



Let's Talk BUSINESS...

LET'S TAKE A STEP AWAY FROM THE DESIGN aspect of T-shirt airbrushing, and focus on the business aspect this time. After all, without good organization and foresight, all aspects of your T-shirt world will suffer. Creativity needs space and an environment that's free of stress and clutter to really flourish. Imagination can't take flight if your mind is constantly preoccupied with thoughts of, "Uh oh, I need to take care of inventory!" Any type of procrastination in this area delays the artistic process and prevents you from really achieving your creative pinnacle. So for this issue, I'll share my business experience in an attempt to help you with yours.

Keeping your day-to-day responsibilities in order requires discipline and repetition. For me, a daily structure is critically important for continued achievement and meeting goals. Even if I know that I just took care of something, I still won't deviate from my checklist regimen. Allow me to break down those jobs and tasks that I address daily, weekly, monthly, and yes, yearly.

HERE'S MY CHECKLIST:

The schedule reveals my artists' locations on any given day, the hours they work, and the particular shop's operating times. This is important in case I need to inform them of display changes, pricing, new orders,

etc. Knowledge is power and works both ways. Keeping in contact with the different locations daily lets the artists know that I'm always accessible and that I expect the same from them. This also ensures that I'll know in advance of any problems getting a shop opened. Nothing hinders your ability to make money like a shop that's closed because the artist didn't

Valleyfair							Phone Numbers	
Arbrush Booth							Phone Number	
Monthly Schedule							Month 2008	
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
8	9	10	11	12	13	14		
15	16	17	18	19	20	21		
22	23	24	25	26	27	28		



The backside of Kent's booths are empty and act as storage space for T-shirts, hats, etc.



makes you nervous is outside of that circle. The cool thing is that any time you successfully tackle something outside your comfort zone, your circle expands. Ultimately, you can grow to the point where your comfortable tackling anything.

Now, let's examine some of the physical aspects of running a business or studio. First up, the booth or studio set-up.

Like I've said before, you've got to think big in order to get big. For this reason all of my locations have multiple-artist capacity. Having at least two artists on duty during most of the day allows me to handle any

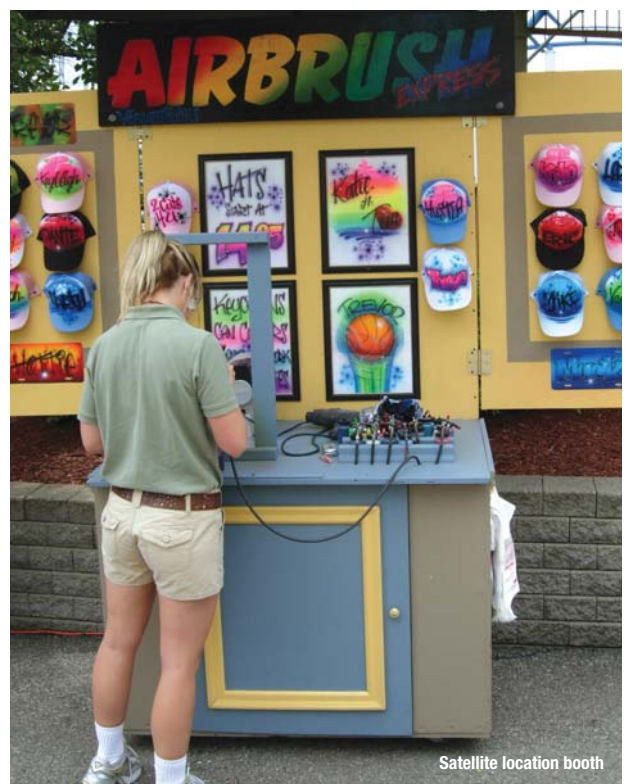
amount of business flow that might occur. On weekends in particular, I'll have three artists working, either all in the main booth or two in the main booth and one in the satellite location. Throughout this article are pictures of each of the locations. Notice that the artists work in the back of the booth. Artists at work are a strong attraction, and this must never be discounted. You can also see that the back wall has tons of display on it, protected by 1/8-inch beveled glass (to keep your display always looking good and easy to clean).

Another big part of my setup is incorporating design space with func-

tionality. For example, my outer display also stores product, and in all locations the front display is angled for easier viewing, and the back sides are empty. This way, the artists can easily grab a shirt to show customers.

Equipment is another huge consideration. My airbrush of choice is the Iwata Eclipse HP-BCS, with an 8- to 10-foot braided hose. My paint of choice is Createx. I use all transparent colors in my lineup except for opaque black and white. I also like to organize my colors in order of use and color family. Going from left to right, closest to the work area, are:

“AS FAR AS DESIGNING YOUR PARTICULAR BOOTH, THE BEST ADVICE I CAN GIVE IS TO MAKE SURE TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE CURRENT ELEMENTS AROUND YOU AND TO INCORPORATE THEM INTO YOUR LOOK.”



Satellite location booth



Opaque Black, Opaque White, Caribbean Blue, Violet, Brite Blue, Deep Blue, Brite Red, Yellow, Fluorescent Pink, Fluorescent Violet, Fluorescent Yellow, Fluorescent Orange, Fluorescent Green, Forest Green, Aqua, Burgundy, Light Brown, Dark Brown, and Medium Gray. This arsenal can easily handle any design challenge. In addition, I do like to experiment and use specialty colors from season to season. Last season it was Leaf Green and Maui Blue (the latter will find a permanent place in my set up this season; it's an awesome color!). I'm not big on opaques, but will do all of my work with Opaque White first and then paint over it with color if need be.

Concerning booth design, the best advice I can give is to make sure to take into consideration the current elements around you and to incorporate them into your look. Now, this doesn't mean that you want to blend in. You've got to separate yourself from the crowd. A great way to accomplish this is to have some eye-grabbing signage. Consider having 3-dimensional aspects to your sign. You may have to comply with the constraints or context of a theme park. For example, at



my Six Flags location, the booth itself is called the "Wild West Airbrush Store," so I had to design accordingly. But, it has to be functional as well.

Your display comes down to having vibrant, clean, and relatively easy designs. I like to use two central flip books right up front and saturate the customer with really colorful and bright name designs. Each book holds 12 pages with up to 24 designs. One book is devoted to simple lettering (script, print, slash, tag) while the other is more complex with a sampling of simple cartoons (puppy, butterfly, dolphin, etc.) The back wall is filled with what I consider to be

trendy and current designs usually driven by popular culture (music, movies, TV, internet). The framed display comprises perennial favorites slightly modified from year to year (sports themes, heart and lovers designs, slogans, and more). Remember to keep it clean, people! A vibrant display will significantly improve

your chances of catching that passerby's attention and converting it to a sale.

Well, this is just something to get you started. At the Airbrush Getaways, I'll typically spend three to six hours talking nothing but business. Things like product and manufacturer contacts, websites, the different styles and quantities of shirts, how to negotiate a contract with an amusement park or mall, and much more are covered in detail. So you might want to consider attending a Getaway. Plus, you can always find Jen and I willing to chat over a beer... or two. Ultimately, experience is the greatest teacher. I'm just here to give you a little push. Till next time! ❌