

Merchandising

Merchandising has become big business for many arts and entertainment organisations. Even those who, several years ago, assumed that merchandising was exclusively the realm of the cinema, Disney, and Hollywood now accept that merchandising can make a major contribution to the bottom line of an organisation.

Merchandising not only provides a source of revenue, it also meets the visitors' need to have a permanent reminder of a visit. This is especially important for children, tourists, and visitors to special exhibitions. There needs to be a range of merchandise, at various prices, which reflects the image, theme, and quality of the organisation.

Shops in museums and art galleries have been established for a long time, but it is only in the last few years that other organisations such as orchestras and the opera have discovered that people will buy not only souvenir programs, but also coffee mugs, jewellery, T-shirts, scarves, tapes, and CDs as mementos.

Merchandising is a form of retailing and requires specialised skill. The selection, pricing, and display of merchandise will all affect the bottom line success of merchandising. When it works well it can provide a big profit base for an organisation. When it fails the organisation can be left with expensive stock which cannot be sold to recoup costs.

Most organisations rely on advice or assistance from retailing professionals, and often sublease their shops, or use temporary staff for special exhibitions.

Visits to other shops, and discussions with similar organisations will provide information on reliable suppliers and those who accept small orders, as well as recommendations on what to stock.



Some of the most common merchandise items for arts and entertainment organisations are:

- ◆ bookmarks;
- ◆ books;
- ◆ calendars;
- ◆ CDs, tapes, CD-ROM games;
- ◆ clothing — T-shirts, socks, jumpers, windcheaters, scarves, hats, caps;
- ◆ diaries;
- ◆ food (chocolates, boiled lollies, herbs, spices);
- ◆ framed prints;
- ◆ jewellery;
- ◆ jigsaw puzzles;
- ◆ key rings;
- ◆ mugs, glasses, china, pottery, crystal;
- ◆ paperweights;
- ◆ pens, pencils, rubbers, rulers;
- ◆ placemats;
- ◆ postcards;
- ◆ prints and photographs;
- ◆ posters;
- ◆ souvenir teaspoons;
- ◆ stationery;
- ◆ stuffed toys;
- ◆ table mats;
- ◆ tea towels;
- ◆ toys.