

## J'net News - A Creator's Art Marketing & Licensing Resource

### Upcoming Events

#### Ask J'net Free Fridays - Live Q & A Session

Send in your questions NOW and register to attend!

Date: Friday, July 24<sup>th</sup>

Time: 9:00 am - 10:00 am PST  
(12 noon - 1:00 pm EST)

#### Legal Ease—Simplifying Copyrights, Trademarks & Contracts for Artists

With Attorney, Elizabeth Russell.

Date: Wed, July 29, 2009

Time: 3:30 pm - 5:30 pm PST  
(6:30 pm - 8:30 pm EST)

#### Professional Creators' Licensing Series: Open Doors and Close Deals

*Intro to Art Licensing, Licensing Presentations & Web Sites, Licensing Sales Techniques, and Licensing Negotiations & Contracts*

Dates: August 4, 5, 6, 2009

Time: 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm PST  
(3:00 pm - 5:00 pm EST)

**To Register for classes and get more information please use link on last page or go to [www.jnetSmith.com](http://www.jnetSmith.com) and click on "schedule"**

### Newsletter Volume 1, Issue 6 July 22, 2009

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#### Dear Readers

Many years ago Scott Adams, creator of Dilbert™, was having a reflective moment and gave me some sage advice. He said that the only difference between him and 1000s (or maybe millions) of others who want to have a comic in the newspaper (or some other creative product on the market)...is that you just have to do what it takes. I think he said, you just have to do it.

And no matter what your business model is, you just have to sell. Sure you can avoid it, or put it off, or rely on an agent, but remember that even finding an agent requires selling yourself, your art and your creativity to them. In fact, if licensing and other creative business is in your future, you'd better get used to some types of selling on some levels at least.

So truly the best way to fail in licensing is to not sell. And that is the topic of this month's J'net News article. For more in-depth information on setting up your own sales process, letter writing, sales coaching and negotiating skills, try one of our courses.



*Sincerely J'net*

### How to Succeed or Fail in Licensing by Jeanette Smith

Once you have your web site up and your licensing collections ready to share with manufacturers, it's time to get the final details in place and start the licensing sales process. This involves the following steps:

1. Create or Update the Lead List
2. Create Sales Letters
3. Send Materials to Relevant Leads
4. Call to Follow-up

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**Create or Update the Lead List** - Make sure you have names, emails and phone numbers for the companies and people you are targeting. I recommend prioritizing your products within the category as well, which will help determine which companies you approach first. Start with lead lists in the 10 to 30 company range. It's up to you, but make sure the lead list isn't so long you can't possibly follow up in a timely manner.

To find the leads, you can explore retailers, the Internet, trade shows, trade show directories, trade and consumer magazines and other press, as well as other artists. And no matter where you find them, the Internet and good old fashioned phone calling are the best ways to make sure that each one is an appropriate company for your art.

**Create Sales Letters** - This may seem old fashioned, but with the slue of art that manufacturers receive today, I believe they have become relevant and important again. Certainly a bad one could make even the savviest Art Director, who loves your art, wonder if they should offer you a deal.

Since you are targeting a certain category of manufacturer, you may be able to use the same letter for many of them. Please, please, please don't send generic letters, at least make them personalized with the recipient's name. And hopefully you can go one level better to include some type of specific information that lets them know the letter is truly directed toward them. Let me explain.

We know that manufacturers tend to get art, designs, illustrations and other creative from lots of people who haven't thoroughly thought through their strategy and picked appropriate licensees, so we want to make sure that your detailed research and "relevancy" really stands out. You can do that by starting your letter with a statement that relates to the manufacturer you are writing. This may be an observation from their web site; or an acknowledgement of something you really appreciate about their business; or a direct correlation between their company goals and products and your artwork. Whatever you choose to say, make it about them.

Yes, I said make it about them. Here's the logic. Everyone likes to talk about themselves and hear about themselves, so if you begin your sales letter with something specific about the manufacturer or retailer you are approaching, you will get their attention. Then in the first or second paragraph, tie the information back to you.

Here are a few examples:

- *"I have admired for years your ceramic design approach, and believe that several of my latest collections would fit their style perfectly."*

- *"I noticed that your company has recently expanded into the juvenile layette and furniture areas. This is a product category which I've been creating designs for years, and I'm sending you a small selection of art that I believe would be a good match for your new division."*

I hope that makes it clear. Find something you have in common with the manufacturers. Start the sentence talking about them and then bring the conversation around to you. Then once you have done that you can continue to tell them more about why you are a great fit for them.

Now let's look a bit deeper at what you say and don't say in an introductory sales letter.

- Say something exciting about yourself, if it can relate to sales that's the best!
- Tell them how great you are to work with and to what extent you will not only provide art, but anything else you have to offer—full production capabilities, product design experience, meet deadlines, etc.
- Don't tell them how terrific your art is or what your art looks like: *"it's a whimsical style with delightful fruit images."*

So let me repeat, don't waste your valuable pitch letter space telling them what your style is and, especially not, how great you are. Get to the point. Believe me, they know immediately if there is potential now, and probably even know immediately if there is potential for the future. What you want to do is give them some other information which will make you stand out if there is another artist they are considering for the same product line. And there always is another really creative person out there. But that's okay, because nobody is like you!

What can you say to make you stand out? Well, luckily you have sent a really beautiful and organized presentation, so that has already made a great impression. The most important thing you can share with the manufacturer or retailer is that you have already have some success with this or that design, or with your work in general.

Think about how you can express your track record in a way they can relate to. Some ideas might be:

- I've supported myself through my creative endeavors for more than 10 years.
- My artwork has sold extremely well at more than 50 juried art shows.
- While I have created several sold-out product lines for XYZ manufacturer, I am now introducing my product lines for licensing.

If you are having a hard time formulating a description of your sales results, or just don't have those statistics to tout, don't fret. Just move to another important focus,

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such as your skills and talents. Remember most manufacturers that are using licensed artists, or are considering this as a new option, don't have extensive creative, art, design and production departments or staffs. That's why art licensing is appealing to them, for both the creative talent and fresh ideas, as well as the production help.

To close your letter, include two things 1) a detailed list of what you sent them (you told them why in the first sentence/paragraph) and 2) specifically when you will follow-up. Of course, don't forget your contact information, and be sure to let them know that you have plenty more art where that came from! The goal of the letter is to get them to open your art and take your call, or better yet, call you! And most importantly, do exactly what you said you'd do. **CALL THEM.** Really no deals will get done if you don't follow up consistently and persistently. ***In the next J'net News, we'll talk about Steps 3 and 4, which includes what to say on those phone calls, when you actually get someone on the line.***

## Ask J'net

**Q. When signing licensing deals with 2 or 3 companies, should a press release be done for each company or can it be combined in one press release.**

**A.** I actually like to combine a couple of deals into one press release. This is more efficient, time wise, and you are more likely to get one piece of press in the media than two. By the time you send the second press release, if they have run or intend to run the first, they will probably bypass your second and give the space and opportunity to someone else. So spread out your press releases and make each one you send impactful.

I have included as many as four or five deals in one release to really show some excitement, but it gets a bit overwhelming and cluttered. Plus the licensees tend to not stand out as much. I'd stick to two or at the most three announcements in one press release. Two last thoughts: 1) Keep the writing very clear when combining multiple deals and/or in any press communication and 2) Make sure you get each licensee's approval before sending it to the press outlets. I once had a couple of competitive manufacturer/licensees who didn't really appreciate being mentioned in the same release, but because I obtained prior approval I learned about it soon enough to avert any problems.

**Q. What are some of the methods used to attract an agent?**

**A.** I like this question, because there is quite a bit of

difference between "finding" an agent and "attracting" one. An agent is first and foremost interested in whether or not they can make money from your creative efforts. They also want a fit in terms of your art style. It should mix well with their other clients, yet stand out so as not to compete with an existing artist.

To attract an agent, you need to present yourself in a professional manner and promote your sales successes. This might be past gallery work, or that you have done your homework and sold your first three deals on your own—something that shows potential. In addition, the more you know about the art licensing industry, really, the better client you will be.

Make sure they know what training you've done. And point out what benefits you offer over other artists; 1) Create and maintain your own website and online portfolio, 2) Computer savvy and able to create customized presentations, and 3) Able and willing to create mock-ups for potential licensees. These are the kinds of things which make their job easier and that's attractive!

**Q. What do you personally pick as "manufacturer ideals?"**

**A.** There is a great issue of License! Global Magazine each November that features the Top 100 Licensees. Now I don't know what their criterion is, but everyone should check it out. I believe these questions are some of the first and most important criteria you should consider when trying to research an ideal manufacturer:

- Do they produce the product(s) you want?
- Is their design style, and overall company image, a match for you (and you for them)?
- Do they have (or don't have) someone with art similar to you?
- And a big one....do they sell into your selected retail channels?

And as you move into negotiations, here are a few more things you want in your "ideal" manufacturer:

- Do they have the quality of product you desire?
- Can they get product out in a timely manner?
- Will they meet time commitments?
- Do they promote your line in the same manner as they market their other lines?
- Are they collaborative and good partners to work with?
- Do they give you a reasonable approval process?

**Contact Information**  
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# Web Resources

## Website

[www.jnetsmith.com](http://www.jnetsmith.com)

## Info

[info@jnetsmith.com](mailto:info@jnetsmith.com)

## Questions

[askjnet@jnetsmith.com](mailto:askjnet@jnetsmith.com)

## Register for classes

[www.jnetsmith.com/schedule.cfm](http://www.jnetsmith.com/schedule.cfm)

## Tweet us!

[www.twitter.com/JnetSmithInc](http://www.twitter.com/JnetSmithInc)

## Find us on Facebook!

<http://www.facebook.com/JeanetteSmith#/profile.php?id=697244034&ref=profile>

## See videos on youtube!

[www.youtube.com/thelicensingcoach](http://www.youtube.com/thelicensingcoach)

# Audio Downloads Available

## Hot Trends in Art Licensing

<http://www.jnetsmith.com/schedule.cfm?ald=7E61E414-C29B-57E0-8E30DFED83C04343>

## Surtex & Licensing Show Top 10 Follow-up Techniques

<http://www.jnetsmith.com/schedule.cfm?ald=F9CD230A-C29B-57E0-842416D8D9E203DC>

## Ask J'net Free Fridays- Q&A (June)

<http://www.jnetsmith.com/schedule.cfm?ald=0F14D202-C29B-57E0-82356C85B09747C2>