

## **Eight Ways To Get Retail Buyers on Your Side** **by Tex Dworkin**

(taken from the Fair Trade Resource Network Business Blog)

Buyers are the gatekeepers who determine whether your products end up on retail shelves. So you want to do all you can to win them over and develop a mutually beneficial, long term business relationship. Here are some tips to increase your chances for success:

1. **Leave pop-ins for Seinfeld.** For those who are familiar with the TV show Seinfeld, you know that Jerry's friends are always popping by uninvited. Retail buyers are busy folks; before showing up with a bag full of samples and stopping buyers in their work tracks, do your homework to make sure they are open to pop-ins. Otherwise you risk starting off on the wrong foot. Some have designated times allotted for vendor visits. Taking the time to find this out will win you points in the game of selling.
2. **Regular check-ins can be helpful.** As a buyer, I didn't mind getting calls or emails from wholesalers checking in to see how my stock was doing. In fact, I appreciated periodic check-ins, and they often turned into new sales for wholesale vendors I worked with.

The folks at [Ganesh Himal](#) do a great job with this; when I was a [Fair Trade Online Store buyer](#), I would get occasional calls from them just checking in to see if I needed anything. Sometimes they were on my list of orders to place, I just hadn't gotten around to it. So being able to rattle off a quick order over the phone helped me scratch another item off my to-do list and gained Ganesh Himal a new order and my gratitude.

3. **Always ask if this is a good time:** If you do decide to call a buyer, start the conversation off with "is this a good time for you to talk." If they say no, ask them when a good time would be for you to contact them.
4. **Email overload:** One of my biggest pet peeves as a buyer was receiving unsolicited emails from potential vendors, with huge product image files attached that clogged my inbox. It was a nuisance that immediately set me off. So avoid emailing large files unless buyers specifically request them. It's never a good idea to inconvenience someone you're trying to sell to.
5. **Make it easy for buyers to buy from you.** Make sure to list pricing in the buyer's currency. Requiring buyers to figure out the exchange rate to determine what your wholesale prices are is an avoidable inconvenient extra step for buyers. Your goal is to make it easy for them to buy from you.
6. **Don't just talk the talk, walk the walk.** This probably goes without saying, but if you make an appointment with a buyer, do not be late; if you say you're going to call at a certain time, then do so; if you say you're going to send something, then send it right away. This will help buyers see you as a professional, dependable wholesaler and help build trust between you.

7. **Ask buyers what their preferences are.** You're not a mind reader. What appeals to one buyer may not appeal to another. So consider asking buyers questions like:
  - How and when do you prefer to be contacted?
  - Do you prefer receiving photo images via email, CD, or some other method?
  - Would a sample of our product(s) help your buying decision?
  - What types of products are you actively seeking to add to your product line?
  - When do you do your buying and when is the best time to contact you about our new product offerings.
  
8. **Keep track of retail buyer preferences.** Most importantly, once you've gathered vital buyer information, enter notes about their preferences into your database and follow up accordingly.

For example, if a buyer agrees to be contacted twice per year via phone to check on stock levels, insert that into your calendar and set up an auto reminder. When the day arrives, you're "calling to follow up as requested." It's about being organized, so your buyers don't have to be. Most buyers will be impressed by your professionalism and you'll end up a step closer to developing a valuable new business relationship.

**The bottom line:**

Do what you can to make it easy for buyers to buy from you, and watch your sales grow!