

Etsy Team Guide: Creative Event Ideas for Buy Handmade and Teams

The Buy Handmade Pledge (www.buyhandmade.org) is a tremendous promotional opportunity for your team. Combining your Team's event ideas with the Handmade Pledge can give you a broader audience, by connecting your event to a larger movement with more visibility. We've been brainstorming here at Etsy (and with you in some of the weekly Teams workshops) about creative events Teams can throw to take advantage of the Handmade Pledge. Here are but a few ideas, which you may steal at your pleasure and improve upon at the whim of your creative genius minds.

We are going to start documenting the best of Team's creative events ideas in a continually updating article in the Storque. If your team has a great event idea (even if you aren't doing the event yourself) email us at teams@etsy.com and tell us the idea, so we can share it with you all!

1. Buy Handmade Craft-a-Thon!

The concept: An 8 hour, 12 hour, even 24 hour (take shifts) CRAFT-A-THON hosted by your team in a public place. Team members can work on crafting small giveaway items such as little crocheted hearts or blank holiday cards or any other creative items you can dream up; they can be given to passersby with a www.buyhandmade.org promo card, and a card with a link to your team's web page or blog online. Whatever you do, set it up so its FUN for all the participants - if your team is having a blast, you will attract a lot of interest! You can make your event participatory (so that members of the public can join in) or performative (Can these cafe crocheters finish all 38 coffeecup cozies for before the midnight deadline? Or will their fingers drop off first?)

The Venues: Cafes and restaurants will be interested in the idea because your promotion of the event will bring in customers. 24-hour diners would be a great place to do the 24-hour craft-a-thon, providing that the diner is in a place with good foot traffic. Parks are great because children will be naturally drawn to the activities; you can even set up a little crafting table for them. For those of you wanting to be a bit more guerrilla about it, try a mall, shopping center, or big-box store parking lot. Just make sure your activities are portable - some places will be less tolerant than others, and if you are asked to leave, leave. You could even be a roving crafting event, walking throughout your city and stopping on benches to knit! Also, think about venues that have wireless internet available - you could have people sign the pledge on the spot!

Examples:

- Mall-Wart [or your local big box store name here] roving parking lot knit-a-thon! The AnyTown Etsy Team will wander the shopping centers of your town. Will your parking meter get "tagged" with a knitted heart? (Team members can hand out www.buyhandmade.org promos and your Team promos to interested passers-by.)
- The YourTown Etsy Team's wrap-a-thon gift wrapping party at the Midnight Diner - sign the pledge and get a free sheet of wrapping paper made by the YourTown Etsy Team all night long. Watch the YourTown Team invent groundbreaking and unconventional new ways to wrap things using uncommon materials! And have a happy Handmade Holiday!
- SomeCity Cafe and the Anytown Street Team present to you: an all day holiday cardmaking party! (team members can make gocco-printed or even potato-printed blank cards all day, and hand them to people with some promo stickers inside for [buyhandmade](http://buyhandmade.org) and your team's web site or blog)

2. Local Library presentations: "Big Box Detox!"

The concept: Many people are tired of the stressful big-box stores and the alienation of the shopping malls, whether for political/environmental reasons or because its just plain impossible to find parking. Many have heard about the crafting and/or DIY movements but wouldn't know where to start when it comes to buying handmade gifts online. Your Etsy Team offers a free presentation at a local library about how to get started, for people of all levels of internet literacy. Offer inspiring information about the handmade movement, show examples of your own and other people's



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work (things you have bought online, for example) and introduce them to the Buy Handmade Pledge (www.buyhandmade.org.) You can demonstrate how to find and purchase gifts on Etsy, how to sign the Pledge, and even give them a gift guide full of offerings from your Team and other Etsy artists. (Keep the event more educational/informative than promotional, however. You are offering a service! People will remember you for this and rewards will come back to you!) After the presentation, people can try out Etsy and the Pledge on library computers, and your Team can hang out and assist them and answer questions.

The venue: A library, Adult Education Center, Literacy Center, Community Center, or other public facility with internet access and computers.

3. Handmade Cafe Ramblin' Road Show Tours

The concept: Rent a van with your Team for the day on a Saturday in the height of shopping season. On a map of your city, place little hearts next to all the cafes where people are likely to go rest in the middle of their shopping day. Visit each cafe and do a little mini-event for an hour or so, leaving cards and promos behind... Then on to the next cafe!

Things you could do at each stop:

- Give patrons hand-decorated coffee-cup holders warmers (you know, those little cardboard things) with a flourish offer knitted mug-cozies or other prizes to the cafe staff.
- Make a mini-play or a Holiday carol about the evils of mass-produced goods and the joys of handmade goods, act it out or sing it (using handmade instruments? Even better!)
- Have a little "live gift guide" presentation have a quick mini raffle, buy coffee and a scone for the winner, and give them a coupon for an etsy shop!

Helpful Tips:

- Be very considerate and respectful of cafe staff - they are at work. As you enter, have one team member go and explain what you are doing. If you are not welcome, leave! If you are welcome (which is more likely), play with the staff and show them love, give them gifts. They are dealing with angry Holiday shoppers all day and you can provide some much needed relief! Plus, if they like you, they'll talk you up to customers.
- Make your event be as much about entertainment and information as it is about promoting your shops or Etsy; otherwise you will be forcing people into the middle of a big advertisement. Play instead - you are offering something wonderful.
- Decorate your van with buyhandmade.com and your team's web site or blog on the side, and fun handmade decorations. Play music and have fun!
- Post the map and schedule on your blog or Team website - so people you know can show up and add some extra cheerful welcome.

4. Buy Handmade Trunk Shows

The concept: A trunk show is an intimate event where artists and crafters show and sell their wares directly to consumers. They are social events, and often happen in the evening with music and/or food present, or on a weekend afternoon with tea and snacks. It's a chance for buyers to meet sellers face-to-face and get to know them if they wish. The Buy Handmade Trunk show involves your team finding creative ways to link this traditional crafting event with the larger movement of the Handmade Pledge. Hold a raffle with winners drawn throughout the event - people who sign the pledge are entered, and the winner gets a goodie bag or a discount at your shops.

The venue: Trunk shows can take place in someone's house, in a church or temple or other religious or community center, a shop, gallery or boutique, or even on a sidewalk.

Helpful tips:

- Have some laptops available and online so that people can take the pledge right there. If you can't have internet access available in the venue you are using, have everyone who wants to sign write their name and email address down, and later send out a reminder to everyone with a link to the pledge.
- If you use someone's house, it can be a team member's house, or someone in the community who wants to support the pledge. Feel free to engage and involve non-Etsy people in your events. The pledge goes beyond Etsy! The non-Etsy people you invite can also help reach interested buyers who you do not know. Use this as an opportunity to expand your audience. Make sure if you are using someone's house that you have really

good directions and maps available to people who may be interested in coming.

Finally, **Have a blast!** The more fun your event is, the more that the buzz will spread out into your community about buying handmade, and about your Team. And remember: [email us](#) with your own Team creative event idea, so we can share it with Teams!

The Etsy Team Guides are produced by Amy Walsh (aka wonderamy) and Sara Selepouchin (aka sarawearsskirts) for the Etsy Teams of Etsy.com. You may find more helpful Etsy Team Guides at <http://team.etsy.com/guides.html>.