

GIFT SHOP

Fall
2012

www.giftshopmag.com

Fresh Ideas for Retailing Success

American Pride

Made-in-the-USA Sales Soar

■ Stocking Stuffers Sell ■ Before and After ■ Fall Buyers' Guide

GREENretailer Quarterly Guide Inside



HENRI LOU JEWELRY

Most pieces retail for between \$12.50 and \$28. "When you think of mass productions, there's no meaning. It's one of a million. You might like it, but it doesn't have any individualism about it," she says. "We make it for them, and they have chosen [the colors and styles]. For example, we sell to Cape Cod and they want beach colors. So we make that for them. Getting away from that mass production is important today."

Lin Dryer, owner of Branelli Beads in Grand Rapids, MI, says no two polymer clay beads used in her jewelry are alike. The business, which employs local artists to design and create necklaces, bracelets and earrings, has doubled its business in the past year since starting, Dryer says.

"Our prices are 15 cents less than my competitor in China," she says. "It's taken off like hotcakes. I find out that people are getting sick of China and getting sick of things not made in U.S.A. Everybody is trying to get back to their roots and to made-in-the-USA. People will pay the price if it's a good quality product and it's made in the USA."

Branelli Beads' earrings retail for less than \$10; prices start at \$3.50. Another popular item she sells: Hand painted crystal nail files (area art students create the 30 different designs freestyle). These retail between \$6 to \$11.

Telling a story

Customers will like knowing products you carry are made here as well as how exactly they're created and by whom, say both shop owners and manufacturers. Village Designs, for example, will share the German heritage behind the business ("Eisenhauer" is German for "metal worker") and how each piece is named for a person who left a lasting impression on Eisenhauer and Turner during their childhoods.



JENDALA



KIKU HANDMADE

"It helps to have that story," says Eisenhauer, who prints out the Village Designs story for shop owners to display. "They always want our story and usually frame it. Anytime the end buyer can relate to the item they are purchasing, that makes it sweeter—it's so much sweeter. So when they give it as a gift, they can say, 'This was made by these two women...' It's just part of the gift."

Some shops may prefer to verbally share the story of the handmade products they carry. Either way, Eisenhauer says she definitely knows which stores carrying her products are sharing the story because they tend to sell a lot more.

Product story is huge for Hadley Pottery, says Fred Meyland-Smith, who is part of the six-person private equity partnership that bought the venerable business in 2009. Meyland-Smith himself grew up using Hadley pieces. The partnership bought the company from a longtime Louisville resident who had owned it for 40 years, having purchased it from Mary Alice Hadley's widow.