

HYA Maker Faire Lessons & Review

Let's look at what we learned from our business startup and Maker Faire experience



Hi everyone,

After each new venture or project, we like to step back and review what we learned. It's important to do this with everything you do no matter how successful or not your project is. In this way you learn something and improve for the next time.

So what did we do? First of all we developed a brand new product category 3D Face Art - we call them Stickablez! They're a fun, easy, and safe alternative to face painting - they make any event or birthday party fun! Over the course of the past 9 months or so, we developed the product, tested them at events, and ultimately launched the product line at Maker Faire on 5/17 & 5/18.



Maker Faire Performance Review



We just wanted to say how proud we were of each and every one of you for your energy, creativity, and flexibility during this weekend's event! We did what a lot of new businesses go through - we had a plan that basically sounded great until we got to the event and saw that our competition in our area offered an interactive experience for free - how do we compete? We pivot - we changed our offering to our customers to match their expectations & experimented with pricing to get the train back on track. We did something that MOST business owners need to do on a daily basis - we plan, we learn, we pivot to match what we learn.



Lessons Learned

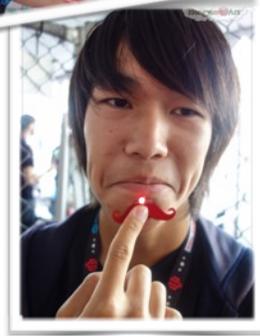
So how did we do at Maker Faire with our Stickablez 3D Face Art? We earned **\$2058** at Maker Faire and in the week before where we did price testing selling at Hongyun Art! Wow great job!

Just do it: I hope you've learned that the biggest part of starting a business is to just do it! Every step forward leads to new information and helps you correct your course. I've seen a lot of people that spend a lot of time planning out their businesses but never take the first step because their plan wasn't perfect. This is NOT the right way to go for the most part. We started with a bunch of ideas, experimented, played, had fun, and ultimately settled on 3 main ideas for Maker Faire - the card kits, stickablez, and the light up butterflies.

Adapt to your environment: As we started sales, we realized that we had to correct our plan on the fly at Maker Faire. This is a PART of doing business. We had no idea who our customers were and what they were looking for. We quickly realized that they were there for a learning experience--to make something with their own two hands--and we course corrected to offer them a product and experience they were willing to pay for. Hongyun and I do this every day and this is how businesses are run. We guess what people want, make some, show it to them, learn from how they behave or react to what we show them, then we fix it, and show them again. Repeat again and again until they start buying what you are offering :) I can honestly say that almost no one has succeeded in business with the very first version of the very first product they try to sell. Anyway, I'm proud of you guys for being flexible and quickly adapting our plan to the marketplace. I've see people who would have just said, "well these people just don't get what we're trying to do" and blame their potential customers all the while making no sales and watching other booths be packed with people. Again this is not the right way - we always watch customers, their reactions, their behaviors and adjust what we offer to fit them. This is generally the right way to do well in business. Great job everyone!

One size does NOT fit all (generally): On Sunday, we were running low on LEDs and Batteries so we increased the price to \$4 for the butterflies. People still paid for them! While some people complained that it was too expensive others were still willing to





pay. The lesson here is that not everyone is your customer - some people came to Maker Faire and barely had enough money to get in (I heard one lady say, "we paid so much just to get in, I didn't realize we'd need even more money to do stuff!"), while others planned on spending money on fun activities. This is called "customer segmentation" meaning there are different segments of customers -- they aren't all the same. That's why you have very expensive cars like Teslas and Lexus and not so expensive cars like Ford and GM - they all let you drive around and carry stuff, but they are meant for different customers. We have to think of our customers in the same way too - who are our customers, what do they want, how much are they willing to pay for it? Again this is a very common activity that Hongyun and I do A LOT!



Hustle and Teamwork: Like almost everything in life, hustling, working hard, and working together are the right way to win. Nothing comes to you without a lot of hustle and teamwork.

I know a lot of you were tired by the afternoon but most of you toughed it out and didn't complain. I'm super proud of you - not many kids can do what you guys did - handle thousands of customers and have fun all day! We also worked well together - teamwork was GREAT! Everyone chipped in where they could - we should always watch each other's backs and be ready to jump in to anticipate what your team members need.

Talk to people: Being good at sales (and just about anything in life) means knowing how to talk to people and understanding the rhythm of a conversation. I tried to teach little bits and pieces to you this past weekend. Remember to watch your customer's eyes and see if they pause. That's when you ask them an interesting question like, "Would you like a light up butterfly to put on your face?" Remember that not everyone will say yes - this is ok. There are always a lot of "no's" on the way to one "yes" - we have to just keep asking new people and adjusting our approach to figure out the right "pitch."



The key point here is to remember that this doesn't just work with customers! It also works with friends, parents, teachers, and other people - learning to talk to people, to share your ideas and creativity fearlessly, and to read people is a very VERY key skill to have in order to be successful. Having the skills to program a computer can lead to a good career as a computer programmer, but having the skills to work with lots of different kinds of people, to motivate and lead them, that's how you become a CEO!

Next Steps

As summer approaches, we're going to work on refining Stickablez and trying them out at a few different events. We're also going to work on taking Stickablez to retail stores in the area and hopefully in a national retailer!

We also have new plans for our Red Cloud & Party Team - including HYA 2.0!! Stay tuned for more information about our exciting expansion coming this Fall!