

SET OF STRATEGIC MARKETING ELEMENTS

Part 2 - Inspiration



CerDee

Introduction

Dear ceramist,

You are practising one of the most beautiful professions: You are an artist and craftsman in a person. You deal with colours and shapes and you decide yourself how to create them in accordance with your ideas and how they should subsequently affect the viewers and users of your objects.

Within the framework of the “CERDEE” project, which is financed by the EU, we have decided to develop innovative marketing strategies to help you better reach your customers or win new ones. The survey carried out in six participating countries has provided valuable information in this respect.

Basically, our proposals can be summarised quite simply: Apply the creativity you need to do your job to selling your objects. Sounds simple, but it takes time, energy and discipline. But it's really true for each and every one of us when it comes to our work being noticed and recognised. Women may find it a little difficult, but on the other hand our achievements are not discovered by chance - you have to do something about it. What it is all about in concrete terms is conveyed on the basis of fictitious reports of experience, which we have compiled thanks in part to discussions with women ceramists. We hope that this approach appeals to you and that you will discover and apply interesting things for yourself. But no matter what you decide - be courageous and just try something! If it doesn't work, you will have one more experience and you will know what suits you best!

We wish you a lot of fun reading, but above all good luck and success in picking up and trying out the ideas and suggestions!

Presence in the cityscape

The visibility of workshop and shop

Sabine, 53 years old, ceramist:

The location of my workshop and its shop is problematic. I underestimated it at first and thought it wouldn't be such a big problem after all. Unfortunately, it is. The shop is in a side street on the edge of the old town and therefore has too few walk-in customers. Although I tried to put a lot of effort into decorating the shop window, I realised that this was not enough. I am still overlooked by the few tourists who then "get lost" in my alley. An acquaintance of mine is a graphic artist and recommended that I paint the window frames in a strong, bright colour and print the name of the workshop in a beautiful, elegant font on the window panes. I would not have dared to think of such rich, strong colours, but she said that the visibility would definitely be better. She is right: strong, vibrant colours go very well with a place where people work creatively. It really works for the customers. People get curious, come in, look around and choose something. But at least I am no longer so often overlooked.

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Posters in the twonscape

Martin, 37 years old, co-owner of a ceramics studio:

I live and work in a town with only 30,000 inhabitants, but since it has a beautiful old town, some tourists do come. The main attraction is the ruins of a medieval castle at the end of Burgstrasse, which is also the main shopping street. Every Easter we open one of our exhibitions. We would like to advertise it more, but the budget is very tight, so we were looking for a free way to draw attention to the exhibition. One day, near a crossroads, I noticed metal and glass billboards with posters of the municipal museum and current announcements. I asked, it is official information of the city. I made an effort to ensure that they could also be used for other facilities of tourist interest. In the same way as it is already usual for the monthly programme of the city. Because the point is that all of us, the museum, the art galleries and we, the artisans, benefit from the tourists. The city has allowed it, and that was a great success. And so our exhibition posters now hang on an equal footing with the posters of the museum and the art galleries and the tourists can see at a glance what awaits them in the city. And indeed, more tourists come to our studio. It has been worthwhile campaigning for the poster panels.

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The “Shopping”-Flyer

Annika, 42 years old, ceramist and owner of “Potters Barn”:

My town is not very big, but offers some nice shopping facilities. In our town there are a few small boutiques, a few nice cafés, restaurants, an art gallery, a creative workshop and an “Bernsteinstübchen”, where a friend of mine makes and sells jewellery and decorative items made of amber. Together with a friend of mine I thought about publishing a kind of “shopping” flyer that would show the out-of-towners how they could spend a nice day in the city. We asked the shop owners if they would like to publish a joint “shopping” brochure. Everybody was convinced of the idea, because in their opinion something should finally be done to strengthen the retail trade and handicrafts. But to make the brochure a real help for day tourists, a few more restaurateurs had to be brought on board. They were a bit more sceptical and referred us to the city app. But we said that older people also come to the city - they don’t know anything about apps. One of the restaurateurs, suggested to ask the Natural History Museum as well, because families often come to see him after the museum visit. Then we looked for someone among us for the layout, and also found a competent woman. So we told her how we envisioned an inviting brochure that would encourage day visitors to spend a whole day in the city and experience, see and buy as much as possible. The Tourist Information Office needs quite a lot of them, that’s where they are most in demand. And we see that many day visitors come to us with the flyer in their hands and look around and buy things. That is what we wanted.

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Presence with and in print media

The own brochure

Marianne, 42 years old:

I give many courses and workshops, both in my studio and in the Volkshochschule. They range from courses for beginners to courses for advanced students, where even crystal glazes are tried out. My courses at the Volkshochschule are announced in the programme - I don't need to advertise for that.

What I have to advertise are the workshops and courses in my studio. I wanted to make a small brochure with the information and some advertising. Besides good texts, photos are important for this, they enliven and explain. There is also a photo of me as a course instructor at the "Open Atelier Day". People should see who is leading the course. All in all, a small brochure has been created which conveys enthusiasm for creativity, handicrafts and for my courses. It is designed in warm colours, which I like very much. The design is promotional, inviting and yet not too perfect, not too stylish, which was important to me. Because the craftsmanship, the uncertain result that comes with a course, should also be expressed a little. Outside the studio, in a clearly visible place, I attached a transparent box made of plexiglass, in which the brochures are placed. This allows interested people to get information even outside the opening hours. This also reduces inhibitions. Whatever comes up more often is the registration form on my registration form, which is sent to me as an e-mail attachment - it's wonderful too. That way I receive the necessary information. What is very important is the distribution of the brochures.

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The press release

John, 33 years old:

I have never understood until now why we, the ceramists, are so rarely in the newspapers. I have always sent the newspapers all the information about my work, beautifully formulated - I really have always made a big effort. But so rarely does anyone come along and ask questions. What is going wrong? A friend gave me a few tips. You have to research the editors you want to send your news to. The name of the editor must be written without mistakes and above all you should know what they write about. And you have to structure your reports well and usably. Because there is a shortage of time in editorial offices. Actually, press releases focus on the works of the exhibiting artists. In the first paragraph the classic 4 to 5 W questions must be answered: Who? What? When? Where? Why? If these questions are not answered concisely and precisely in the first paragraph, the press release will end up in the waste basket. And he said that he always writes factually, precisely and informatively. He does not invest much time in beautiful wording. The editorial offices do that themselves, he says. You shouldn't "chew the fat" out of the journalists. They don't like that. But it is very important to write to the editorial offices in good time. Not just before the deadline, because they have many appointments and must be able to plan. When I think about all this, I might have more success in the future.

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Cooperation with journalists

Mareike, 44 Jahre, ceramist:

I know how important good press work is. You have to invest some time, because the press people don't come on their own. I have created my own small press distribution list. First I looked at all the newspapers and magazines in the region and wrote down the names of all the press people. In my file are the names of all journalists who deal with art, culture and events. I write to them all according to the occasion. For courses and workshops I only write to the journalists responsible for events, for exhibitions to the art and culture editors. This works very well because, as I said, I don't supply the general editorial address, but the journalists personally. In my opinion, e-mails to the general editorial address are not forwarded. When a journalist came by, I was happy to answer any questions and above all I tried to explain the concept behind my objects and the respective production techniques. Because journalists write about many different cultural topics. I cannot expect them to know how the Raku technique works. They are always very grateful when I patiently explain everything to them. I am enthusiastic about my profession and I believe that journalists notice this and therefore like to write about my exhibitions and my work.

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Presence in trade media

“According to Bernard Leach, whose “Potter’s Book” of 1940 is the basis for every ceramist, the existence of a ceramist consists of 50% work and 50% sales”.

Jutta, 59 years old, porcelain artist:

There are not as many magazines for ceramists as in the past. I like to read them, because that way I can find out what other ceramists are doing, what is hip, what the new trends are, how which techniques are used and where which exhibitions are shown, etc. In interviews, the artists who work in ceramics or porcelain talk about their ideas, inspirations, the process of finding ideas, but also about the challenges and difficulties of implementing one or the other technique. I try to find more information about the techniques on their website or in their social media pages. And I can also understand the difficulties the artists have. Often you can announce exhibitions, workshops and courses with a small entry. There are also ceramists for us, but also for the interested buyers or dealers directories where the studios, shops, markets and exhibitions are listed. Here you should definitely be present, besides it usually costs nothing. Also in magazines like “art magazin” summer courses are announced, be it painting courses in Tuscany as well as pottery courses, ceramic workshops etc. There are many ways to get to know yourself and your work!

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Presence on the internet

The own website and online shop

“If you take one thing out of this book, it’s this: Get your do-main name. Buy www. [your name].com! If your name is widespread or you don’t like it, take a pseudonym, an artist name, then buy some webspace and build yourself a homepage. (Sounds crazy technical, but it’s not - a little googling and a few books from the city library are enough). If you don’t have time or don’t feel like it, there is a small army of web designers who can help you.”

Sylvia, 52 years old:

I dared to do something I wasn’t convinced of: setting up my own internet site. Because during the first Corona wave I realised how difficult it was for me, because I didn’t have an online shop for my ceramics, for example. After this painful experience, when I also saw that the younger ceramists had managed to sell via the internet, I finally got over it. I went to the public library and got a book about the creation and design of internet sites. During the lockdown I had time, so I researched and looked at other websites. After only one week I had a good idea of how the site should look like. So I designed it step by step and then put it online. The result was really impressive. As a ceramist, you have a basic aesthetic understanding without a doubt. It was a really great feeling! But what I got professional help for was the technical setup of the online shop. I couldn’t have done that alone. In the course of setting up the shop, the web designer reworked my website in some places - the professionals see things that a layman would overlook. I saw that my extensive internet research during the first lockdown and especially the reference books from the library were very worthwhile.

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Susanne, 55 years old, ceramist:

I used to think that a brochure would be enough to advertise my small studio where I give courses, but that's not true. And of all people who are taking a pottery course for the first time have a lot of questions that can best be answered in detail on the internet. I admit that I have invested some money to have the website designed, but it looks attractive and inviting. I can maintain the site myself, change the content and keep it up-to-date. If a course in my studio is cancelled at short notice due to illness, I can announce this on the website, not in a brochure. I can also show the whole variety of my work on the internet. I have set up a nice photo gallery, which is clicked on very often, as I know from the evaluation programme. And I can always add something new myself. At the moment I am currently thinking about selling my stuff online, because I heard from another ceramist that the online shop saved her halfway through the Corona crisis when she, like me, could not give workshops. Also, successful ceramists sell on the internet and I am sure that online sales will increase. My older daughter therefore recommended that I inquire about amazon handmade and Etsy. On these portals only handmade goods are offered, the sales process and shipping is done by the portals, so that one can concentrate on the production. But it is very important to point out on your own website that you are selling through amazon handmade and through Etsy, otherwise you will not be found easily. I will inquire about the conditions and am looking forward to selling my stuff online in the future.

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Presence in social media

Yes? No? Maybe?

“And don’t say you don’t have time for this. We are all insanely busy, and the day only has 24 hours. “How do you find the time for all these things?” I am often asked. The time is there - I just take it. Time slumbers in the same places as loose coins: in the nooks and crannies. It is stuck between the big tasks - during the train ride, during the lunch break, in the scarce hours when the children are finally in bed. Maybe you’ll miss an episode of your favourite TV series or get an hour less sleep, but you can find the time if you just look for it. ... But sharing your work must not become more important than the work itself. If you find it difficult to reconcile the two, just set a timer for 30 minutes. When the timer rings, the Internet and time to work are over.”

Christine, 48 Jahre alt, ceramist:

I find Facebook and Instagram very difficult and I can’t imagine being present there because I’m worried that people are giving too much of themselves away. And I don’t like being the centre of attention. But another ceramist, who is already over 50, told me that she had her daughter explain Instagram to her, and she now thinks it is great. I can’t imagine presenting myself there yet, but the participants of my courses at the adult education centre are all either on Facebook or Instagram. So it’s worth thinking about and the advantage is that it’s free. On the other hand, I would always have to come up with new content. Would I have enough ideas? In any case, Face-book should be practical for communicating events. That would actually be quite good for announcing my courses and workshops. But I have heard that you should not only concentrate on events etc., but as an entrepreneur you should also present your product range and of course write something about your work and definitely about the work process. I have decided to start by looking at the Facebook pages of other ceramists. Because I think that you can learn from successful people. They are not successful for nothing - they can present themselves well.

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Advertising for the crafts? Social media!

Marie, 35 years old, ceramist:

I may not be a real digital native, but I couldn't live without Facebook. Before I set up my account, I took a close look at the Facebook and Instagram sites and YouTube films of other successful ceramists and thought about what I could do. What I liked most was that they showed exactly how they really work, how their objects are created. I think that's really important because I think that most people today have hardly any idea of the craft and simply underestimate the work behind our objects, or cannot even appreciate it. I have often been asked how it can be that a cup of mine costs 45 euros. I found it a bit tedious to answer the same question every time. On the other hand, we can't blame our customers for not knowing how much work is involved if we don't show and explain it to them. In today's world, where manual work and handicrafts are increasingly disappearing, we cannot presuppose knowledge of the craft. I don't reveal anything private - that has no place there, but a lot about the work, almost every second or third day. On Facebook, I tend to focus more on events, markets I visit or events and events at my place, or those I have visited myself. Instagram is more about my products and the background of my work. These are short films, posts etc. I bought a tripod and off I go. There is always something uploaded after work - that's part of my work. And I have made the experience that customers actually get information on social media before they come to me. Since I've been uploading the films about the production process, I'm asked less often why my stuff is so expensive.

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Innovations? Communicate, share, and learn!

Communicate new technologies

Ariane, 31 years old, ceramist:

I've been working with the 3D printer for some time now, mainly for single pieces or small series. I have always had a soft spot for technology. I have also tried out some of the conventional methods. For me, these are challenges that I simply enjoy taking on. The Community could certainly have answered many of the questions I had. Especially with 3D printing, it's now very easy to exchange ideas on the web, pass on experiences, get tips, etc. I would have saved myself a lot of time. And in this way, I could have told my customers, who are interested in my work, what I was working on and, above all, how I was doing it. I would have made them curious about the 3D objects. 3D printing is a new topic and people are certainly very curious. So I made 3 videos for YouTube about making vases with 3D printing. People were very interested, there were also comments and tips from professionals who know about 3D printing. And the best thing is that one customer ordered two vases at once. One for herself and another as a gift. I am very pleased about that. I simply have to communicate more

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Exchange with others?!!!

Annette, 29 years old, porcelain artist:

I live and work in a small village in the countryside. Thanks to social media, advertising works quite well. But what I really wish for is an exchange between porcelain and ceramics artists, and that in small “one-woman shows” like mine. I would like more contact with people who are more my age and have the same problems as I do. So I took matters into my own hands and researched places on the internet to see if there were porcelain makers and ceramists there. And I actually found a few. I contacted them online and asked if they would be interested in an exchange on various topics such as government, working techniques and inspiration, brainstorming. Of the 5 men and women who were contacted, both younger and older ones were present, 2 answered me. One is also in her late 20s and the other in her mid-30s, so we are relatively young and have similar problems. We have decided to meet now and then at one of our workshops. We have already met twice. It was very interesting to see how the others work. The exchange was very important for me - only then do you realise that you have the same worries and problems. That helps enormously. And the best experience I have had at our two meetings so far is that you come back with new ideas because of the exchange. Whether it’s official matters, work organisation, working techniques, advertising, social media, brainstorming etc. I even took notes and went through them several times, because I liked some things very much.

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Inspiration and brainstorming?

Mareike, 49 years old, porcelain artist:

Finding ideas is one of the most important steps in my profession. Customers often ask me how I find my ideas for the different colours and shapes. I think that many of my ideas come up unconsciously. Actually, I simply always keep my eyes open, even when I'm just going for a walk, for example - I observe nature very closely. Every season has its typical colours, which sounds very banal, but in my eyes is an everlasting treasure trove of ideas. I capture many things on photos, my mobile phone pictures are enough. Very important for my work are also books with illustrations or art books. From these books I mainly take ideas for the decoration of my porcelain pieces. It's not really stealing ideas; I simply transform many things. But sometimes I wonder why, for example, a line pattern has to be completely reinvented when someone else has already done it very beautifully and skilfully and I just have to adapt it? Artists used to do it the same way in the past.

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Your work does not explain itself.

Katja, 31 years old, ceramist:

Due to my age, I'm not really one of the digital natives anymore, but I really enjoy writing about my work in the social media. Actually, I'm an introverted type - I just don't like to talk about myself and certainly not about myself. I'm more of a listener and I love hearing other people's stories - I find that fascinating. But I have always liked writing - even at school. And I also know that there is no way around writing, sharing and telling about my work. After all, I want to sell my stuff, so people need to know something about it. The better they know my work, the more willing they are to buy my things, which are really not cheap. They buy the story that goes with it and yes, each of my objects has its story. The story behind it makes the object unique. What is the story? The story is - how did I come up with this idea? What have I been inspired by? What is unique about this object? All this is part of it.

But there are also stories of failures, of things that don't succeed at all, of clay that doesn't want to form properly, etc. Not everything succeeds at the first attempt. I also post these stories and above all I think about how to package them in a funny way. Because that way people get to know my work better and have the impression that they know me. This is not quite true, because only I decide how much of myself I reveal.

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Pure communication! The ceramic markets

Ulrike, 32 years old:

I love to go to the ceramic markets. But it is very labour-intensive and time-consuming. Just the preparation alone and then the follow-up work on such a market takes up an enormous amount of time. But I don't have any children (yet), so I can invest my whole weekend in travelling. Only two or three years ago, I still had no real sense of whether it was worthwhile participating in a particular market. I didn't ask around much, I wanted to try it out for myself. But I should have done it with one or the other, because the organisation is not always very professional and some things are chaotic. But if the turnover is right, then it'll work again. To make the whole thing even more fun and a little less work, I got together with another ceramist. We now go to the ceramic markets together and have come up with something special to attract people to our stand even more. We offer to paint cups and bowls with porcelain pencils for children. This is how we attract families to our stand. While the children paint with porcelain pencils, the parents look around the stand, we talk to them and they buy some things. In any case, there is always something going on at our stand and this in turn attracts other customers, even without children - they usually buy more than the families. But what is very important to me is the advertising of the craft itself. I notice that people lack information about our creative work and that they are curious and want to get a feeling for how things are made.

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Porzellanikon

Staatliches Museum für Porzellan
in Selb & Hohenberg a.d. Eger



Zavod za turizem in kulturo Kranj

ZTKK