

*Recently I had to buy my teenage son a suit. So we went to the men's store to buy one. And came back with one suit, three shirts, three ties, socks, shoes, a belt, and a tie chain. What happened? The value-added sale!*



*A Nan Hemple canvas on display, partly stitched. By having this canvas on display, the store owner has sold several of this exclusive canvas.*

*By Janet Perry*

# The Value-Added Sale

Value-added is a term sales people use for the process which allows them, as sales people, to get you, the customer, to buy more products than you originally intended. And while pushy salespeople give this idea a bad name, it is a very effective business strategy -- if you do it right.

With the suit, while I didn't intend to buy all that when I walked into the store, I did actually need all that. The salesperson sensed that from what I told her and made suggestions. I didn't buy everything she suggested but I bought enough to almost triple the amount of the original sale.

Applying this technique to your needlework business can add to your revenues and make your customers happy. Here are some great ideas from other shops which will help you get value-added sales.

## **Models Sell Needlework**

Have you ever walked into a shop and been delighted with a stitched canvas or chart you saw on the wall? Sometimes, seeing is enough to make a customer say "I want that!" Models, especially when packaged with threads, charts and embellishments, make it easy for a stitcher to get the same results.

If you don't want to stitch models, but

have a finishing or framing service, why not ask some of your customers to leave their best pieces in the shop for a month or so? One shop I knew did this with one complex piece and sold several copies of the book as a result. You get an ever-changing display, the displayed customers get the recognition, and other customers get inspiration.

And sometimes, especially if you are showing off a thread, the model doesn't even have to be finished. Leave it in a hoop or on stretcher bars.

Make the display even more attractive by labeling the models with cards. The cards should include information about the canvas or chart, threads used and any other information of what is needed to complete the project.

## **What's a Stitcher to Do**

Many stitchers see a great needlepoint canvas, but then don't know how to stitch it. They may even buy it and have that canvas languish in their stash. You can easily add items or information which will help inspire them to buy (and to stitch).

Recently a local shop had a great canvas

which would look wonderful in longstitch. By taking a scrap piece of canvas and similarly colored yarns, a sample of the technique was worked up and stapled to the canvas. Now it's easy to see how to do the technique.



*A belt on display with the threads for it pulled out as a suggestion.*

You can do the same process with threads, or a special stitch for the background. Not only does this give people ideas when they buy the canvas, it also expands their knowledge.

One designer I know of often stitches a little bit of the canvas with her suggestions for colors and stitches. It's not enough to tie you to doing things that way, but it does provide great ideas. Even easier is pulling and displaying the threads for a piece, along with the piece.

A friend of mine who was on a "Shop Hop" bought a canvas and all the threads simply because the two were displayed together. She told me "It was so beautiful -- I had to have it!"

Yes, you can pull the threads when they buy the canvas, but perhaps your customer doesn't have time, or doesn't want to think about it. Putting the two together can give them the boost to buy. An idea which takes a bit more effort on your part, but if the canvas has squares for the color painted on it, why not snip a bit of each color of thread and tie it on? Make a list and attach it to the canvas, so you can pull the threads easily. Whenever you pull threads for a canvas, make a list of them, so that it's easy to do this again. That way the next sale takes even less time and effort on your part. If you write down the color numbers of threads in your receipt book, make sure you have the canvas listed as well with designer and model number. Then you can transfer it later to your computer so it's ready to print on your shop letterhead.

A more labor-intensive help for stitchers is to provide stitch guides. While many designers offer stitch guides, there are also companies which will write stitch guides (or maps which are shorter and less expensive) for your shop or for individuals.

**Selling All the Parts**

Another great way to add value to sales is to make sure all the accessories are included.

As a customer service many shops give needles with canvases, but what about selling a magnet as well to hold the needles? I know stitchers who will use a

different needle (along with a magnet) for each thread used. I put a magnet on each canvas I stretch.

Is the customer making a first venture into using stranded silk? Sell a laying tool.

Another shop I know uses scroll bars. While most people have sets of sides, the shop sells (and sews the canvas to) a new set of top and bottom bars for every canvas. Shops which use stretcher bars should look to selling sets with canvases (and what about thumbtacks as well?).

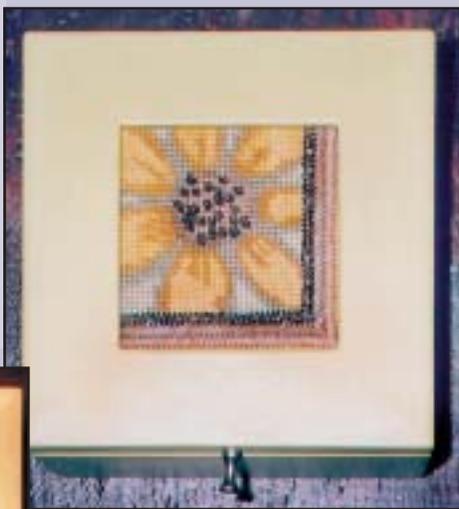
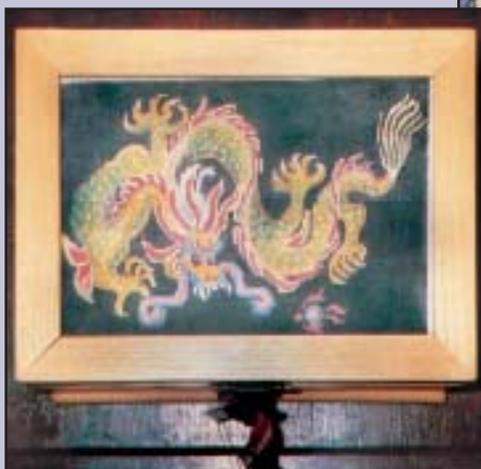
Show off easy ways to finish canvases and look to include those products as well. I've bought lots of small canvases for gifts simply because I know I can buy the small boxes for them at my local shop. It only takes a few minutes to finish and I have a wonderful gift. I would never have thought of doing this if I hadn't seen a canvas (unstitched) in these boxes at my local shop. Has a great new gadget come out? Display it along with a canvas where it can be used. The canvas can be a "value-add" for the gadget.

Have reference copies of books out on a table for customers to see. Then sell them

the book when they see a stitch they want to try. Or prepare a "kit" for new stitchers to get with their first canvas. Include scissors, a magnet, a basic book, stretcher bars and thumbtacks. You might even discount this slightly or offer them a short beginner's class. Many stitchers are loyal to a single shop and helping them this way at the beginning will gain you permanent customers.

Not every sale will be a value-added sale, nor should they be. Most needleworkers don't want to be pressured into buying something, and many (like me) have enormous stashes. But by showing off your products with an eye towards adding to the sale, by making suggestions, and buy using and showing products which will make stitching easier and more fun, you can maximize your revenue while getting great reputation as a customer service shop.

Keep Stitching,  
Janet Perry



*Stitched Sunflower displayed in a box for finishing. Having this item on display has sold many of the boxes along with similar canvases.*

*An unstitched canvas displayed in Chinese Box; a possibility for finishing.*

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