

DollShowUSA.com
"The Place to go to Find a Show"
Karen A. Kosies, Founder

Event Guide ~ Helpful Tips for a smooth & easy events

- ◆ Be sure you know the "rules" for holding and selling at special events in your area. Check with both your state and city sales tax revenue departments. State on your contracts that sellers are solely responsible for any and all sales taxes. No one wants the city or state showing up at your event to interview your sellers to be sure they are all compliant. With the economy the way it is, government agencies are hurting for money so you want to be sure you know and follow the rules to prevent large fines.
- ◆ Research your date and see if there is any other event in your area. Check www.DollShowUSA.com website for other events in surrounding areas as well. Saturday or Sunday? Both have benefits and drawbacks. For instance, Saturday shows limit Sellers/Vendors that own shops from coming and Sundays have church so some would not be able to come until later in the afternoon.
- ◆ Consider an "Early Bird" Admission. Many Sellers/Vendors will still be setting up but that's okay..... That's part of the fun!
- ◆ If this is not a club event, consider having a charity benefit from the grand prize and/or raffle (sometimes known as helpers) drawings. Usually, the sellers are more than willing to donate nicer items for the raffle and the charity may have a mailing list that they can send notice of the event out to as well. Sometimes, television or radio stations will do a story on the doll show if a charity is involved.
- ◆ Always start by posting your event on DollShowUSA.com and include www.DollShowUSA.com on all advertising, flyers and contracts as the source for more details. By posting your event at DollShowUSA.com you also have the advantage of the site's excellent standing on the internet. With almost 1,800 hits a month, there has been a lot of work put into the site over the years to get it where it is on the internet/search engines. Upgraded listings cover everything you need including contracts and flyers available for printing 24/7 saving you hundreds of dollars in printing and postage costs.
- ◆ Share our YouTube DollShowUSA.com video. Hover your mouse on the video on the first page of the site. Click the "Watch on YouTube" and it will bring up the video for you to share or email. The more people we get to the site, the more people will know to go there to find your show information.

- ◆ Facebook ~ Many people (myself included) are not a fan of Facebook but it is the number one internet marketing tool at this time. If you are a Facebook member, please be sure you like DollShowUSA.com's Facebook page. Here is the direct link- <https://www.facebook.com/DollShowUSA/>. Make up your own Facebook page for your club/organization/business. Be sure to your event to your page. Add me, Karen Kosies, as your friend so I can share your posts to corresponding Facebook pages. If you need help with Facebook, email me for details.
- ◆ When advertising, start with FREE and go from there. Go online and search for free calendars. Don't forget television and radio stations. Many have online submission forms. Click to follow the link to our list of Publications and General Free Online Calendars on our Sponsors- Links Page. Non-profit organizations can send out PSA postcards (Public Service Announcement). Promoters can send out Press Releases -- best if sent out 2 - 6 weeks before. Spend a day posting flyers and leaving handbills. Carry some with in your vehicle and to leave at craft & fabric stores, antique shops, post office & anywhere there is bulletin board. The week or two before, hand them out to everyone you meet in a day, bank tellers, clients, grocery clerks, doctors offices, dentists, etc. You never know who likes dolls or knows someone who does. Make up some wire signs that can be used every year. They work great but do require some time and energy.
- ◆ Printed advertising is EXPENSIVE! The rule of thumb is to be sure you are going to get a 150% return on your advertising costs. If you spend \$100, you should get a return of at least \$150. Think about how many people is that one ad in the newspaper really going to bring in? Keep in mind that doll enthusiasts probably already know when and where the next show is so you have to decide is it worth it to spend the money for a printed advertisement only to hopefully get a couple of new people in to the event.
- ◆ Be sure you add a space for your seller's email to your contracts and start developing a seller email list so you can email contracts instead of snail mail. Saves lots of time and money.
- ◆ Contracts, registration forms and/or flyers ~ Whether emailing or having available on a website, always turn them into a "pdf" file first so they are easily printed on the other end. You can download free software to do that at <http://www.cutepdf.com/>. It installs a printer driver onto your computer where all you have to do is print your document to the CutePDF printer driver and it will turn your document into a pdf. That way, the person should have an easier time printing regardless of the word processing program is used in the preparation of the document.
- ◆ Help your sellers have a great show! www.Selling-Dolls.com has some great ideas for your sellers and even has a link to a printable copy if you want to include it in with your contract. I have done all the work for you!
- ◆ Keep track of your sellers on a spreadsheet listing Name, Helper, Preferences, Number of Tables Requested, Amount owed, Amount paid. Makes for an easier transition to the table assignment chart. Always make copies of the checks received and keep the envelope they came in just in case the handwriting is illegible.

- ◆ Sellers will often wait until the last minute to commit. Always allow for extra tables, if possible. If you don't need them for sellers, you can always use them for a make and take or other activity.
- ◆ Send out postcards about 6 weeks before the show. You may even get an extra seller or two from them.
- ◆ Develop an email and snail mail list at the door of the show. Have each attendee fill out name address and email for door prize drawings. You can also ask how they heard about the show to track advertising.
- ◆ Give a \$1 off with coupon, ad or flyer and chalk it up to advertising costs. Some promoters are now giving additional discounts to UFDC or area club members.
- ◆ Attendees love goody bags! Even if it is simply a pen and a couple of chocolate kisses or a raffle ticket. Set the mood and give out small stuffed animals or dollies at the door for free to children that attend.
- ◆ Doll displays, program or a "make & take" of some sort always spark interest. If you have the room, have a seating area for people to rest, visit & recharge. Some shows have a train display for the "guys".
- ◆ Door prizes throughout the day add to the fun. They can be from the sellers or simply a show gift certificate for \$5.
- ◆ Someone to do restringing and/or small repairs as well as identification and/or valuations brings people to your show. For the identification/valuations, we ask for a donation for the charity. For those who may try to come into the show for just the identification/valuations. Always have a sign at the door that states that they still have to pay the admission and if you charge a fee or how many dolls are included.
- ◆ Keep in mind that there are people out there who live their lives to try to get something for free. They will tell you at the door that they are only there to visit or help a friend or that they just want to look around for a particular item or just look around for a minute, etc. If they don't want to pay to come in, you don't want them there anyway. Allow sellers one helper the day of the show. If they have more than 2 tables, allow one helper per table thereafter. Have them provide the names of their helpers in a timely manner so they can be provided with a show badge or name tag. Any additional family or friends do need to pay to attend And why wouldn't they if they want to support them and the show?
- ◆ Sellers, Vendors, Exhibitors should all realize that this is their show too. The success of the show or event, is not the sole responsibility of the promoter, whether club or individual. There is only so much that can be done as the promoter and so much money that can be spent on advertising so it is always a plus when the show "family" sends out cards to their people, posts on facebook and hand out flyers.
- ◆ Last but not least, have FUN!