



National Association of Retail Buyers & Sellers presents

TRENDS & TRADE SHOWS

**A Note from
Co-founder
Angela Dalby**



TIS THE SEASON... to deck the convention halls with boughs of great new product finds! The Fall Trade Show Season is upon us and just like a child on Christmas morning, I am ready to tear into each show with anticipation of what I will unwrap. Sometimes you uncover just what you wanted or more of what you needed, other times you find something new and surprising. My mother always hid something small but wonderful in the bottom of my Christmas stocking, each year the package was easy to miss if I rushed through the holiday festivities. Life as well as trade shows can be likened to that: rushing through each aisle or booth will likely cause you to miss out on something wonderful. If you take the time to walk each trade show with the anticipation of a child--but with the determination of a professional--you will find that item you never knew existed and discover your stores can't be as profitable without it.

In today's economic climate, it is important more than ever to get the most out of each of your trade show experiences. In this month's section of the National Association of Retail Buyers & Sellers, we will spend some time talking about tips for walking a trade show, product trends, product development, insights into the challenges of custom

importing, and the "Dos and Don'ts" of trade show etiquette. There are multiple items on that etiquette list I'm certain everyone can identify with (at least half of all the Buyers I know have a "bathroom" story).

We hope you enjoy the insight that fellow industry veterans share and welcome you to become a part of our

growing community of professionals. We have lots of great events planned at the upcoming shows, from morning seminars to evening networking mixers, and invite you join us. To find out more about our organization and upcoming functions, please visit us at: NARBuyers.org. See you on the trade show floor!! -Angela

NEWSFLASH: DNC joins NARB as the first retail company Corporate Sponsor. The Delaware North Corporation has joined NARB as a \$5,000 Corporate Sponsor. DNC Regional Director Derek Zelwicky has set precedence in the industry by not only being the first retail company to come on board as a Corporate Sponsor but also had made the single largest cash contribution to date. Funds received from DNC will be used to underwrite the educational programs and launch the scholarship fund for the organization in 2010.

NARB SUMMARY: National Association of Retail Buyers and Sellers (or NARB) is an independent, non-profit, national membership organization dedicated to strengthening and developing the careers and/or education of its members. It was founded in the summer of 2009 by Andrew BeauChamp and Angela Dalby. Both founders saw a need in the industry for a forum where buyers from all different types of retail backdrops could join together. NARB aims to unify and organize those retail professionals who desire to further their career and/or education in the retail buying, selling, planning or product development field. Through formal and informal educational programs, roundtable discussions and networking events, NARB will contribute to the professional growth of its members. For additional information or to become a member of the organization, please visit: www.NARBuyers.org.

SAVE THE DATES

Las Vegas Souvenir & Gift Show

Wednesday Sept 22nd 10 a.m. Store Planning Seminar
-on trade show floor end of aisle 1500

Wednesday Sept 22nd 2 p.m. Social Media Seminar
-on trade show floor end of aisle 1500

Wednesday Sept 22nd 5-6 p.m. Networking Cocktail Mixer for Buyers and NARB Vendor Sponsors

Cocktail Networking Mixer at Rosen Shingle Creek Resort
(in conjunction with *The Gathering*)

Sunday, October 10th from 6 to 7 p.m. at Headwaters Lounge
Open to members and their guests a DJ will be spinning tunes!

NARB Smokin' Hot Hoedown (a NARB Scholarship Fundraiser Dinner)

Friday, November 5th at Sevierville Events Center East

Concourse (in conjunction with *IGES*)

Proceeds to benefit the NARB Scholarship Fund

Cocktails at 7 p.m.-Dinner at 8 p.m.

Tradeshow

DOs AND DON'Ts: a guide to a better world

Compiled by: **Angela Dalby, Co-Founder of NARB**

TIME TO PACK YOUR SUITCASES and if you are flying, your quart size bags, trade show season is upon us!

In an attempt to make the tradeshow experience a bit more pleasant for all in attendance, the National Association of Retail Buyers & Sellers has compiled a few simple etiquette guidelines for each side of the proverbial table to observe. Our hope is with simple consideration we can make the world, or at least the next trade show, a better place.

Buyer DOs

- DO** have enough business cards to last the whole show.
- DO** have your badge ready when entering a show so others behind you don't have to wait.
- DO** wait your turn if exhibitors are busy helping other Buyers (be respectful of other's appointment times).
- DO** be aware of your bag or briefcase as you maneuver through a booth or an aisle.
- DO** bring updated credit sheets and on hand inventory position reports to use on orders/reorders.
- DO** treat exhibitor's products and feelings with respect.

Exhibitor DOs

- DO** try to design a visually interesting booth rather than rely solely on supplied draping and skirting.
- DO** have enough catalogs and price lists to last for the whole show.
- DO** watch and respond to a Buyer's body language, know when someone wants to be chatted up and when someone wants you to keep your friendly distance.
- DO** know your product line, pricing, MOQs, lead times, etc. so you are prepared for any questions.
- DO** make and keep good eye contact (Buyers notice when you look over their shoulder to read the name badges of other Buyers passing by).
- DO** be respectful of a Buyer's knowledge of their store(s) and their business needs.

Buyer DON'Ts

- DON'T** ask "What's your minimum?" before saying "Hello."
- DON'T** expect to take a catalog without giving up a business card.
- DON'T** drink or eat free booth food if you have no interest in the booth itself.
- DON'T** assume everything in a vendor's booth is a free sample.
- DON'T** photograph merchandise without permission.
- DON'T** ask for a discount or free freight on a below minimum order.

Exhibitor DON'Ts

- DON'T** yell like a carnival barker to get Buyers into your booth.
- DON'T** follow or chase a Buyer down the aisle ways in hopes of grabbing their attention.
- DON'T** eat a tuna fish sandwich or other stinky food in your booth.
- DON'T** follow a Buyer into a bathroom in hopes to have a conversation or to slip them your business card.
- DON'T** linger outside another exhibitor's booth in hopes of pitching to one of their Buyers as they exit.
- DON'T** abandon one customer to help another.



Trends & Tradeshows

JELLYSTONE PARK

**By: Sheila Isaac, VP-Retail Operations
Leisure Systems Inc./ Jellystone Park™ Franchisor**

MY COMPANY, LEISURE SYSTEMS INC., IS THE JELLYSTONE PARK™ CAMPGROUND FRANCHISOR. We hold a license from Warner Bros for the Yogi Bear™ & Jellystone Park trademarks, so they have final say over all of our product development. This makes for a very lengthy process from product concept to product arrival, and at the Fall 2009 Tradeshows, I was already working on 2011. This time frame can be a bit prohibitive for me to capitalize on all trends. Lucky for me, there seem to be some trends in the marketplace that have been around for a while and keep escalating.

We have been extremely successful for almost five years with “Peace & Hippy” influenced T-shirts. These include tie-dyes for men and women, as well as more understated “Peace & Love” patterns on junior silhouettes. We introduced some bright colors in 2009, and have extended the line to include new prints in fabulous pastel and sorbet colors. Apparel lines are often the first indicators of a successful idea, and we have also begun extending this “look” into some other lines such as drinkware.

There are now many “green” items in the marketplace, and this seems to be a trend that is still gaining momentum. I have had the most success with those that are reasonably priced, and serve a purpose to help the environment. Reusable “market” bags have been around for decades in other parts of the world, and have gained popularity in North America more recently. I introduced a folding version a few years ago. I am finding now that tote bags overall are increasing in sales. People are carrying these around on vacation almost empty to transport souvenirs and sundry items without needing a plastic bag.

To help us stay on top of the latest trends, tradeshows are vital. It is so important to have that tactile and visual relationship with the product. There have been many times I saw a picture of something, and then once I had the sample in my hand, it made much more sense. Besides seeing the product first

hand, meeting the face behind the phone call or e-mail is an extremely important component of building business relationships. Buyers have been placed in a precarious position when it comes to attending tradeshows over the last few years. Trade shows can be costly due to travel, and travel budgets are often one of the first to be slashed in trying times. If your employer is asking you make these cuts, it then becomes a task to not simply eliminate attending, but prioritize which ones suit your business’ needs best.

It is impossible to attend every show that is pertinent to your business, every year. For me, it makes the most economic sense to go to souvenir focused shows, like the Las Vegas Souvenir & Resort Gift Show. At this particular show I can see many vendors that I currently do business with in one fell swoop. I can often accomplish a lot more with these accounts in one brief meeting than in weeks of e-mails and phone tag. I primarily develop customizable, licensed items for Yogi Bear’s Jellystone Park™ Campgrounds. I find that even prospect vendors at souvenir shows understand the time, limitations, and complications that arise from producing my products. These shows make

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Trends & Tradeshows (From page 195)
perfect sense for me from a financial and time perspective to get the proverbial “bang for my buck.” I attend several of these shows throughout the year, and certainly leave with a sense of accomplishment at the amount I can accomplish in a whirlwind of pre-arranged meetings and also finding new vendors from walking the show.

I also make an effort to rotate a few non-souvenir oriented tradeshows a year into my travel schedule. These include gift or specialty shows, and for me have included The National Stationery Show, Toy Fair, The San Francisco International Gift Fair, and others. I know I am not going to find a stable of new vendors ready to do custom projects for me, but that is not why I attend these shows. I never know what I might find in new vendors, ideas, and trends. I can be inspired by a single art graphic, and have been known to bring a trendy item or a cool postcard from these specialty shows to my custom souvenir vendors to have them create something

similar for my line. In 2010 these inspirations have transformed into successful lines such as several retro patterned stationery and houseware collections.

I first saw one of the hottest trends I have seen in a long time at Toy Fair in February 2010, but I didn’t quite “get” it yet. It is too bad kids aren’t allowed in shows because my 6 year old could have filled me in back then! The Stretchy Bands/Crazy Bands/Goofy Bandz/Silly Bands craze is huge! Whatever version you buy, these are rubber bands that come in shapes like animals or hearts, and are worn on the wrist. Kids trade them with their friends. I know that they have been banned from several local schools, further heightening their allure. This summer, over half of the top 25 bestsellers on Amazon under “Toys & Games” are some variety of these rubber bands. There are dozens of vendors, and hundreds of designs, providing enough supply to capitalize on sales. Of course, this influx of inventory could saturate the market, and cause it to die out very soon. I hope not, because I have already started on my custom Yogi Bear™ version!



A&F GIFT AND SOUVENIR CO.

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2010 Show Schedule:
Las Vegas Souvenir & Resort Gift Show - September 22-24
IGES-Super Souvenir Show in Sevierville, TN November 3-7



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RSN 02

THE INSIDE SCOOP on CUSTOM IMPORTING FOR 2011 MARKET

By: Angela Dalby, Co-Founder NARB

DEVELOPING AND IMPORTING CUSTOM GOODS CAN BE ONE OF THE MOST CHALLENGING BUT REWARDING CATEGORIES FOR A BUYER. The ability to design custom products that properly reflect your brand or location is one of the most powerful tools in our industry. Not only will it set you apart from your competition by offering products that are exclusive to your locations, it also affords you more aggressive margins if you can handle the larger inventory commitments. With the right art, custom products can define and even elevate your brand or retail outlets--a key ingredient in today's challenging retail environment. The benefits of importing far outweigh the many challenges; however it pays to be well informed. A good sense of the global business world will serve a Buyer well, permitting them to act on instead of react to the continuing changes and demands that the international markets face.

An astute Buyer is well versed in regulatory requirements from the CPSIA (Consumer Products Safety Improvement Act) and CTPAT (Custom Trade Partnership Against Terrorism). With the majority of hardgoods still coming out of China, it is important to have a general knowledge of that particular country's working conditions, labor shortages, current production lead time, changing currency valuation and raw material costs. The echoed message that import suppliers have for 2010-2011 is to expect longer lead times and escalated costs out of China.

Marshall Cannon, CEO of Charles Products Inc., states "What has become apparent from my recent trip to China is that factories are still having production issues. After Chinese New Year in February 2010, up to 70 percent of the workers did not return to their factories. Many of these factories still have not fully recovered." Average production times have significantly increased with labor shortages and a knowledgeable Buyer will plan orders and reorders accordingly. Marshall suggests that when forecasting import orders "it is smart to add in at

least an extra 30 days of lead time on many products given the current labor climate."

Minimum wage is increasing as well. Wage varies by region and has increased in the last several years by a rate of 10-20 percent. More intensive labor driven product like hand painted ceramics and poly resin or hand cut laser magnets will likely see the biggest price increases as a result.

Ken Glaser, President of Smith Novelty Company, reports that "In addition to the minimum wage increases many factories have offered their workers a 15-25 percent salary increase to keep and stabilize their labor force." Ken also shares that "While the labor force in China is not unionized, workers at factories doing similar production are sharing salary information and salary increases, which is making it difficult to search out more competitive pricing."

China has also seen an increase in the costs of its raw materials including metals, paper, inks, plating and textiles. Ken adds that those price increases will "be further

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Custom Importing (From page 197) complicated by the revaluation of its currency verses the US dollar in the near future. We anticipate a 10 percent bump and as the Chinese RMB gains strength, the cost of Chinese exports will become much more expensive.”

Jean Kliegman, President of Billco International Inc., agrees with the above assessment of the situation in China and also has factories experiencing “labor shortages, pressures on pricing and the looming currency valuation changes.”

Jean also states “in addition to those challenges in China, we must comply with the new regulatory requirements from the CPSIA to ensure that the product we import is safe for the end user.” There are often added costs to product manufacturing and testing to pass all CPSIA requirements that a well-informed Buyer will be aware of based on the types of goods he or she has in production.

Pursuing every opportunity to combat the escalating challenges out of China is one of Jean Kliegman’s top priorities. Billco International Inc. was able to successfully work with some Chinese suppliers who were taking proactive steps in their flexibility with MOQs to keep and ultimately increase their business. To combat longer lead times, Billco holds a CTPAT, which is a Homeland Security certification held by importers to help keep our ports safe. Jean reports that carrying the CTPAT certification “not only helps keep us safe but it also allows our containers to get in the fast lane to help speed up shipping time”. That key certification could also help speed up processing time stateside.

Marshall Cannon hopes that the situation in China will “help make the United States factories that much more competitive against the Chinese factories resulting in some of the previously lost overseas production returning state-

side.” Charles Products Inc. already runs a significant amount of their custom business with US factories and Marshall expects their domestic business to grow even more in 2011. Domestic custom capabilities--including full color wrap sublimation designs--have dramatically expanded in recent years. Given the already short lead times and lower MOQs, if costs become more in line with Chinese imports, running custom items domestically becomes an attractive solution for many retailers.

While the business climate continues to change and importing out of China becomes more difficult and expensive, importers are aggressively seeking alternative international sources to ensure that custom merchandise remains a viable option for retailers. Even though it will take time, Ken Glaser is actively sourcing new factories outside of China for Smith Novelty Company including: India, Indonesia, Vietnam and Mexico.

In the end, Buyers should actively strive to stay ahead of the anticipated longer lead times of 2011 by starting their planning process earlier. The objective is to have the product land in the states prior to the retailer’s peak seasonal time period. The goal should be to develop custom artwork earlier so that during the fall trade show schedule, the time can be used to approve art concepts rather than being in the development stage. This will greatly assist production schedules and delivery times. Working with your suppliers to evaluate alternative sources and solutions will also be important strategies in order to react to the ever changing forces in the industry. A Buyer’s key factor to success is to remain educated and informed.

(For more information, circle 342 on card.)

“...walk each trade show with the anticipation of a child but with the determination of a professional...”

—Angela Dalby, co-founder, NARB





Colporteur TREND REPORT

Colporteur: noun; a word of French origin meaning a peddler of wares.

By: Andrew BeauChamp, Co-Founder NARB

The Colporteur Trend Report is an ongoing column of product and trends geared towards our members in the specialty markets of Museum and Cultural attraction retail.

BIG BOLD AND SEXY is the big trend in jewelry for the fall and spring season. I have witnessed a surprising spike in our jewelry sales these past few months and everyone is going for the big and colorful jewelry. I have some real fun finds to share with you

Bello Arte (Belart) is an eclectic mother-daughter team that shares the artistic vision to create art both in the Green Mountains of Vermont, and on the tropical shores of Latin America. Using the Taqua nut, which comes from the palm tree, they have it carved into beautiful jewelry. Before the invention of plastics and when ivory had become scarce, tagua seeds had been used for hundreds of years as a raw material for luxury articles, then with the ascend of plastics, tagua was disposed of. But in the last decade tagua is enjoying a GREEN revolution, and is valued again for its beauty and its characteristics as a natural, biodegradable, sustainable, and renewable



resource. Belart acquires the tagua nuts solely from government controlled environments, making sure that sufficient seeds are left to perpetuate the palms and not disrupt the tagua native habitat. Belart has created some wonderful fashion forward jewelry: their Bracelet, item # EXB037, is our hottest number, followed by a close second by the rings and Statement necklace with the whole tagua nuts on a big ribbon. To see more of their jewelry and their other fashion accessories visit the company online.

Now for a little zipper fun, the next collection comes from Looksur, designs from far south. When I first put these out in my store the statement necklace made of

all red hue zippers flew out followed quickly by the one made in blue hue zippers and I never looked back. The line has been a staple in our store ever since. Now you can also buy the zippers in single pendant necklaces which is also another strong seller and they come in all colors including silver and to add a little whimsy are the rings which are a great pick me up at the register. Looksur also has a line made of T-shirt material in an array of colors and textures. The large statement necklaces were the first to sell along with another fun accessory, the head band, which has been reordered every month since we began carrying these items. To see more of the collections they carry, visit the company online.

Jewels and big ones at that are also hot mixed with bold silver and gold beads and of course color. Khalsa Trading is a great place to go, designed by Gurudachi from Mexico City. Their assortment of big cool blue quartz, bold juicy citrines, eye catching amethyst and sexy rose quartz stones mixed with bright pearls and playful silver and gold accents are in demand. To see more visit the company online and ask them to send you the collection slide shows, you will not be disappointed. (For more information, circle 341 on card.)



Retail **ROUNDTABLE**

How do you make your way through the sensory overload of a trade show to find great new products?



**Laura Ginnebaugh, Senior Buyer/
Merchandiser at TMP Company**

You have your badge, you've been scanned and are in the show...now what?! The vastness of a show floor never ceases to amaze me. No matter how many times I have attended a particular show I always have the overwhelming urge to turn around and run. But I have found that if you are prepared you can push through the "same and mundane" and

find those terrific new items that can be your hottest sellers hidden among those acres of booths. There is no magic system to working a trade show. It all begins with planning.

Regardless of the type of show you attend – housewares, gift or fashion- always go in with an open mind and open eyes. Utilizing the exhibitors list before you arrive works best. You can use it to identify NEW vendors and to make appointments with current vendors. Your current key vendors are a great source for finding new and unique products and should already understand how your operation works. Stop by new vendors and see if they have something different. It is important to always be open to new ideas. Try to visualize how a new line will fit into your store or how you can take one product and customize or update it to fit.

Talk to as many people as possible. Yes, a show floor can be intimidating. But if you plan ahead, map out your attack and keep your mind and eyes open you are sure to have a successful show.



**Christine Anderson,
Merchandise Manager at
Bay Retail Enterprises**

Trade shows can be a bit overwhelming and intimidating to say the least. Organization is the key to successfully finding great new products. The following tips work best for me as I venture out onto a trade

show floor:

- Initially, I walk the entire show looking for items that catch my eye. A compact notebook is my constant companion. If something jumps out at me I stop only long enough to jot down all pertinent information (Booth location, company name, contact name, item number, description, cost, delivery, etc.) and always acquire a business card.
- After covering the show floor I review all notes and establish a game plan to revisit the booths that offered new and exciting items.
- Appointments with key vendors are booked in advance and scheduled for the following days of the show.
- I reserve time at the end of the show to revisit booths where I found new items. It is important that this is done lastly as it is always possible that my key vendors might have the new items I spotted initially. After negotiating price, terms and delivery, I write the order and leave it at the show to guarantee first delivery.



**Tracy Barlow, Souvenir
Buyer for HMSHost**

A good show day starts with a big cup of coffee! The best way to navigate is to chart your existing vendors vs. vendors you'd like to see - always view the new suppliers first. This way, you can better identify items that will comple-

ment your current assortment. Start each meeting with a new vendor by asking "what are your best items?" and that will cut down on the sales pitch, and go straight to the products they are selling in volume. Why waste time on products that the vendor has shipped little or nothing of? When you've selected some new items to try, don't agree to deliver them at one time - rather, stagger deliveries to match your business season. It's easier for your store associates to see sales increases when product introductions are a few weeks apart, and gets them excited to find out what's coming next. Last, visit with your existing vendors (thank them for their business!) and let them know you're trying items from a new supplier - a little competition for your sales floor never hurt anyone!



**Lisa Shroyer, Director
of Retail Operations at
Space Needle LLC**

Trade shows....fun, exciting, productive, but can be very overwhelming if you don't have a game plan. Here are a few of my tips to make the most of your time at each trade show:

- Block out your first hour to walk the floor. Pay special attention to any overlying colors or trends. Be careful not to spend more than a minute or so in any booth, but make sure to relay to the vendor that you'll be back. Use this time to get your bearings on the show floor layout and set your starting point.
 - Do not over commit to appointments. There is nothing worse than leaving a show and feeling like you didn't get to see all of it. Allow yourself blocks of time to explore new products and establish relationships with new vendors. My goal at each and every show is to find one new vendor that meets my business needs.
 - Focus, focus, focus! Make the most out of the time you set with each vendor. Stick to the time allotted. If you need more time with a vendor, pick another time to regroup, but try and keep to your schedule.
- Lastly, try and have fun!