organiser features nine plastic drawers that are ready to store a wide range of accessories! From crafting essentials to bedroom basics, consumers will be able to enjoy spacious, convenient storage that takes up minimal room. The organiser features rolling wheels too, allowing easy movement that is particularly perfect for keeping drawers in an office or craft room. As well as the drawer space, there is storage space on top of the organiser for your most-used essentials, papers and files. Height: 69cm, width: 63cm, depth: 39cm.



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Assess gauge
Reduce clutter
Track progress



2cm markings on the cable & needles for quick measuring on the go!



www.knitpro.eu

Sara's COVID-19 Business Tips

Crafter's Companion CEO Sara Davies shares ideas gained from her success in the craft industry that could inspire you to consider new avenues for your brand



The last couple of months have proven to be challenging for everyone and fantastic businesses are struggling to make ends meet. I am by no means an expert, and we are all doing what we think is best for our companies. However, I thought I would share a few thoughts and business tips that I have found really helpful, when

trying to navigate through this very difficult time.

IT'S TIME TO ADAPT

First of all, it's important to remember that it is not 'business as usual' and lots of our daily operations will have had to come to a halt. All we can do is focus on what is working for our businesses and pay greater attention to those areas, adapting our services to work with the current situation.

For example, if you work in the craft industry, it might be that your products are continuing to sell well online, so, whilst bearing government regulations and advice in mind, you can continue to promote your items on these platforms. Also, while bricks and mortar stores aren't open at the moment, there are lots of online marketplaces where you can sell your products, even if you are in the very early stages of setting up a craft or hobby-based business.

CAPITALISE ON THIS NEWFOUND SURGE IN INTEREST

During this time, people are eager to try new things that could potentially alleviate stress and boredom. Customers will be thankful for giving them suggestions of projects they can replicate at home to give them a bit of a break. It could also introduce new people to your brand who have never thought about taking up a craft. Crafting has such a large

community, and with it, a huge support network. Look at different ways you can encourage this for people at home, whether it's additional content or free downloads on your website, inspirational ideas on your social media or creating a space where people can share with one another. It's also a perfect time to support other companies on social media and a great opportunity to highlight worthwhile initiatives from other businesses, whether they work within the craft sector or not.

KEEP LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN

No matter which industry you work in, an important thing to remember is that messaging is key. It's an uncertain time for everyone and your customers will appreciate being kept in the loop. Insights into what changes you're making to the business that will affect customers, things that you are adding instead and precautions you are taking to stay safe will be greatly appreciated by your followers.

Finally, remember that everyone is going through this together. No one has the right or wrong answers but chances are, if you reach out for help people will be willing to support you with the guidance or advice that you need. **CB**

Crafter's TV

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5 Minutes with...

SARAH PATTERSON

The co-owner of online retail store Sewing Sanctuary and wholesaler Sark Textile explains her savvy investment in laminate fabric



Why did you decide to launch your company?

"I started as a retailer and opened a small fabric store in Bournemouth, while also earning and income from buying and selling furniture. I purchased fabric from a few UK wholesalers, and I realised that most of the quilting fabric available was made in my country of birth, South Korea. On my next trip there I visited the huge textile market in Seoul and made contact with four very good companies who deal with high quality fabrics. I bought samples of many of my favourites, carried as much as I could fit in my luggage and had others shipped on. On subsequent trips I established a connection with a printing company who specialise in digital rather than screen printing. It costs more per metre to digitally print fabric rather than to screen print, but this is only true if you order more than 1,000 metres of a particular design. I continued to import from my Korean suppliers but was driven to start designing my own fabrics and enrolled on a surface pattern design course. My first fabric samples were delivered in May 2018 and I was absolutely thrilled.



These were introduced to the UK market that same year via the companies that I co-own with my husband, online retailer store Sewing Sanctuary and wholesale website Sark Textile. I only featured a small range of designs at first, but people thought it was fresh and very different. My next design range was larger, and to fund this I decided to introduce my patterns to other retailers at the February 2019 CHSI Stitches show. It's all really grown from there."

What products do you specialise in?

"Most of my own designs are printed on 100% pure cotton, and with the latest design range I have branched out to use a linen/cotton mix which I feel

is better for dress making. I am probably best known in the UK for laminated cotton fabric. I discovered this a number of years ago while travelling in Korea, it completely opened my mind to new opportunities and all my designs have a proportion that undergo the lamination process before shipping. I have my own range of sewing designs that are growing with the range of fabrics, a bag and some of my craft designs have been created to use the laminated fabrics and the new direction is towards dress making and linen/cotton mix is ideal for these."

How is your company developing and growing?

"Our focus is on fabric designing, printing our own designs and

specialising two different types of laminated fabric. In order to branch out into different patterns and ideas we've had to maintain the price per metre to a level that is profitable. I've also created sewing patterns and information that relates to the best use of my fabrics in order to help customers get the best out of their purchase."

What inspires you to create new products?

"I'm influenced by all kinds of things including the weather, environmental issues and the changing fashion industry. These are great sources of inspiration to keep my designs fresh!"

How has the market changed since you first started your business?

"More people have recognised and understood how to use laminated fabric rather than confusing it with oilcloth. Many people still get confused because oilcloth has dominated the market for a good while. I'm doing my best to expose people to the benefits of my fabrics, which has gotten easier over time."

What advice would you offer to retailers?

"Find what you are good at and specialise/focus on a couple of products rather than introduce a broad range early on. It's better to be known for doing a small number of things well, than make less of an impression selling hundreds of products."

What are you currently working on?

"I am making six different garments for a catwalk project. Our new 150cm wide eco-bio laminated cotton dressmaking fabric was launched in late February of this year, so I'm currently creating sewing patterns for these. Feature products will include an adult poncho, raincoat and cross overlap reversible apron."

For trade enquiries go to www.sarktextile.co.uk

CraftBusiness

For any information regarding advertising in *Craft Business*, please call

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or email
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