

*We asked five needlework store owners from around the country, "What type of sales promotions do you run in your store?" They told us about their special sales, retreats and how they advertised for them!*

# Retail Promotions

## **Ann Studier, owner of Friendship Crossing in Corvallis, OR**

The Friendship Crossing has only one major anniversary sale a year. Loyal customers come early to shop at 7 a.m. in their pajamas and bathrobes. They save 40% during the first hour of the sale. The next hour they save 30% and so on. This sale has continued over the 14 years the shop has been in business and coincides with the downtown Crazy Days. This sale is promoted in the store's newsletter. The only other sales in the store can be found in the ½ price book box and bargain basket that houses clearance merchandise.

## **Kay Meharry, owner of Country Sampler in Tuscola, IL**

Kay first mentioned her Give Away Grab Bags as a successful promotion that had been done years before she bought the store. The grab bags are filled with various merchandise taken from sale inventory with a value of \$35-\$50. The merchandise is packaged in paper sacks. When the Grab Bags are placed near the counter, she has found that customers will buy a little more to reach the \$50 sale needed to receive the giveaway.

Kay's other sales include an end of the year clearance, free shipping on her website and a Christmas Open House the 1st week of November. Most of these sales are 20%-25% off and she advertises for them with signs, handouts and her newsletter. Kay always offers the same sales in her shop to her online shoppers.



This past October, the Country Sampler had a Columbus Day Retreat held at a local museum. Someone is brought in to teach a class and customers come to see the designers kits, register for grab bags and door prizes. The attendees enjoy these retreats as a quiet place to stitch. Kay organizes the motel rooms, food, location, etc. for the retreats in advance as her store is just five small rooms and too small to hold a retreat.

## **Carol Pedersen, owner of Cross Stitch Plus in San Antonio, TX**

Cross Stitch Plus has two big sales every year. The first sale is on Super Bowl Sunday. It is a one day sale and the store is open from Noon-4 p.m. Customers draw to see what percentage off they receive, anywhere from 15%-35% with most receiving 20% off.

The second sale is a two day event (Friday and Saturday) celebrating the store's birthday in

September. Customers receive a flat 20% discount off their purchases. Early birds shopping between 9 a.m.-10:30 a.m. receive double punches on a keytag.

Coupons for free shipping or a 10% discount are sometimes sent to customers on the mailing list. The mailing list was started about a year ago using names from customer checks, the guestbook and returned keytags.

Cross Stitch Plus is located in a shopping center and all mall employees receive 10% off their purchases. The local hospital also has a 50+ card that has discounts for local merchants like Cross Stitch Plus.

Carol has a Stitch In every Friday evening. The store closes at 6 p.m. but customers come when they can and stitch until around 10 p.m.

## **Pat Finlay, owner of Noble Craftsmen in Pittsburgh, PA**

The Noble Craftsmen, which has been in business 17 years, has two big sales every year. The first is a Super Bowl Sale. The store is open on Sunday from 1 p.m.-5 p.m. and customers receive 20% off everything except lamps, custom cut fabric or special orders.

**\$ALE!**

The second sale is a Christmas in July sale and lasts four days. For this sale, customers also receive 20% off their purchases including custom cut fabric. Pat advertises for these sales with a coupon in her newsletter, which is sent out 6 times a year.

Other sales include Flossy Fridays (3 floss skeins for \$1); Buy One Get One Free coupons; Keytags; a 50% off sale bin; and grab bags. Every April, Pat cleans out her 50% off bin and donates items to the Salvation Army. They have a large Annual Fabric and Craft Sale that raises money to help women's charities.

The Noble Craftsmen holds a special needlework event once a month. This month it is entitled Welcome Autumn. On this night, stitchers come from 6 p.m.-10 p.m. and have fun snacking, stitching and sharing projects. This month, the stitchers will be treated to a turkey dinner. Special events are held in the store's large classroom.

There is also a Stitch Along every 1st and 3rd Wednesday. "The ladies used to stay around till midnight," remembers Pat, "but since I'm the one that has to open the store the next morning, now we close earlier."

## **Diane Fisher, owner of Diane's Design in East Petersburg, PA**

Although Diane's Design has been renovating lately, she has still come up with a full schedule of sales and specials! Before her store closed for the renovations on July 1st, Diane sent out a postcard (above left) for a last day 20% off sale. The postcard also listed the day her store reopened, an open house in August, new products from Charlotte and a trunk show featuring Birds of a Feather in September.

When I spoke to Diane, she mentioned she was really into sending postcards but she also has a newsletter and sales on her internet website. Lots of custom-

ers find her after searching on the internet for a specific item like Vera Bradley Colors. She also advertises her store in the local small town paper and she is in the yellow pages. Diane's Design also provides demos at the fair and local German American Festival.

Website specials include a Sales Room and a Bargain Section. Sometimes Diane offers 15% off orders placed online. She also has a newsletter to tell customers about exciting things happening at the store including upcoming hardanger classes and trunk shows.

A popular promotion Diane holds every year is a percentage off sale for April Showers Savings. She hangs blue raindrops everywhere, including the ceiling. Diane also holds a sale on Super Bowl Sunday when she previews new items and has grab bags. She also has an Open House in August after her return from Charlotte. In October, Diane's Design will celebrate their eighth anniversary with eight different specials.



The store is open noon-5 p.m. the last Sunday of every month and is Stitchin' Bird Day. The Stitchin' Birds are a club customers can join at Diane's Design for \$15.00 per year. Membership includes a collectible pin (last year's pin shown above), special 15% off savings and 20% off everyday you shop during your birthday month. On Stitchin' Bird Sundays members also receive an extra 5% off plus 25% off an unadvertised special item highlighted with bright pink birds for members only!