

# The Maker's Marketing Guide

## A Practical Guide from the Business Cottage Industry Association

**How to Boost Your Sales  
Online and Offline ... ..**



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# Welcome to BCIA

## About the BCIA: Our Story

The Business Cottage Industry Association (BCIA) was formed through a unique partnership between the Cottage Industry Association and George Cornelius, a seasoned digital marketing specialist with deep roots in the UK show circuit.

Before COVID disrupted markets and events, George spent years as a hands-on trader — selling a range of products at the Ideal Home Show, Grand Designs, Spring Fair, County Shows and weekend Fairs, Craft Markets, and Pop-up Events across the Country.

When lockdowns forced a pivot to online sales, George combined his trading experience with digital expertise to help fellow stall holders survive and thrive.

This sparked the creation of BCIA — a dedicated support network created specifically for stallholders, crafters, and small producers by Cottage Industries and George Cornelius.

Today, the BCIA bridges the gap between traditional markets and modern digital selling, giving cottage industry creators the tools, training, and community they need to build sustainable businesses that work on and off the stall.

## **The Unique Power of Open Shows**

Physical markets give you something no website ever can — the chance to connect face-to-face, let customers feel your products, and turn browsers into lifelong fans.

## **Why Open Shows Are Your Secret Weapon**

When someone picks up your handmade ceramic mug, runs their fingers across your leather wallet, or smells your artisanal soap, something magical happens. They experience your craft in a way pixels on a screen can never replicate.

### **Real stallholder benefits:**

- Touch and feel creates trust — customers buy what they can hold
- Immediate feedback — hear what works, what doesn't, right from your ideal buyer
- Emotional connection — people remember the friendly maker they met, not just the product
- Prospect gathering — collect emails, Instagram handles, WhatsApp numbers from genuinely interested people
- Word of mouth in action — happy customers tell their friends about "that amazing stall at the market"

## **The Numbers Speak for Themselves**

Studies show 70% of buyers prefer discovering new and products makers at physical markets first, then shopping online later. One day at a well-run open show can generate:

- 50+ quality leads (phone numbers, emails, social follows)
- 10-20 repeat customers who now know where to find you online
- Stories and testimonials you can use across all your digital channels
- £500-£2,000 in immediate sales (depending on your product and footfall)

Turn every visitor into a future customer:



# Chapter 1

## The Digital Advantage for Makers

The world has changed, and so has customer behaviour. Today's shoppers often discover and research brands online — before they ever visit a stall. Having a simple online presence isn't just "nice to have" anymore; it's how you ensure people can find you, remember you, and buy from you again.

Here's the good news: building or upgrading your website is easier and cheaper than ever.

- Real Costs (Much Less Than You Think)
- Professional web domain: less than €15 per year
- Website hosting: from less than €5 per month
- E-commerce setup: €20–30 per month (or free with some platforms)

Think of your website as your permanent market stall, one that stays open 24 hours a day, welcomes customers from anywhere, and never needs to pack up at 5 p.m.

It doesn't need to be fancy — just clear, friendly, and easy to buy from. One well-designed page that tells your story and showcases your products beautifully can outperform a dozen markets with low turnout.

### What Your Website Should Do

- ✓ Tell your story clearly
- ✓ Show high-quality photos of your work
- ✓ Make it easy to contact you or order
- ✓ Work beautifully on phones and tablets
- ✓ Build trust (show reviews, testimonials, or your credentials)

# Chapter 2

## **Social Media — Your Digital Marketplace**

If your website is your stall, then social media is the road that leads people to it.

Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and Pinterest can help you:

- Share the story behind your craft — people buy into passion
- Show your process — photos and short videos build authenticity
- Promote events and connect with local buyers
- Encourage repeat customers to shop online between markets
- Build a loyal community around what you make

## **The Secret: Consistency Over Complexity**

You don't need to post daily; just post regularly, with purpose. Show what you make, where you'll be, and remind followers how to order or contact you.

## **Smart Social Media Tips**

Choose one or two platforms where your audience hangs out

- Instagram & TikTok: visual, younger audiences, perfect for process videos
- Facebook: local community, events, direct messaging
- Pinterest: long-term discovery, perfect for design-led products



## Share behind-the-scenes content

- Work in progress photos
- Your studio or workshop
- Stories about your inspiration
- "Meet the maker" posts

## Every post points somewhere

- Link to your shop or website
- Mention where you're trading next
- Make it easy for interested followers to become customers

## Engage with your audience

- Reply to comments
- Share customer photos and testimonials
- Ask questions and start conversations

## Sample Social Media Calendar

- Week 1: Behind-the-scenes process video
- Week 2: New product launch with story
- Week 3: Upcoming market or event reminder
- Week 4: Customer feature or testimonial

**Repeat.** Keep it simple. Stay consistent.

# Chapter 3

## Blending Offline and Online Success

The most successful stallholders today combine traditional markets with smart digital marketing. Your in-person events and your online presence work together.



## **The Hybrid Approach**

### **At Your Market Stall:**

- Display a QR code linking to your online shop or mailing list
- Collect emails or social media handles from interested visitors
- Hand out cards with your website URL and social handles
- Take photos for later social media posts
- Offer "online exclusive" discounts to drive traffic to your site

### **Online Between Markets:**

- Post photos or videos from your event — shows authenticity
- Share testimonials and customer stories
- Promote your next market appearance
- Offer "click and collect" options for online orders
- Keep your audience engaged during quiet periods

### **The Ripple Effect:**

Someone sees your Facebook post →  
visits your website →  
orders online →  
receives excellent packaging →  
leaves a 5-star review →  
their friend sees the review → becomes a new customer.

**This is how sustainable growth happens.**



## **Real Example: From Stall to Scale**

A ceramicist starts by selling at one local market. She posts process videos on Instagram showing clay on the wheel. One video gets shared by a pottery influencer. Her followers grow from 150 to 2,000 in two months. She adds an online shop. Now she sells online and at markets, and her weekends feel less stressful because her income isn't dependent on foot traffic alone.

# Chapter 4:

## **Supported by the Business Cottage Industry Association**

As part of the Business Cottage Industry Association, you're not doing this alone.

We're here to support you with guidance, visibility, and resources to help small creative businesses thrive in the digital age.

## **What We Offer BCIA Members**

### **Educational Resources:**

- Workshops on website building and e-commerce basics
- Social media strategy guides and templates
- Photography tips for product shots
- Video creation for beginners

## **Marketing Support:**

- Visibility in BCIA promotional campaigns
- Access to member directories and listings
- Featured "Maker of the Month" opportunities
- Co-marketing for member events and fairs

## **Community:**

- Peer support and networking with other makers
- Advice sessions with digital marketing specialists
- Group buying power for tools and services
- Shared learning from what works

## **Advocacy:**

- We work with event organizers to improve conditions for stallholders
- We campaign for better parking, loading, and venue management
- Your voice matters, and we fight for fairer terms

## **How to Access Support**

Visit the website [www.georgecornelius.com](http://www.georgecornelius.com) or contact us directly through [info@georgecornelius.com](mailto:info@georgecornelius.com).

Many resources are free for members, stall holders and new or existing clients, with optional low investment workshops for deeper support, training, website builds and graphic design.

# Chapter 5:

**You've mastered your craft — now let's master your marketing.**

## **This Week**

- Audit your online presence: Do you have a website? Is it current? Mobile-friendly?
- Claim your social media handles on at least one platform
- Take 5–10 high-quality photos of your products and workspace

## **This Month**

- Set up a simple online shop (Shopify, Etsy, WooCommerce, or similar)
- Post your first 4 social media updates (one per week)
- Create an email capture option (newsletter or mailing list) on your website
- Attend a BCIA digital marketing workshop

## **This Quarter**

- Grow your social media following to at least 500 engaged followers
- Make your first online sale
- Collect testimonials from happy customers
- Plan how to blend your online shop with your market stalls

## The Bigger Picture

Your creativity is your business. With the right digital tools — and support from the BCIA — it can shine everywhere, every day.

You don't need to be a tech wizard. You don't need a massive budget. You just need consistency, a story worth telling, and the willingness to show up — both in person and online.

## Quick Reference: Platform Guide

### Instagram

- Best for: Visual creators (art, jewellery, textiles, home décor)
- Time commitment: 3–4 posts per week
- Key content: Process videos, finished products, behind-the-scenes, reels
- Link to shop: Link in bio + swipe-up stories (if eligible)

### Facebook

- Best for: Local community connection and events
- Time commitment: 2–3 posts per week
- Key content: Events, customer stories, group discussions, marketplace listings
- Link to shop: Shop section on page + direct messenger

### TikTok

- Best for: Reaching younger audiences with entertaining, authentic content
- Time commitment: 2–3 videos per week
- Key content: Quick tutorials, "satisfying" process videos, trends, Q&As
- Link to shop: Bio link + product mentions in videos





## Pinterest

- Best for: Long-term discoverability and traffic to your shop
- Time commitment: 5–10 pins per week (can be scheduled)
- Key content: Product photos, design inspiration, infographics, blog posts
- Link to shop: Every pin links directly to your website

## Key Takeaways

- A website costs less than one market stall and works 24/7
- Social media is the bridge between your craft and your customers
- Consistency beats perfection — just keep showing up
- Blend online and offline for sustainable, stress-free growth
- You're not alone — the BCIA is here to help

## Contact & Resources

- Business Cottage Industry Association
- Helping makers, crafters, and small producers sell more — on and offline.
- ✉ Email: [info@georgecornelius.com](mailto:info@georgecornelius.com)
- 🌐 Website: [www.georgecornelius.com](http://www.georgecornelius.com)

## About the Business Cottage Industry Association.

We represent makers, crafters, artists, and small-batch producers across the region. Our mission is to help cottage industries thrive by providing practical support, community, and advocacy.

Whether you're just starting out or ready to scale, we believe every maker deserves the tools and support to build a sustainable, joyful business.

### Join us. Grow with us.

This guide is free to distribute.

Please share it with fellow makers, crafters, and small business owners in your community.

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