



5 STEPS *to* MARKETING YOUR ART ONLINE


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There's a misconception that any great artist will eventually be discovered and sell well, yet the world is littered with highly accomplished, unknown artists. A few get lucky and are "discovered", but that's rare.

Most artists who sell do so because they make consistent marketing efforts. To sell, you need a focused marketing plan – and determination. The "4 Ps" is a good place to start...

Product, Place, Price and Promotion.

Define exactly what your product is, the best place to advertise and platform to sell it, the optimal price to move your inventory *and* make a profit, and finally, how you'll promote it. Keep this in mind as you develop your web marketing plan.

Here are five steps to get you started on your way...

Step 1

Create a Website Featuring Your Online Art Portfolio

A website is a **MUST** to market your work. There are plenty of website builders you can use. If you choose to hire someone to set up your framework, make sure you can navigate the site yourself as you'll need to update it regularly.

Your new website should definitely contain:

- **Online Portfolio:** This should contain your absolute best work. Focus on quality over quantity and update it with strong new pieces every few months.
- **About Page:** This is where you can house your Artist Statement, as well as your bio. The Artist Statement should be a brief and clear description of your work. Give the potential buyer/gallery owner insight into the how, what and why of your art. (This is typically required by competitions and used by galleries and media outlets.)
- **Contact Page:** Make sure your info is accurate and up to date. You should include a (frequently-checked) email address and phone number, at the very least.
- **eCommerce Site:** Link to an online platform where your audience can buy your paintings. There are options varying from the mainstream like Etsy or eBay, to print-on-demand sites and online galleries. Find the one that makes the most sense for you.

Optional website elements include...

- **A Newsletter Archive/Blog:** Search engines scour for content that's relevant and timely. Frequent updates will increase your website's rankings, which in turn will result in more visits to your pages and thereby, more sales.
- **A place to have folks subscribe to an email list** (this can simply be your blog posts, emailed out).

Step 2

Write to Your Potential Collector

Think about who your audience is. Picture those collectors you've met in person. What gender and age is most drawn in by your work? Why does it appeal to them?

Let's say most of your collectors are women in their 50s. Perhaps they compliment you on the colors you choose, or the subjects you select.

Take all this and create an image of your collector – this will be the individual you'll write to. Some marketers refer to these as "avatars" or "personas". They create entire bios of this person, their job, income, marital status, number of children, etc... but we're going to keep this light for our purposes here.

Let's call this target collector "Beth". "Beth" likes and wears bright colors and gardening. She enjoys nature and her family and friends.

So get a picture of her in your mind and when you write, write to HER... not to a bunch of faceless email addresses.

Let "Beth" get to know what drives and excites you. If you enter art competitions – and you **ABSOLUTELY SHOULD** – be sure to brag about it when you win. (Side Note: We've heard more than one artist say that winning an art competition like [Plein Air Salon](#), launched their career as a professional artist.)

DO NOT try to sell her your artwork in every communication. Instead, sell yourself – and you can tease your upcoming works for sale.

Tell “Beth” a funny story about your recent plein air expedition when you had to wade into a pond to save your hat. Or the beauty of the grounds of an old estate where you just started painting.

Tell her your stories (this is KEY to engagement)... and add some photos.

And THEN show “Beth” your new paintings. Tell her how you felt when creating them. Was the sun warm on your face and the smell of roses surrounding you? You want her to feel a connection to the work... to long for it to be on her wall.

This next point is crucial...

When you are selling, make sure you have a clear call to action (CTA) like “SHOP HERE” linked to your online store.

Some people write a few times a week, others a few times a month. Frequency depends on what your time allows and what you have to say – and sell!

This writing can either be a blog post on your website, or an email that then gets posted in an archive on your site.

We recommend the latter. Here’s why...

Step 3

Create an Email List (Your Very Own Newsletter)

When you add potential buyers to an email list, you have a direct line to market your latest works. It’s also a strong selling point to galleries considering exhibiting your work. You’ll essentially be providing them marketing support as you boost attendance to your opening.

There are many email marketing services (EMS) that are easy to use and allow you to schedule mass email sends: Moosend, Gmass (from Gmail), Mailchimp, Zoho, Mailerlite, Constant Contact, etc. The EMS will instruct you how to add sign-up links to your communications and website.

You could offer an incentive – like a 10% discount or free shipping – to those who sign up for your email list.

Have a header/banner/logo at the top of the email and link it to your website. Also have your (linked) website URL below your signature/signoff in each communication.

Write your email to “Beth” and post it on your website. As mentioned earlier, email marketing is a direct channel to your customer and extremely valuable, as a result. Then you simply post it as content on your website. This will service the same purpose as a Blog, helping your search results.

Step 4

Create a Social Media Strategy

First, decide on your goal. Is it strictly to sell more of your work online? In local brick and mortar galleries? Or do you wish to also teach, for example? Perhaps partner with companies like our own Streamline to sell art instruction?

Those motivations could dictate what you post. If you'd like to teach, short instruction videos posted on Instagram, Facebook and YouTube would be wise. You could garner a following for that, as well as admirers of your paintings.

But let's say your primary goal is to sell your paintings. The key element here is the audience you wish to target.

If we're continuing with our "Beth" example, she's very likely to be on Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest. And unlikely to be on SnapChat, for example.

Other Social options include Twitter, TikTok, LinkedIn... and more.

You can create posts along the same lines as your emails for Facebook, but heavy on the photos.

Instagram may be the hottest platform for artists at the moment.

Obviously for Instagram, photos and videos - particularly 15 second [Reels](#) - are key.

Video yourself painting, then speed it up and post it. Other videos can show you preparing for an exhibition or shipping out orders. You can give a tour of your studio. Anything to catch "Beth's" attention as she scrolls. And everytime she likes or shares your post, that's more eyes on your work. This assists with your branding, as well as sales.

Hashtags are how your posts get more eyeballs. You can find loads of information on this over the internet, but essentially, you want to research niche tags related to your medium, subject and style to gain exposure - and those ever-crucial "likes" for your posts. It's important that your tags vary for your posts.

If you wish to advertise on Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest you must set up a business profile/account.

You can then target your advertising to fit your demographic and your budget. Again, there's a lot of information out there to help you get started.

Step 5

A Quick Word on Advertising

The three-legged stool of all marketing is media, message, and market.

You have to present the right message, and reach the right market. When advertising fails, most people blame the media, when that's often not the issue. If you're "getting no calls" or website visits, the problem is with your message – in the content, and possibly in the targeting of your market.

Most ads fail because someone assumes running an ad one or two times will work. Ads require repetition over long periods of time. Other ads fail because people are copying what they've seen others do rather than writing an ad that grabs attention and includes a call to action.

No ad should have a single purpose.

Most artists put a single painting in an ad, hoping there's one buyer out there who likes it. But what if there isn't? You do shows with multiple paintings, and sometimes none of them sell. This is no different.

Your ad should have a capture device designed to pull people to your website to sign up for something (newsletter, discount, free lesson, etc.), so you can place them in your sales process beyond your ads.

You can't get where you're going without a map.

Most people advertise with the idea of simply selling more artwork. Rarely do they have a plan, nor any idea of what they want to achieve, what their brand should be, or the purpose of it all beyond just selling. In his [Art Marketing Boot Camps](#), Streamline Publisher Eric Rhoads explains how to craft a life plan so you can build your marketing plan around it.

In Conclusion

We hope this guide gives you a basic starting point for your online art presence. Consistency is important. Don't get frustrated if it takes a few months before you see results. Regularly review what's working and what isn't, adapt – and persevere!

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