



Artisan Markets: 10 Key Components To Success

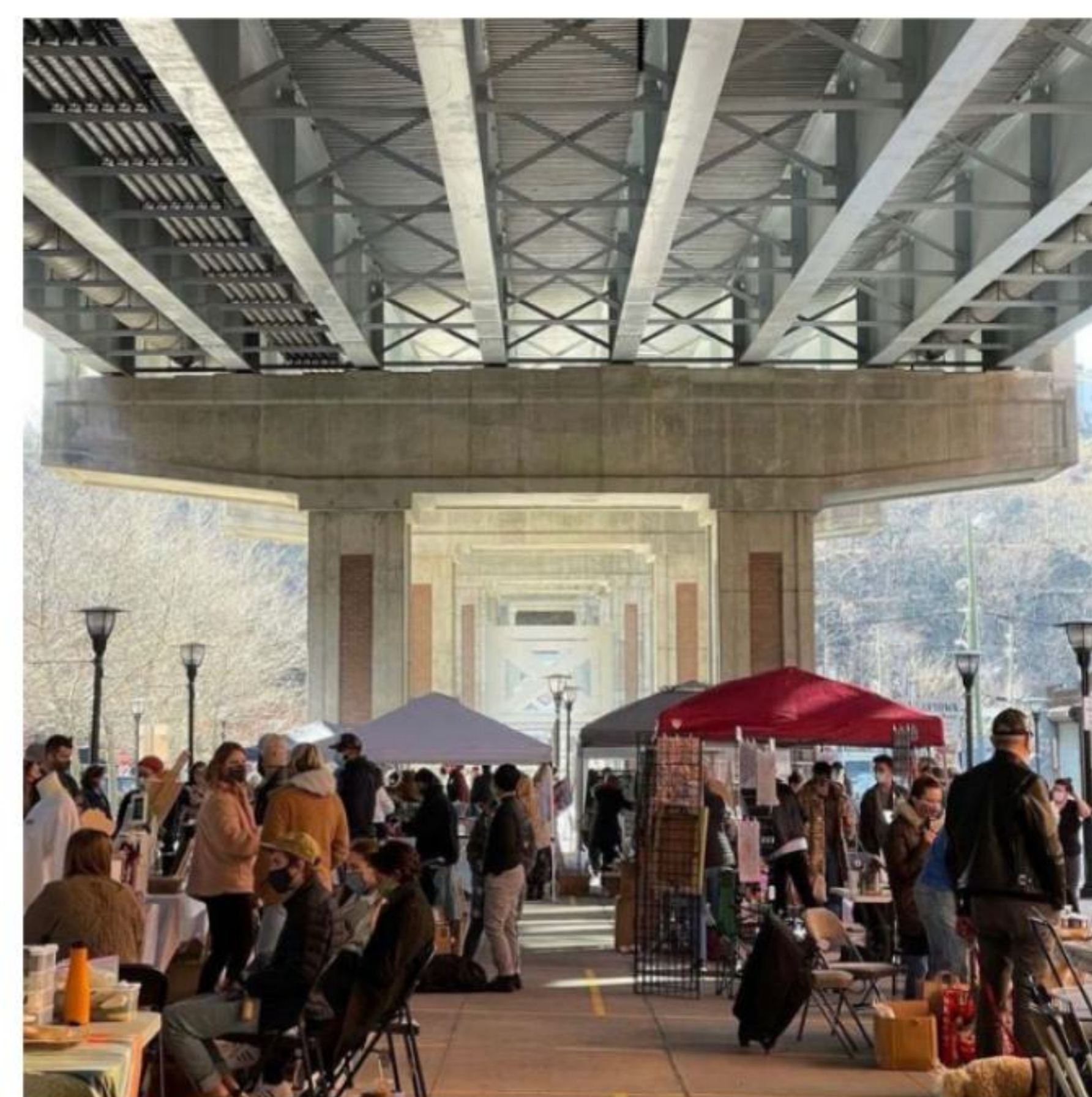
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September 9, 2022

Outdoor Artisan Markets are an excellent way to increase excitement in your area, forge community connections and boost local economic development. These dynamic and interactive markets act as “Creative Placemaking”, providing a meaningful space where artists and makers share their creations and people can engage with one another, attracting local residents and visitors alike to your downtown area.

Today’s consumers crave unique and original handmade products made responsibly and locally, and small entrepreneurial businesses are looking for ways to sell their wares and connect with the community. Artisan Markets allow people to share their talents but also their stories, perspectives, and history. People inevitably come together and start conversations. That’s community building!



In addition to creating a stronger sense of community, these markets offer a microeconomic development opportunity for restaurants, retailers and local services by driving traffic to your business district. There is much momentum to support small businesses and shop locally now, so it is a win-win for all. The artisans are local, the shoppers stay local, and the neighborhood businesses benefit from all of the increased visibility. In addition, these markets act as a perfect “test” for entrepreneurs considering opening a brick and mortar in your area, thus helping to foster future local retailers.

Outdoor artisan markets have been an effective way to provide a safe public venue in the COVID era where local residents can gather safely to shop and socialize, but the benefits can be realized anytime.

Main Street Pops’ mission is to “make local social again”, and our goal is to create a community block party vibe at each event. We have produced many popular and bustling markets the past few years, and have outlined ten key elements that are integral to success:

1. **Curate deliberately:** Make sure there is a wide variety of offerings in different categories of goods. This ensures all vendors do well and visitors have a more interesting shopping experience. Categories to solicit include Art, Photography, Jewelry, Home Goods, Artisanal foods, flowers & plants, Pet Products, Children’s items, Fashion, and vintage upcycled finds. Rotate in new artisans each month to keep shoppers coming back! Don’t compete directly with the stores in your district, and invite them to participate. Savvy business owners will recognize the promotional opportunity to have a direct dialogue with their community and might even source new vendors for their shops.
2. **Celebrate diversity:** The people behind the products are as unique as the products themselves, so be diverse so you can generate more interest and attract a wider audience.
3. **Source locally:** Bring in artisans from your town, but also adjacent zip codes, making it easy for their friends and family to come out for the day to support them. The additive effect of supporters is exponential. Many of these “day-visitors” will also patronize other businesses while there.

4. Add Activations: Encourage engagement and dwell time by creating themed activations throughout the year. Arts & crafts projects for the kids, Holiday giveaways, selfie photo sites, etc. Book local performers- live music from hometown favorites always keeps the energy high. Cross-promote local organizations whenever you can, as they bring crowds! For example, partner with a local dance company to produce a holiday-themed Flash Mob. All of the families will come to watch and post on their social media. Make sure to have Santa & The Easter Bunny visit during the holidays, and pass out candy on Halloween. Ask vendors to offer special items to promote for Mother's Day, Father's Day, Graduation, etc.



5. Give back: Donate a table monthly to a NJ nonprofit. Not only does it generate good will and further a sense of community, but they are able to bring awareness to their cause, collect donations, recruit new members, etc. An added bonus is they will attract all of their followers to your event.



6. Be on-site: This can't be stressed enough- on-site management is the difference between an amateur event and a professional one that people want to return to each month. It is imperative that someone is there to answer questions and troubleshoot when problems come up.

7. Sweat the small stuff: Great organizational skills and a keen attention to details is a must. Logistics like insurance, permits, trash, police, easy-to-use applications, and readable floor plans are not the most exciting part of the job, but streamlined processes make your event better than all the others. Your vendors will be impressed, refer others, and come back month after month, making recruiting much easier and saving you time and money.

8. Solicit sponsors: Artisan markets provide an opportunity for sponsors to invest in and connect with the community. This kind of regularly scheduled event is attractive to smart marketing professionals if given the opportunity to have a table onsite and interact directly with customers. This is especially attractive to professional services like banks, insurance brokers, realtors, developers, doctors, etc.



9. Invest in Marketing and Promotion: Use your local expertise to craft brand messaging that reflects the unique flavor of your town and will get the community excited. Enlist local politicians, social media groups and influencers to help generate awareness. Provide social media posts and other promotional tools to your vendors and partners, as they are just as invested as you are in the day's success. They will each post to all of their followers, and your audience will grow each time. As the market increases in popularity, it will become a regional attraction that will build upon itself.

10. Partner with a professional: There are many professional event companies like *Main Street Pops* that can complement your strengths and thrive on organizing public events! Use their expertise and do what you do best- help make the local connections.



The more you invest in engaging the community, the maximum interest and attendance you will generate. Reaching out to all of the local arts organizations, non-profits, and community groups gives everyone a sense of ownership and pride in the market's success.

Tracy Gravant is a creative Brand Strategist and Dot Connector. A former magazine publisher, she has held executive sales and marketing management positions at *Elle Decor*, *Interiors*, *ArtNews* and *Robb Report* magazines and her *CARMA Consulting* business has helped spur significant growth for many clients, whether by expanding an established brand or launching a new business start up. She has introduced successful signature programs such as *Elle Decor's Dining By Design* National Tour and *The Elle Decor International Design Awards*. Tracy is also a Travel & Lifestyle writer, contributing to many popular media outlets. Her passions are wellness travel and blowing up small brands!

Main Street Pop's mission is to bring the feeling of Main Street back, support small local business, and build community. To do this, we've reimagined the Main Street experience with dynamic live and virtual hyper-local programming designed to start conversations and create engagement through the arts. Amazon, the iPhone and the internet are not going away. So what will compel us all to get off the couch?



Find out more at <http://mainstreetpops.com/>. Or follow @mainstreetpops on <http://facebook.com/mainstreetpops>, [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).