Process modeling of US retail craft buyer decision making

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Process modeling of U.S. retail craft buyer decision making

by

Pamela Joyce Brown

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department: Textiles and Clothing
Major: Textiles and Clothing

Approved:

Signature was redacted for privacy.

In Charge of Major Work
Signature was redacted for privacy.
For the Major Department
Signature was redacted for privacy.
For the Graduate College

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
1995

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DEDICATION

To my children, Sara, Allison, Emily, and Graham: May you always be willing and eager to learn.
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CHAPTER 1: JUSTIFICATION

In many developing countries crafts are produced as a primary occupation, while in other countries, craft production is an alternative or supplement to inadequate or diminishing sources of income (Herald, 1992; Pye, 1986). Handcraft products are made by hand or simple machinery; primary media include fiber, wood, and clay (Herald, 1992; Leonard, 1989). Crafts are produced because they are congruent with the work, lifestyle, and culture of the people. Expansion of handcrafts into the world market provides an opportunity for economic development among indigenous artisans worldwide (Herald, 1992), if crafts meet retail consumer demands. Development literature repeatedly cites the lack of access to adequate markets in order to sustain handcraft production within developing countries (Beauclerk, 1989; Dhamija, 1989; General Assembly, 1990). Once linked with international markets, craft producers face a complex and competitive marketing system. Although this study was launched from a focus on international craft marketing, it evolved to include both international and U.S. sources of craft in order to examine buyer preferences for each type. The decisions buyers make in choosing craft in a market affect the sustainability of income for all craft artisans.

Two avenues by which crafts enter the U.S. marketplace are wholesale craft and gift markets held multiple times yearly. Markets offer the largest concentration of product in one location. Shows are held in large facilities where vendors (representing companies of many sizes) display selected products for buyers to view and order for future delivery. When entering a market, buyers are confronted with row upon row of vendors' booths on either side of numerous aisles. Thousands of buyers, seeking craft products to order, converge in the same location during the limited time of market. Some market sponsors carefully jury the selection of vendors who exhibit at market, while others base participation on rentable space. Most craft markets feature sections by categories of usage, such as jewelry, table top, or home...
furnishing. Within these classifications, buyers find a variety of craft media. Larger, less craft-oriented markets, such as the New York International Gift Fair, feature sections such as "Decorative accessories", "General gifts", "Accent on Design", or "American and international crafts". Another craft category at the New York show, "Handmade in the USA", is located in a separate building from the main exhibit hall. Craft vendors may be situated in any of these sections. Irregardless of the medium or the classification of market sections, except areas designated as exclusively U.S. products, international and U.S. craft booths may be located side by side.

Buyers are faced with a multitude of product choices when entering a market. The craft products offered for sale vary according to the medium used. Media may be wood, clay, fiber, glass, metal, or stone. As an example, within the medium of fiber, craft available at a wholesale market may include wall hangings, rugs, placemats, baskets, tablecloths, brooms, dolls, apparel, and apparel accessories, such as scarves, sweaters, or jewelry. Some pieces are one of a kind, while others are available in quantity.

Buyers are more likely to encounter the actual artisan of U.S.-made craft than they are international producers at market. Several other types of intermediaries may be the actual vendors of international craft. They include importers of craft (e.g., travelers bringing craft into the states, importers, Alternative Trading Organizations (ATOs), family members of craft producers and cooperatives, or individuals who work with and buy craft in-country), and sales representatives for exporters. Seldom is the international artisan from a developing country able to sell craft directly to buyers.

Craft markets have increased dramatically across the United States, from 350 in the 1970's to 495 in 1993 (List, 1992, p. 60; Nash, 1993). The major wholesale craft shows are temporary, last from 2-5 days, and are held annually, semi-annually, or more frequently in a variety of locations (e.g., New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Phoenix, Chicago, Columbus, Boston, San Francisco, and Atlanta). Approximately ten profit-making organizations sponsor
and produce these markets with attendance varying from 2,000 to 46,000 per show (Loyle, 1993, p. 26-27).

Gift markets, which have also increased dramatically in the last 20 years, represent a second type of wholesale market for handcraft products. Over 90 percent of gift shop owners attend one of several gift shows each year (McAllister, 1992, p. 124). Both permanent and temporary markets characterize the gift industry. There is increasing competition to attract retail craft buyers to gift show markets. For both gift and craft market attendees, markets offer an opportunity to view new products, establish business relationships, and order products.

Unlike U.S. handcraft producers who have access not only to wholesale markets, but regional and local retail markets as well (Aerni, 1987), artisans from developing countries are limited to wholesale markets for the sale of their crafts. Many international artisans seek to network with individuals in their country who can sell their work in U.S. markets (e.g., importers or other types of representatives).

The initial customers of crafts in the wholesale market are retail buyers. The retail buyer has been conceptualized as a gatekeeper (Krapfel, 1985), an assembler of assortments, a reseller (Alpert, Kamins, & Graham, 1992; Nillson & Høst, 1987), a checkpoint, and a prescreener (Taylor, 1985). In these roles the buyer makes decisions on which crafts will be ordered, purchased, and incorporated into the retail store's merchandise mix from which consumers may ultimately purchase. Within the wholesale market buyers serve as brokers between the craft vendor and the ultimate consumer.

The buyer's role is crucial in determining what and how much merchandise will be ordered. Potential business success for the retailer and the artisan lies with the decisions of the retail buyer. Understanding how retail buyer decisions are made, factors that influence buyer decisions in market situations, and specific product preferences of buyers are critical to the success of markets, retail businesses, and craft producers.

The international craft marketing system involves producers of craft, ATOs, exporters
and importers, market promoters, retailers, and consumers. Research on the craft production and marketing system has concentrated on producers (Stephen, 1991; Tice, 1995); product development (Popelka & Littrell, 1991); Alternative Trading Organizations (Dickson, 1994; Dickson & Littrell, 1993; Littrell, 1994; Littrell & Casselman, 1991), tourism retailers based in developing countries (Moreno, 1995; Popelka, Fanslow, & Littrell, 1992), and retail consumers (List, 1992; Littrell, 1987, 1990; Littrell, Anderson, & Brown, 1992; Littrell, Reilly, & Stout, 1991; Slaybough, Littrell, & Farrell-Beck, 1990). The addition of research on U.S.-based retail buyers will provide insight to an important link between producers and retail customers in the craft marketing system. Understanding retail buyers who order and purchase products at wholesale markets, their expectations of domestic and international handcrafts and the individuals who make them, and their decision process to buy or not to buy is critical for developing marketing channels and effective targeting of handcrafts for specific markets. Crafts are most promotable for economic development when secure markets are provided for handcraft products and when craft production offers a viable opportunity for people’s economic growth and social development (Beauclerk, 1988).

**Purpose**

The nature of buyer decisions can potentially affect product style, quality, quantity, and inevitably the sustainability of handcraft production as a source of income. The purpose of this study was to profile U.S. retail craft buyers in order to describe how they make product selection decisions when attending wholesale markets. Inherent in the purpose was to examine buyer preferences for international or U.S. craft, vendors, and markets. The study was also designed to provide a contextual description of the retail craft industry, including its products, businesses, customers, and buyers.

A buyer decision making model was initially proposed as a point of departure for the research. Two models of buyer behavior, one an international industrial buyer model (Samli, Grewal, & Mather, 1988) and the other an organizational buyer behavior model (Sheth, 1979)
were integrated to formulate a proposed buyer decision making model that might reflect how craft buyers make decisions. The model incorporated known and expected constructs that retail craft buyers encounter in the decision making process. It was assumed that the proposed model would be altered following data analysis to reflect how buyers actually make buying decisions and to incorporate unknown constructs influencing the decision making process.

The research will benefit several segments of the craft marketing system. Profiling buyers who attend U.S. craft and gift markets will assist craft producers in developing skills in order to participate in the U.S. wholesale market system. The study will provide them with a working knowledge of the retail market process, the people involved in the process, and how to more effectively and efficiently present products for sale to brokers for the U.S. consuming public. The profiles will assist market sponsors to be more cognizant of buyer characteristics, to more effectively focus the purpose and content of craft markets, and to better promote the right market to the right buyer. Finally, international development organizations that work closely with artisans will benefit from a more accurate description of retail buyers to be used in development programming. For all groups, understanding retail craft buyers will create a basis for more effective target marketing of both domestic crafts and international handcraft products.

Due to the absence of research on craft buyers, apparel buyer research was the focus of the literature review. To date research on apparel buyers has been primarily quantitative in nature and has focused on the job content of retail apparel buyers in department, chain and specialty stores; specific apparel and vendor selection criteria; and attitudes toward imports. The research conducted in this study has both quantitative and qualitative components. The quantitative component provides descriptive contextual data about the retail craft industry not previously available. The qualitative approach expands the underlying meanings of decisions and decision criteria, and contributes to explaining how the decision making process is negotiated, altered, or compromised. The research builds on and contributes to existing conceptual models that have been developed based primarily on industrial buying, non-food
buying, and more recently apparel buying. A grounded theory approach was used to generate understanding of how the buyer’s mind works in a variety of market settings.

**Objectives**

The following are objectives which guided development of the research.

1. Develop profiles of the decision making process employed by retail craft buyers in market situations as impacted by components of the proposed model, including:
   a. Individual factors
   b. Organizational factors
   c. Supplier accessibility options
   d. Choice criteria
   e. Past decisions

2. Analyze reasons that buyers prefer to purchase U.S. crafts and/or international crafts.

3. Compare buyers’ decision making for textile crafts as compared to other craft media.

4. Compare findings to the proposed model. Recommend changes to the proposed model as suggested by research findings.

**Assumptions**

The following assumptions were made in the research on craft buyers:

- Market promoters provided names of craft buyers from which to select a random sample for the buyer survey.
- Buyers were accessible and capable of accurately describing their businesses and the buying process.

**Operational Definitions**

The following definitions were used to launch the research:

- Craft - Products made by hand or simple machinery that incorporate cultural characteristics, technologies and techniques in order to be marketable. Media include fiber (both wearable and decorative), clay, glass, wood, metal, or stone. The terms craft and crafts are used
interchangeably throughout the text.

- **Domestic or US made crafts** - Craft products produced within the United States.
- **International crafts** - Craft products produced by artisans in countries other than the United States and introduced to the U.S. market through an importer, ATO, international development organization, or by the artisan.
- **Retail buyer** - A representative of a retail business responsible for merchandising craft products, which includes selection, ordering, and replacement of merchandise.
- **Retail craft market** - A locally held event at which vendors display and sell their craft products directly to consumers at retail prices.
- **Vendor** - An individual selling craft at a wholesale market.
- **Wholesale craft market** - A national or regional event located within the United States and held in a single or multi-building location where a retail buyer comes to order crafts at wholesale prices for a retail craft store. The terms “fair” and “show” are used interchangeably with market.

**Organization of the Dissertation**

The contents of this dissertation are divided into six chapters. Chapter one outlines the purpose of the research. Chapter two reviews pertinent literature related to the theories of buyer behavior, buying function, buyer relationships within the wholesale market, apparel buying research, and a proposed model for retail buying of crafts. The methods used in conducting the research are reported in chapter three. Chapter four presents information on the status of small business in the United States and explains the resulting demographics of the retail craft buyer survey. This chapter serves as a contextual foundation for describing the current retail craft industry. Analysis of the qualitative data from interviews with retail craft buyers is given in chapter five. A revised model of retail craft buyer behavior is proposed. Chapter six summarizes the study results and suggests recommendations for additional research.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The retail craft buyer comes to the wholesale market with identified needs, motivations, and expectations based on individual characteristics and organizational requirements. Retail buyers may view international crafts as products that can stimulate competition in an increasingly competitive craft market. Alertness to new products places buyers in the path of creating more favorable merchandising opportunities and competitive environments (Barreto, 1989). Influencing the decision making process are choice criteria and accessibility of buyers to suppliers of product. How retail craft buyers negotiate these options and subsequently make product decisions is not fully understood.

Research Perspectives

Research on the retail buyer has focused primarily on industrial buying and buying in the grocery industry. Apparel retail buying and other non-food categories of buying have only recently been addressed. No research on craft retail buyer decision making exists at this time. Because apparel retail buyers represented product categories that were more similar in characteristics to craft products than industrial products or food products, apparel buyer research was included in this review of literature. To date research on retail apparel buyers has been conducted from a marketing and business perspective and has focused on retail buyers in specific regions of the U.S., Canada, and Europe. Only one study used qualitative methods to examine buyer behavior terminology (Banting, Blenkhorn & Kosenko, 1985; Banting & Blenkhorn, 1986; 1988).

The purpose of this study was to examine the decision making strategies of craft retail buyers. The following topics are included in the review of literature to establish a theoretical basis from which to explore craft buyer decision making. The topics included are theories of buyer behavior, the buying function, and apparel buyer research. The absence of any literature related to the issue of handcraft buying is indicative of the importance of the current research.
Theories of Buyer Behavior

Buyer literature includes theories of international industrial buying and organizational buying behavior. Industrial buying models concentrate on relationships that influence the process of decision making. Samli et al., (1988) (Figure 2.1) propose an industrial buying model that is characterized by an input-output format that allows the buyer to weigh various kinds of information as buying decisions are made. Also included are social and environmental factors, cultural beliefs, norms, and values that are derived from the buyer’s experiences, culture, and individual needs. Four uncertainty factors - time pressure, perceived risk, type of purchase, and value of the purchase - are presented as part of the model and are believed to affect the buying decision regardless of where decisions are made. How decisions are processed in the minds of buyers is not clearly understood.

In his theory of buyer behavior, Sheth (1981) (Figure 2.2) believes the buyer behaves both as a consumer of products and as an agent or representative of an organization with specific responsibilities. Sheth includes five constructs in an organizational model of retail buyer behavior. They are merchandise requirements, choice calculus, supplier accessibility, ideal supplier/product choice, and actual supplier/product choice.

Sheth (1981) suggests that the content of buying for an organization is similar to that of a consumer; they are both purchasing product. The distinction between industrial and retail buying lies in the purchasing of components to create finished products in industrial buying as compared to the purchasing of completed products in retail buying (Kline, 1994). Further, in industrial buying the locus of control is the buying unit, or organization, whereas in retail buying the locus of control may be an individual buyer or a buying committee.

A proposed model for retail buyer behavior

The model for retail buyer behavior proposed in this research (Figure 2.3) combines the Samli et al., (1988) model (Figure 2.1) with its international component and the Sheth (1981)
Figure 2.1. Integrative Model of International Industrial Buying Behavior (Samli, Grewal, & Mather, 1988)
model (Figure 2.2) of organizational retail buying with the role of the individual in making
decisions within a wholesale market context. The Samli et al. model identifies factors that
influence the individual, but limits the individual to both a buying unit and to an international
location for buying. Sheth's (1981) model contributes organizational and market
characteristics that impact the choice process of buyers, but fails to recognize the importance of
the individual in the decision making process.

Many of the factors from both of these buying models apply to the individual buyer in a
U.S. wholesale market who is buying domestic and international handcrafts. Each of the
major sections of the model (individual retail buyer, individual factors, the organization,
customer needs and wants, supplier accessibility, choice calculus, the decision making
process, and the buying decision) are discussed as they impact the two central components of
the model, the individual buyer and the decision making process at the market. Constructs
borrowed from the Sheth model (1981) and the Samli et al. (1988) model are outlined in
different graphics according to the key. Components with no graphics are original to the
proposed model. Grouping of constructs does not indicate a hierarchical influence on the
individual buyer. The research was designed to learn more about the nature and magnitude of
influences on the buyer while making buying decisions in a market situation.

**The individual retail buyer**  The retail craft buyer arrives at market with
buying needs, the motivation to buy, and expectations of the market and its products (Keith
Recker, buyer for Care Catalog, personal communication, Feb. 22, 1993). Identification of
need is based on what the buyer perceives is the business’s product needs. Motivation is
influenced by previous buying experiences and results from earlier buying decisions.
Motivation may be altered by expectations, perceptions, and uncertainty. Expectations are
based on preconceived notions about conditions that the buyer expects to find at the market.
Expectations might include vendors or sales representatives who were seen at an earlier market,
location of vendors within the market, or products displayed in a booth. Connecting lines in
Figure 2.2 A Theory of Merchandising Buying Behavior (Sheth, 1981)
Figure 2.3: Proposed Model of Retail Craft Buyer Decision Making

- **Performance Outcomes**
  - Level of Satisfaction
  - Customer needs and wants

- **The Organization**
  - Organizational Characteristics
  - Merchandize Requirements

- **Individual Retail Buyer**
  - Identification of Need
  - Motivation
  - Expectations

- **Decision Making Process at Craft Shows**

- **Supplier Accessibility**
  - Socio-cultural Images
  - Relative Marketing Effort
  - Corporate Image
  - Competitive Structure

- **Individual Factors**
  - Market Perceptions
  - Socio-cultural Beliefs about crafts
  - Individual Character
  - Uncertainty factors

- **Choice Calculus**
  - Choice Rules
  - Information Search
  - Negotiation
the proposed model illustrate that buyers' needs, motivations, and expectations are interrelated with individual factors and the organizations they represent; as well as with the outcomes of previous buying decisions.

**Individual factors** Central to the proposed model is the individual retail buyer whose goal is to make a decision concerning a product or products that will be sold in a craft store. Factors influencing the retail buyer are individual characteristics, socio/cultural beliefs about crafts, uncertainty factors, and the person's perceptions of the market.

Samli et al. (1988) define individual characteristics as the person's background, self-perception, leadership skills, educational level, interpersonal skills, languages, and past experiences. Values and international experiences are included as part of the individual factors construct in the proposed model. The individual factor construct is composed of characteristics that influence who the buyer is, how responsibilities of the buying job and subsequent interactions are handled, and perceptions the buyer has of the world as it is encountered. Included in the buyer's perceptions are attitudes toward internationally produced handcrafts, producers, and vendors promoting these products.

Socio/cultural beliefs about crafts evolve from experiences the buyer may have had as an individual in society (i.e., cultural heritage of ancestry as an Afro-American), or through traveling both in the U.S. and internationally. Other experiences include those with producers and markets, as well as with products from various locations. Attitudes the buyer has toward preferences for U.S. versus internationally made products are included in this construct. The buyer's definition of craft evolves in this category and influences whether a buyer views a craft as representative of a culture, as well as how a craft contributes to defining the business (Keith Recker, buyer for Care Catalog, February 22, 1993).

Uncertainty factors are described by Samli et al. (1988) as perceived risk, type of purchase, value of purchase, and time pressure. Perceived risk may vary with vendor selection, type of product, conditions of the sales agreement, and attendance at a particular
wholesale market. Risk could also be associated with regional location of the store and customer reception to the product types offered for sale. For example, would the same product types sell as well in Des Moines, Iowa, as they would in San Diego, California? The type of purchase, first time buy, straight rebuy, or modified rebuy (Samli et al.), influences the degree of risk taking and internal conflict that results in reaching a buying decision.

As purchase value increases, the degree of concern and amount of time spent in decision making increases (Samli et al., 1988). The individual buyer's perspective of time pressure may be two-fold. First, the intensity of the market situation requires quick judgments within a limited time in order to obtain the right goods at the right price. A second type of time pressure requires that goods ordered by the buyer be provided to customers in a timely manner, in other words "get quick delivery" (Samli et al., p. 25). These factors are interpreted and experienced by the individual in a personal manner and may be interpreted differently by an individual who is both owner and buyer compared to the person who is employed as a buyer for a retailer.

Market perceptions are based on the situations buyers encounter at the actual market. Perceptions include where vendors’ booths are located, the varieties of products, prices, format of the market, and available time to shop the market.

The organization Organizational characteristics and merchandise requirements comprise the organization factors of the revised model. When buyers are employed by a business, they are subject to its organizational factors, such as the business's characteristics, needs, and constraints. Little is known about how buyers contribute to a business’s characteristics. When buyers are owners of businesses, they define the organizational culture, characteristics, needs, and constraints. Organizational characteristics encompass the goals and objectives of the organization, level of centralization, performance trends, type of operation, merchandising strategy, product positioning, management mentality, organizational culture, and retailer size, type, and location. Competition is also considered an organizational
characteristic (Samli et al., 1988; Sheth, 1981).

The merchandise requirements as indicated in the proposed model are influenced by the organization, its characteristics, and the business's customers. Sheth's (1981) model defines functional merchandise requirements as the "buying needs which are a direct reflection and representation of what the retailer's customers want in merchandise" at the business (p. 181). The merchandise requirements are identified by the individual retail buyer as needs of the organization in order to fulfill the organizational image. Merchandise needs include the products necessary to create an image of the business and fulfill the product variety and quantity to maintain the business and create profit. Merchandise requirements may be defined differently depending on the size of the retail organization, the type of merchandise that characterizes the business, type of ownership, and relationship with customers. How the decision making process is negotiated at market in order to achieve the goal of a buying decision that will fulfill all the organization factors is not well understood. Sheth (1981) suggests that retail buyers should be segmented by the type of decisions they make rather than by "demographics or consumption behavior" (p. 186).

**Customer needs and wants**

In the proposed model customer needs and wants is a separate category that influences both the organization and the individual retail buyer. Customer needs and wants may be perceived as influencing the more general merchandise requirements of the organization. Because of the more personal relationship the owner/buyer may have with individual customers versus the impersonal nature of buying for a large store or major department, customers may influence the individual buyer. One craft buyer reported that she goes to market with specific customers in mind and may buy according to the interests of that person (Mary James, craft store owner and buyer, personal communication, November, 1992).

**Supplier accessibility**

Also influencing the decision making process is supplier accessibility. Sheth (1981) defines this concept as the "evoked set of choice options
open to a retailer to satisfy his merchandise requirements" (p. 184). Factors included in this construct are competitive structure, relative marketing effort, corporate image, and socio/cultural images of vendors. These four variables represent the choice options of the craft buyer. Supplier accessibility when viewed from the buyer's perspective includes only characteristics that affect the ability of the buyers to find products and make decisions about products at market. The competitive structure of the market influences the kind and number of suppliers available to the retail buyer. The choice of a specific craft wholesale market influences the buyer's available selection of vendors and products. The greater the number of suppliers and the larger the suppliers are, the greater the number of choices in the decision process.

Relative marketing effort includes the aggressiveness of the vendors in marketing their products. Efforts include extension of credit to established versus new businesses, inclusion of international products versus strictly U.S. made crafts, or even the aggressiveness of the sales representative toward buyers on the first day of market compared to the final day.

Sheth (1981) defines corporate image as the perception that buyers have of a company. Associated with this image is the company's country of origin. However, in the proposed model corporate image is redefined as the business presentation of the company. The presentation style of the vendor at market influences the buyer's opinion of the company and its products. For example at the New York International Gift Fair, vendors are positioned one after the other along lengthy aisles. Some are organized to represent small stores; others have products displayed with no extensive attention given to a business appearance. Sales representatives may be dressed very casually or very businesslike; they may be assertive in approaching the buyer as they enter the booth; or they may wait for the buyer to approach them. All of these factors influence the corporate image of business.

A fourth factor in supplier accessibility is the societal/cultural image that is related to the handicrafts being promoted by the vendor. As one peruses the aisles of the New York
International Gift Fair, it is apparent that there is a continuum of images promoted through international handcraft vendors. Images are defined not only by visual presentation and products, but by company name, promotional materials, and staff. At one end of the continuum is the vendor whose multitude of products extends from floor to top of the exhibit with no unifying theme of country of origin, product type, or media. This vendor’s motive, as he explains, is for-profit only (David Spetka, international craft importer, personal communication, Feb. 24, 1993). Next in line is the vendor whose purpose in promotion is more altruistic, though the exhibit may not promote that image. The vendor may share a concern for the producer being represented (Evonne Cherish, international craft importer, personal communication, Feb. 1993). The other end of the continuum includes exhibitors such as Aid to Artisans, that promote a unified theme of representing artisans around the world. The exhibit, promotional material, and sales staff openly promote the benefits to the artisan and of the product itself. Thus socio/cultural image extends beyond the visual impression of the exhibit to include the handcraft products themselves, as well as interaction with staff.

Buyers’ perceptions of a vendor’s societal/cultural image may affect the willingness of buyers to consider a vendor as a potential source of products, conditions of the decision negotiation process, and the choice of products. If a vendor offers for sale products that represent a less than desirable image, sales are unlikely to be influenced by sales promotions because the image has negatively influenced the potential buyer’s opinion (Darcy McQuaide, craft store owner and buyer, personal communication, February 24, 1993). Each of the options within supplier accessibility can influence buyers’ perceptions of choices, reactions to the market, and resulting decisions.

**Choice calculus** Sheth’s (1981) choice calculus includes 1) trade-off choice of such product variables as price or packaging; 2) dominant choice which involves choices based on one product criterion; and 3) sequential choice in which the retailer narrows the choice based on available options. The three variables are included in the proposed model, with the
understanding that other variables may be identified as characteristics of retail craft buyers.

Information search is part of the choice calculus. There may be many different varieties of information available to the retail craft buyer, but it is not known which is most influential in the decision to buy international crafts. Negotiation is also included under the heading of choice calculus. This variable may include negotiation with the vendor, with other individuals in the business, or within the mind of the buyer. The ability and extent of negotiation may be influenced by the position of the buyer in the company, the organization's and the individual's characteristics, and the buyer's perception of the market. Research has indicated that, in situations of group buying, one individual can influence the negotiation process and consequently the decision to buy or not to buy (Krapfel, 1985).

**The decision making process at craft shows**

The retail craft buyer comes to market with a preconceived plan based on the merchandise needs of the business. The buyer is aware of the increasingly competitive environment for craft products. International craft may be considered a viable alternative to increase a craft business's competitive edge in the retail market. It is not understood how buyers assess the conditions of a wholesale market. The buyer is influenced by choice options and the accessibility to the vendors present at the market. Using these constructs, buyers somehow negotiate a decision.

**Performance outcomes**

The final section, the buying decision, includes the level of satisfaction with the buying decision and the outcome of the decision. The Samli et al. (1988) international model positions the outcome of the buying decision before the level of satisfaction. Timely delivery of the product, satisfaction with quality, and product performance in generating revenue all influence the level of satisfaction, and therefore generate new motivation to repeat the purchase or to expand into other new product markets. The level of satisfaction with the buying decision may be independent of the outcome of the buying decision. Outcome may be defined by customer reaction to a product or group of products and consequently the actual sales generated. Customers may respond positively to a product, but
fail to purchase. Therefore, the outcome of the buying decision may be less than satisfactory, resulting in a negative influence on the next buying decision at a future market. The results of the buying decision may very well influence the organization's and the individual buyer's definition of product needs.

**Consumer process and choice models**

Models of decision making have been used to explore how consumers take information and process it in reaching a decision. These models have been confined primarily to consumer decision making (Bettman, 1979; Robertson & Kassarjian, 1991; Payne, Bettman, & Johnson, 1993; and Schindler, 1988). The models appear to be of two types, those that focus more on the process of decision making and those that focus more on choice. Process modeling of retail buyer decision making has evidently not been explored.

Bettman's (1979) research in consumer decision processing is cited in this review of literature for its detail in choice heuristics and methods used to trace decision making. Specifically, process models trace, from any one of a variety of perspectives, an individual's experience in making choices that result in an action or conclusion (Bettman, 1979). In this study, retail craft buyers recalled the processes they utilized to reach decisions and the criteria inherent in those decisions.

Bettman (1979) suggests that consumers choose among alternatives and that the process of searching and comparing may be simultaneous rather than sequential. However, the process of the final choice is unique to the individual. Bettman (1979) proposes that during the decision making process two choice heuristics are implemented. One heuristic involves "stored rules" in the mind of the consumer that are applied as a whole directive to a choice situation (p. 174). The second method, the “constructive method”, uses fragments of stored rules and recombines them into a choice rule applicable to a specific situation (p. 174). As the consumer gains experience in a buying environment, the use of stored-rule heuristics increases, while the constructive method is followed by consumers having less experience and knowledge of a
product or choices. Additional factors influencing the choice process are location of the decision making activity and the consumer's use of memory. Overlooked in consumer choice research is detail on how the consumer uses choice heuristics in processing the decision.

In contrast to process models, consumer choice models examine the content of decision making and how the consumer weighs different criteria in order to reach a decision. Kahn and Lehman (1991) developed a consumer choice model that examined the value of an assortment. The model was designed for retail settings where uncertainty existed concerning the consumer's future preferences and high risk due to product category. Variables included in the model were item preference, item uniqueness, and numbers of items in the assortment. Consumers were found to evaluate a product assortment using “flexibility for future choice and the effort to weed out the unacceptable alternatives” (p. 297) as variables in the decision making process. Consumers prefer product assortments that are unique and contain a minimum of unacceptable items. Uncertainty and risks exist in knowing whether consumers will prefer certain types of craft categories, e.g., U.S. made or internationally made craft.

Methods of collecting data on decision making have been subject to criticism. Data quality and reliability may be limited by participants selectively recalling actual circumstances (Bettman, 1979). Data quality and reliability may be related to whether the subject reports the most internal of thoughts or selectively reports what actually occurs. Protocol data, which documents every thought and action of decision making, analyzes distinctive individual behavior rather than the collective effect of decisions (Bettman, 1979). The study of decision processing is complex with consideration needing to be given to the individual nature of decisions, the setting, the product, and how the process will be analyzed.

The Buying Function

The decision making process of retail buyers is a relatively unstudied area (McLaughlin & Rao, 1991). The retail buyer is the person in the retail business responsible for purchasing merchandise at wholesale prices for the retail business. The buyer role is shaped by the
organizational structure of the retail firm, management behavior, and the overall culture of the organization. The firm may be categorized as a single- or multi-unit firm comprised of departmentalized units within the firm. Centralized management and control may characterize the firm, such as in a chain store. The decision-making autonomy of the buyer may be preempted by the control of a higher level management (Rachman, 1979), though in small firms the buyer may also be the owner (Catalog Age, 1995). The buyer's initial responsibilities involve generating revenue for the retail business and controlling costs. These responsibilities include planning assortments for the merchandise mix (Rachman, 1979).

Several terms may be used interchangeably with the term buyer: “merchandiser, product development manager, designer, buyer, product manager, and merchandise manager” (Kunz, 1995, p. 256). In spite of the job title or the firm's size, the buyer's responsibilities are to direct and oversee the development of a retail firm's product lines, including content of the line, styling, breadth and depth of assortments, pricing, visual display, and timing. The merchandising functions of buyers constitute decision making in multiple areas. More specifically, buyers in small firms may be responsible for both buying (including merchandise planning and sourcing) and selling the merchandise. The buyer may visit several markets annually, limit visits to regional markets, or order through sales representatives or a resident buying office which provides market information to many retail buyers (Borden & Hayword, 1979; Catalog Age, 1995). The buying function is further characterized by two types of buying: replenishment and anticipatory. Replenishment is geared to more staple products in the merchandise mix. Anticipatory buying is aligned with new fashion-oriented products that attract consumers (Roberts, 1979). The success or failure of the business is dependent on decisions made by the buyer, though the organization of the firm provides support for the buyer decision making process (Rachman, 1979).

Buying responsibilities have been the subject of research. Buyer jobs require that a person be adept at decision making, negotiation, mathematics, leadership, and interpersonal
communication skills (Kean, 1985-86; Kotsiopulos, Oliver, & Shim, 1993). Job turnover has been reported to be high among buyers in large retail organizations, particularly among discount buyers (Kean, 1992). Buyers with longer term employment have increased discretionary responsibility, or buyer autonomy (Keaveney, 1992).

Though focused on the grocery industry, McLaughlin and Rao (1991) suggest that the buying function is characterized by a “structure-conduct-performance (S-C-P) paradigm” (p. 36). “Conduct” in the model refers to the manufacturer and distributor strategies and decisions which often include buyer response to a product before it actually reaches the trade market. The conduct phase of the paradigm has been relegated less attention in research due to the many variables inherent in behavioral research.

The buyer role at the wholesale level is equivalent to that of a consumer. The wholesale market functions as a test site for potential sale of, in the case of this study, crafts. Rather than the ultimate consumer deciding if they like a product or not, the retail buyer acts as a proxy for the consumer in the setting of the wholesale market. Many products fail to reach the consumer market because of the decisions of retail buyers. One study gave consumers the opportunity to select merchandise that was available for buyers ordering at market (Taylor, 1985). When the selection of the two groups was compared, consumers tended to choose different items from specialty retail buyers. The decisions of retail buyers may prevent potentially profit-making products from entering the retail store.

**Buyer relationships within the wholesale market**

A wholesale market functions to bring together a variety of vendors of all sizes and types from which retail buyers can select product to resell in their businesses. Buyers seek opportunities at market to make a profit through their decisions to buy from selected vendors (Barretto, 1989).

Little has been written about vendor accessibility at wholesale markets. Cave and Rosen (1982) reported that the availability of vendors at a wholesale market may create a sense
of uncertainty in the overall market climate. Small businesses needing accessibility to vendors, often attend a market because they are unable to compete with large retailers who order in volume and diversity of product. Larger retailers frequently have established relationships with vendors; small retailers may not. Vendors that depend on large retail businesses attempt to minimize business uncertainty by participating in markets that attract a diverse array of retailers with diverse needs rather than limiting business to exclusively large retailers. A canceled order with a large retailer can create havoc for the vendor who is depending on bigger orders from larger organizations to accomplish sales goals.

Buyers from small firms participate more frequently in decision making at the actual market than buyers representing higher levels of positions in larger companies. The position of a buyer can be one of power, establishing, sustaining, and terminating relationships with suppliers (vendors) while making decisions within the confines of a retail organization. Characteristics that contribute to a buyer’s sense of autonomous strategic behavior appear to be related to their tendency to share the rewards of the buying effort, to influence vendors, and to plan (Robicheaux, 1988). Buying in multi-level retail organizations is complicated. Buyers at higher levels of organizational responsibility indicate that networking transactions are an important function of the market (Bello, 1992).

**Relationship between buyer and vendor**

Buying committees in large retail organizations establish roles for certain individuals who act as key buyers. These individuals establish working relationships with vendors. Recommendations to the buying committee are presented by buyers based on that individual’s interaction with vendors at market. One industrial buyer model proposed that the exchange of information between manufacturer and distributor or manufacturer and retailer depend ultimately on a buyer’s recommendations in decision making (McLaughlin & Rao, 1991).

Krapfel (1985) investigated the boundary role person’s (BRP) function in large industrial organizations and the influence of that person on the buying committee’s decisions.
A boundary role person functions as a key contact for vendor representatives and serves as the main source of information on products from vendors. The advocacy role is an influential one. That person possesses key information that is usually obtained externally to the organization. In his model Krapfel places the BRP in the decision influencing position of vendor choice. The BRP, given the access to key information concerning a product, its performance, and salability, emerges as a self-confident leader in the decision making process, and actually functions as an advocate for a particular product or line of products.

ZuHone and Morganosky (1995) examined power within the buyer-vendor exchange relationship of apparel retailers and apparel manufacturers in order to determine the influence channel members perceived themselves to hold in decisions. Apparel retailers perceived themselves to hold more power than apparel manufacturers. When decision making was related to future pricing of products, retailers perceived less power. Retailers' perceptions of power increased as the level of power in determining the kind and timing of product shipments increased. Manufacturers perceived increased power in where goods were placed in the store, in markdown timing, and in the pricing of products. Rather than the exchange relationship between retailers and vendors being a balanced partnership, imbalance is created when power is perceived to be greater by one party involved in the decision making process.

Small retailers may have limited resources. A study of small apparel retail firms found that buyers search for vendors that offer a variety of marketing resources (Fiorito, 1990). These resources included marketing services such as promotional assistance, technical assistance with computer inventory, more extensive product variety, delivery reliability, and products that offered a better gross profit margin. The last factor assisted small businesses in maintaining a competitive edge over nearby stores.

The women’s sportswear industry was the focus of a study which examined the relationship in wholesale markets between manufacturing organization size and retail firm size (Caves & Rosen, 1982). Exclusivity of brand name within a territorial area seemed to be
sufficient reason for many retailers to align themselves with particular vendors. The relationships were based not only on product specific characteristics, but cooperative exchange of services as well. The researchers reported that firm size was not as critical a variable as was accessibility to buyers at lesser costs.

The responsibilities of buyers are diverse and multiple. Research indicates that buyers perform an important advocacy function both for the retailer and the vendor. Small retailers appear to have a disadvantage in defining buying resources that can improve their competitiveness. They develop a sense of alertness to opportunities that will benefit their competitive position and enhance their product accessibility. This sense is not easily explained, and there is an “unknown, mystical aura about it” (Barreto, 1989, p. 21). This alertness places the buyer in the path of new opportunities. The key to understanding buyers is determining how some buyers perceive that opportunities exist and others do not.

**Apparel Buyer Research**


**Buyer job content**

The job content of buyers appears to differ across demographic variables. Buyer job content varies depending on the size of the retail organization. Buyers for large apparel retail stores seem to use more quantitative analysis, apply more assertive behavior, and experience
more time pressures in buying than do buyers for small stores. Small store apparel retail
buyers report having extensive personal contact with business organization members (Fiorito &
Fairhurst, 1993). Across the product categories of women’s, men’s, children’s, and
accessories the job content is similar for small retail store buyers. However, small store buyers
require diversity of knowledge in merchandising product lines (Fiorito & Fairhurst, 1989).

Job content in large and small retail firms include merchandising management and
decision making (Fiorito & Fairhurst, 1989; 1993). Negotiation skills, decision making,
mathematics, leadership, and interpersonal skills are considered by buyers to be part of the job
(Kean, 1985-86; Kotsiopulos, Oliver, & Shim, 1993). Appliance and apparel buyers were
found to differ in their objectives of buying, concepts of fashionability, and routineness of
purchasing decisions (Francis & Brown, 1985-86).

Job turnover is frequent among retail buyers in large organizations, particularly in
discount stores. Longer tenure of employment in large firms increases the discretionary
responsibility of the buyer (Kean, 1985-86; Keaveney, 1992). The exercise of discretionary
responsibility is similar to autonomy in the job of a buyer. Autonomous buyer behavior does
not appear to be related to retail department size, and type, nor to other buyer demographics,
such as age, experience, or volume of sales (Robicheaux, 1988).

Men’s apparel buyers and appliance buyers appear to place more routine reorders than
women’s apparel buyers, possibly due to the concern of both apparel and appliance buyers
with vendor reliability and less concern with fashionability (Francis & Brown, 1985-86; Stone
& Cassill, 1989). Buyers use a variety of resources to make decisions. Similarities between
industrial buyers and apparel buyers exist in their approach to using resources in buying. Past
experience with vendors, the vendor’s reputation (e.g., financial reliability), and the vendor’s
innovative approach (e.g., personal selling) were important to both appliance and apparel
buyers (Francis & Brown, 1985-86).
Decision making criteria across merchandise categories

Retail buyer decision criteria vary across merchandise categories. Profit, price, delivery time, and product attributes are considered important in decision making. Other variables include country of origin, vendor history, and store type and size. Buyers in different merchandise categories vary from one another in their salability judgments (Arbuthnot, Sisler, & Slama, 1993; Atkins & Jenkins, 1988; Ettenson & Wagner, 1986; Francis & Brown, 1985-86; Rogers & Lutz, 1990; Sternquist & Phillips, 1989; Stone & Cassill, 1989; Wagner, Ettenson, & Parrish, 1989). Department store buyers, specialty store retail buyers, and consumers differ in their selection of apparel when presented with the same array of items at the wholesale market level (Taylor, 1985). Salability judgments also relate to the selection of vendors from which to order product. Apparel retail buyers are more influenced by selling history, markup, and vendor delivery record in selecting potential vendors than by fashionability, product quality, reputation, or service record of the vendor (Wagner, Ettenson, & Parrish, 1989).

Buying decisions are also influenced by the retail buyer's perception of quality. Perception of quality is related to the buyer's educational background and years in the buying position. The most salient quality indicators influencing decisions are style, garment construction, brand name, and price (Rogers & Lutz, 1990). Imported apparel is considered by retail buyers to be potentially better quality for price, resulting in higher markup and exclusivity of merchandise (Sternquist & Phillips, 1991; Sternquist, Tolbert, & Davis, 1989).

Buyers use a variety of information sources in making buying decisions. According to Kline and Wagner, "the effect of individual experience on organizational buying decisions has been virtually ignored" (Kline, 1994, p. 78). Researchers developed a series of case studies to examine information sources and then had buyers respond to imaginary decision making scenarios. Analysis indicated that customer requests were the most important source of external information, while the buyer's own knowledge (product specific and tenure) was the
most important overall information source. Consumer magazines rather than industry publications were another important source of buyer information. Of little importance in the information hierarchy were sales histories of products (perhaps due to the newness of products) and vendor product information. Generally, the more experienced the buyer, the less dependence on other sources of information, and more dependence on self-knowledge. Anthony and Jolly (1991) found that apparel buyers were more dependent on personal sources or other individuals for buying decision information. Secondary sources, such as printed information, competitors, and consultant organizations, were less important. The researchers in these studies, using Sheth's (1981) model of buyer behavior, suggest strengthening the individual component in the model based on results of research.

Understanding the meanings buyers attribute to decision criteria is critical to understanding how they make decisions. Retail buyers differ in the meanings attributed to twelve traditional decision criteria. For example, buyers viewed quality in relation to price; expected profit contribution meant not only adequate profit margin, but anticipated selling price and the price the buyer was willing to pay. In a second example, image was defined in product terms as fitting a store's marketing strategy rather than a general definition of image (Banting & Blenkhorn, 1986, 1988; Banting, Blenkhorn & Kosenko, 1985).

**Small apparel store performance**

Decision criteria among small apparel retailers has had limited focus in research. Among small apparel store buyers, decision criteria used in selecting vendors was attributed more to product specific variables than to retailer size and location, merchandise type, or type of retail buying decision (Fiorito, 1990).

Small apparel specialty store retailers that are highly satisfied with their store’s performance consider product characteristics more important than those retailers with low store performance satisfaction. Specifically they consider aesthetics, quality, and fashionability of products to be of high value. These satisfied individuals also emphasize the importance of
competent sales people, exhibitions, trade shows, publications, and resident buying offices in the buying process (Arbuthnot, Sisler, & Slama, 1993).

The limited apparel retail buyer research indicates a need to integrate the information into a more specific retail buyer theory that emphasizes the role of the individual buyer in the process. Research has shown that apparel buyers have a broad set of job criteria and use a set of product and store needs criteria in making buying decisions. We also know that product criteria used in buying for a large retailer are different than criteria for a small retailer. What we do not know is the actual process individual buyers use in the decision making process. The individual buyer maintains an especially critical role in the operation and merchandising of goods in the small retail organization. The decisions made at market concerning merchandise selection may determine the success or failure of small businesses in the United States.

**Summary of Buyer Literature**

The retail buyer research reveals a need to integrate the information into a more specific retail buyer theory that emphasizes the role of the individual buyer in the process. Apparel buyer research indicates that:

- decision making criteria on product selection varies by product category,
- vendor selection is affected by store size and product category,
- small retailers use a different decision making strategy than larger store buyers, and
- retail buying is characterized by the buyer’s autonomy in decision making.

Sheth’s (1981) theory of buyer behavior, an organizational model, has been the primary theoretical basis of much of the research on retail buying. Within apparel buying research, few studies have been conducted with application of Sheth’s theory. The role of the individual in the decision making process has not been investigated, nor has decision making been examined as a process. The individual buyer maintains an especially critical role in the operation and merchandising of goods in the small retail organization. The decisions made at market concerning merchandise selection may determine the success or failure of small
businesses in the United States. Understanding the decision making processes of handcraft retail buyers will contribute to existing theory on retail buyer behavior.
CHAPTER 3: METHOD

The craft industry has experienced tremendous growth in the United States. Yet little is known about the businesses that characterize the retail segment of the industry. One purpose of this study was to contribute to a more comprehensive description of the retail craft industry, including the experiences and perspectives of retailers who deal in crafts. The study was designed to gather specific information about the business, the buyer, and buying experiences at wholesale markets with the goal of more clearly understanding how retail craft buyers make product decisions.

The study was divided in two stages. Stage I involved the development of a questionnaire based on the proposed buyer model and administration of the questionnaire to a random sample of retail buyers. In Stage II, the primary focus of the research, I used qualitative methods by interviewing a sample of retail buyers and employed a grounded theory approach for refining the buyer decision making model.

Researcher preparation

My earlier years of experience in retailing had provided me with the concepts necessary for understanding how products are marketed at the retail level. However, I was lacking an experiential basis for studying wholesale marketing strategies for crafts. Several activities as a graduate student allowed me the opportunity to gain the background experience necessary for the present research. First, I began by developing five case studies of craft retailers as part of a graduate class (Littrell, Brown, Meyer, Moreno, Paige, Rupe, & Scheller, 1993). Interviews were conducted with local craft retailers concerning their experiences in buying for their businesses. As the research planning evolved, I spent a week at the New York International Gift Fair as an intern with Aid to Artisans (ATA), an internationally recognized leader in craft product development for U.S. markets. This experience involved conducting on-the-spot interviews with ten retail craft buyers at the wholesale market in order to gain a perspective of
their experiences in making craft buying decisions. Vendors and craft producers were also interviewed to gain their perspective of retail craft buyers. In addition, telephone interviews were conducted with two market promoters, and personal interviews were held with a craft publisher and a craft market promoter.

These experiences enriched my understanding of the wholesale market system in the United States, allowed me to develop an approach with buyers that gave validity to the study because of my experience base, and enabled me to make contacts within the industry with people who will actually benefit from the study. Experiencing the buying system in person differs greatly from studying it on paper. I have taken my experiences with buyers, vendors, and markets and incorporated those learning's, along with current research on buyers, into the proposed buyer decision making model. The questionnaire and interview schedule were developed with all of the experiences and resulting concepts in mind.

Stage I Mail Survey

Sample selection

Stage I of the study required that questionnaires be mailed to 750 retail craft buyers. Criteria for this sample included that the participant be employed by or own a retail business that sold at least 25% of its merchandise in crafts. No stipulation was made for either U.S. or international crafts. Craft producers selling only their own products, craft wholesalers, craft market promoters, and Alternative Trading Organizations selling crafts from developing countries were omitted from the sampling frame.

The sampling frame included names of buyers obtained from seven sources: attendees of George Little Management, Inc.'s New York International Gift Fair, San Francisco International Gift Fair, Portland Gift Show, and the Seattle Gift Show; subscribers of The Crafts Report; purchasers at the Aid to Artisans vendor booth at the New York International Gift Fair for the two selling seasons in 1993; and the mailing list of The Crafts Center in Washington, DC.
All retail buyers listed on the New York International Gift Fair list, and the San Francisco, Portland, and Seattle lists were sorted by computer to eliminate as many non-craft businesses as possible. Sort criteria were based on categories that buyers check when they register to attend a market. In order to avoid duplication of businesses, the San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, and New York attendance lists and the subscriber list of *The Crafts Report* were merged and duplicate buyer names were purged from the combined list. Each entry on the list from The Crafts Center and Aid to Artisans was reviewed in order to eliminate duplication with the main lists and to eliminate wholesalers, importers, and craft producers where identifiable. The total number in the sampling frame was 16,668. In order to obtain a systematic sample of 750, every 20th name was selected from the list until initially 1,028 names were identified. Only United States mainland businesses were contacted; all others were omitted (e.g., Hawaii, Virgin Islands). Potential participants were entered on a master list using the Microsoft Word 4.0 software program; information recorded was name, business name, mailing address, and telephone number.

**Questionnaire**

The purpose of the questionnaire in Stage I was to provide a contextual description of the retail craft industry, including product categories; employment; business data such as profit, sales, and inventory levels; wholesale market experiences; and demographic data on retail craft buyers. The description resulting from questionnaire data served as background for the interviews in Stage II. Portions of the questionnaire content and format for the seven scales of items were adapted from research on apparel catalog purchasers (Abraham, 1991), Alternative Trading Organization catalog purchasers of international textile products (Dickson, 1994), small apparel business failure (Gaskill, 1994), and business strategies (Porter, 1980). Statements addressing experience at wholesale markets were developed using information from my earlier work with retail craft buyers, my experiences at wholesale markets, and the expertise of craft industry leaders. Individual items were worded to reflect situations and
Table 3.1. Questionnaire sections

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section number</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>Section I</td>
<td>Information about your customers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section II</td>
<td>Information about the products your business sells</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section III</td>
<td>Information about you the buyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section IV</td>
<td>Information about your general experiences at wholesale markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section V</td>
<td>Information about your business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section VI</td>
<td>General information</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

terminology used in the craft industry.

The thirteen-page questionnaire was divided into six sections shown in Table 3.1 (Appendix A, Section I). A preface on the front page of the questionnaire provided a common description of crafts for the study respondents. Exclusive of the demographic section, all components of the questionnaire and their accompanying questions were developed to assess and describe parts of the proposed buyer model. A few additional topics of interest to the research sponsors were added to complete the questionnaire. Those topics addressed product trends, store image, and profitability.

After the questionnaire was developed it was reviewed for construct validity by five researchers knowledgeable of retailing and by three craft marketers knowledgeable of the wholesale market system. Reviewers were asked to examine whether terminology was appropriate to retailing and to assess the fit of statements and phrases for specific sections of the questionnaire. Reviewers were also asked to give suggestions for other questions pertinent
to craft retailing or of interest to the sponsor. Prior to pretesting, the Human Subjects Review Committee at Iowa State University reviewed and approved the questionnaire for use with human subjects (Appendix A). Following revisions suggested by the experts, the questionnaire was pretested with five local retailers who were asked to note the starting and finishing time in completing the questionnaire, clarity of instructions and statements in the questions, and any additional information that would eliminate ambiguity and help clarify questions. Final changes were made based on the pretesting.

**Telephone screening**

Response rates in business research have been notoriously low (Forsgren, 1989). Previous studies of consumers and businesses have found that screening potential participants results in higher response rates (Abraham, 1991; Dickson, 1994; Forsgren, 1989). Therefore in order to encourage higher response rates in this study, potential respondents were screened by telephone prior to mailing the surveys. A drawing for one free round-trip airline ticket was also offered as an incentive for participation to those who completed and returned the survey.

The initial telephone screening of the systematically selected names was conducted in mid-May, 1994. Nine callers were hired to conduct the telephoning along with the researcher. Six were graduate students at Iowa State University. Three were independent of the university. Coded access numbers were distributed to the callers. I met with each caller individually to explain the purpose of the research and the screening procedure. A set of calling instructions, a telephone protocol, and a calling record sheet (Appendix A) for recording contacts with the buyers were discussed with the callers. Initially each caller was given a typed list of between 90 and 150 names generated through the Microsoft Word 4.0 software program for mailing labels. Callers were instructed to make at least three attempts to reach each person, varying the time of day for each attempt. It was necessary to make calls during business hours, which varied from the Eastern time zone to the Pacific time zone and from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. within those time zones. Calling was conducted for 7 days, resulting in 160 agreements...
to complete the mailed survey. Because of the need to reach 750 buyers who would agree to complete the survey, I continued calling on my own for six additional weeks.

Numerous problems were encountered during the entire telephone screening process. The problems contributed to the low affirmative response and to the necessity for drawing an additional 1,188 buyers for a total of 2,216 names. Unlike consumer groups involved in telephone screening in earlier studies (Abraham, 1992; Dickson, 1994), buyers in this sample frame were associated with businesses. Buyers gave business numbers, as well as a variety of other numbers, all of which made the best time for contact difficult to predict. The problems in reaching buyers included categories of no answer; reaching answering machines or answering services; the buyer being unavailable at the time of the call (in many cases an associate agreed to the questionnaire mailing because it would have been impossible to reach the actual buyer); incorrect, disconnected, or out-of-business numbers; reaching an artisan rather than a buyer; businesses that were not retail businesses; and businesses that carried less than the required percentage of crafts in their merchandise assortment. Only 10.8 percent of those actually reached and meeting the study criteria declined participation. Figures of responses in these categories can be seen in Table 3.2. Callers were instructed not to leave messages, since it was believed to be unlikely that anyone would return a research-related, long distance call. Results from the first week of calling revealed that the 25% crafts criterion was causing elimination of many businesses. I made the decision, after discussion with the callers, to reduce that criterion to 10%, since 46 of the eliminated businesses indicated having at least 10% inventory in crafts. These 46 individuals were then included without being recalled. All calls after that point included the criterion of at least 10% crafts.

A total of 2,266 contacts was attempted during seven weeks of calling to reach 2,016 buyers. Calling was stopped when I reached 606 agreements; although short of the 750 goal, the rapidly increasing cost of the phone bill with relation to project funding precluded further
Table 3.2. List of telephone screening responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of response</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not a retail business or no longer employed</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answering machine, answering service, or fax</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer after the telephone rang 5 times</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could not reach the buyer at the time of the call</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorrect phone number</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disconnected</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of business</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An artisan not a buyer</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retailer, but no craft merchandise</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carried less than 10% in craft</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carried between 10% and 25% craft</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;No, not interested in answering questionnaire&quot;</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreements to sending questionnaire</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,266</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

telephoning. Of those businesses where an individual was actually reached (n=1290), 616 (47.8%) did not meet the study criteria. Of the remaining 674 who were contacted and met the study criteria, 606 agreed to participate (response rate = 89.9%). The remaining 68 (10.1%) met the criteria for the study, but were not interested in participating.

Mailing procedure

The total number of questionnaires mailed in the survey was 779. Of that number, 560
agreed to complete the survey. An additional 46 were included in the mailing even though they were initially eliminated because of having less than 25% crafts in their inventory. However, they met the revised criterion of at least 10% crafts. An additional 173 buyers were mailed questionnaires without having been contacted. It was hoped that the additional buyers would increase the number of responses to the questionnaire; they would also provide a comparison in response rate of screened versus non-screened respondents.

Dillman's Total Design Method (1978) was adapted for use in this study. Surveys were mailed in groups over five weeks as calling was completed. The mailing included a cover letter, the questionnaire, and a postage paid business return envelope. A postcard reminder followed one week later, and then a repeat complete mailing after three weeks to non-respondents (see Appendix A for copy of questionnaire correspondence).

A total of 377 questionnaires was returned for an overall response rate of 48.7%. Seventy-five were not usable due to being returned blank or were determined to be non-eligible based on responses that gave contradictory information to the prescreening information. The usable response rate was 38.8%. In order to assess the value of telephone screening, screened and non-screened participants were compared. Of those respondents who were screened by telephone, 264 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a response rate for screened participants of 47.1%. Of the 173 respondents who were not contacted during the telephone screening, but received questionnaires, 47 returned the questionnaires, with a response rate of 27.2%. Telephone screening prior to mailing of questionnaires was an effective, but costly method of increasing the response rate in this study.

Stage II Telephone Interviews

The purpose of the interview stage of the research was to further explain and refine the decision making process of the buyer model. The objective of the in-depth interviews was to identify the processes, conditions, and influences under which retail craft buyers make decisions. The interviews used actual decision making situations that the interviewees had
encountered at recent wholesale markets as a basis for discussion, rather than asking participants to respond to fabricated scenarios. Naturalistic methods allowed variables to emerge that were part of the decision making process, but that may have been overlooked in earlier research. A grounded theory approach in inductive research allows for the most parsimonious level of analysis with the broadest possible range of behavior (Glaser, 1992). The result is an inductive theory grounded in the data.

**Sample selection**

A final question in the mail survey asked if respondents were willing to take part in a telephone interview. A total of 165 indicated interest in the interview. An additional criterion was that interviewees carry both U.S. and international crafts in their businesses. Seventy-six individuals met the interview criterion for stock diversity (46.6%). The original intent was to use a purposive sampling technique to define interview participants. However, with the small number of potential interviewees and the apparent similarity of demographics to the larger survey sample (see Analysis section in this chapter), the decision was made to use random sampling for the selection of interviewees.

Respondents’ survey numbers were listed and renumbered in numerical order from 1 to 75. Using a table of random numbers, a total of 50 potential interviewees was identified. An additional 12 were randomly selected when some buyers were unable to participate. Each person was called and asked if he or she would be willing to take part. Attempted contacts with buyers and the resulting appointments for their interviews were recorded on a calling record (Appendix B). At least five attempts were made to reach each individual. When attempts to reach an individual failed, an additional interviewee was randomly selected to replace that individual.

**Interview schedule**

The interview was developed to address concepts in the proposed buyer decision making model (Figure 2.3). Open-ended questions were developed for each section of the
model to elicit as many variables as possible concerning that particular concept. The questions were then rearranged in an order that moved interviewees from thinking globally about crafts (Section 1, questions 1-4; Section 2, question 3), to thinking generally about a specific market experience (Section 2, questions 1 and 2), and finally discussion about one craft order at a specific market they had recently attended (Section 3, questions 1-4) (Appendix A).

Responses to each respondent's mail questionnaire were used to verify experiences and provide an introduction to selected interview questions (Section 1, questions 1-4 and Section 2, question 1, and Section 3, question 3). Attitudes about international crafts and experiences with textile crafts were addressed in two separate questions, as was satisfaction with craft purchases. Specific reference to either a recently attended wholesale market or a recently purchased craft product was used rather than more global questions addressing markets or products in general. Research has indicated that realistic stimuli result in more valid and reliable measurement (Holbrook, 1983; Abraham, 1991; Dickson, 1994).

The Human Subjects Committee at Iowa State University reviewed the interview phase and determined the research could be conducted as outlined (Appendix B). The interview schedule was pretested first with an assistant buyer at a local museum store specializing in crafts. The interview was conducted in person to obtain a more accurate sense of the conditions under which respondents would be answering questions. Revisions were made to reduce the interview time from 2 1/2 hours to approximately one hour. A second pretest was conducted by telephone with an individual who had pretested the mail survey as well. This was useful since four of the questions in the interview asked the interviewee to further elaborate on responses the individual had made on the survey. The interview time for the pretest was one hour 10 minutes. Questions were reordered to increase efficiency.

**Interview procedure**

At the agreed upon time each subject was called and interviewed. Interviews ranged from 30 minutes to one and a half hours, depending on the extensiveness of respondent's
comments. Because the interviews were conducted by telephone, it was necessary to tape record the interviews for accuracy. Participants were asked whether they objected to the taping. They were assured that their names and their store names would be eliminated from the transcription. A tape recording machine using standard size tapes for better recording quality was employed. The machine plugged directly into the telephone, therefore eliminating unnecessary noises while taping the actual conversation.

Three attempts were made to contact each potential interviewee. Interviews were conducted at the convenience of the buyer, some at the store, some in the evening at the store, and others at the home of the buyer. Though fifty individuals were randomly selected for the interviews, an additional twelve had to be added to replace those unable to be reached or unwilling to participate. Forty-six interviews were conducted with the randomly selected group. The goal of 50 interviews was revised downward due to occurrences of redundancy in the later interviews and the approaching holiday season, an increasingly busy time for retailers. All except two interviews were conducted continuously. In those two situations, it was necessary to stop the interview due to other interruptions to the respondent, such as customers coming in or incoming telephone calls. I then recalled the interviewee and resumed the interview.

Of the 62 randomly selected potential interviewees, 15 were eliminated. One was eliminated due to carrying only U.S. crafts, one was too busy, one business had changed owners after the survey, six were unreachable, one had changed jobs and moved, two were omitted when I learned they were ATOs (Alternative Trading Organizations) and bought crafts from a designated central buying group, one was just beginning business, one missed three scheduled times for interview, and the last was a consignment-only business. Of those individuals actually reached and meeting the criteria, 46 out of 48 agreed and were interviewed (response rate=95.8%)
Analysis

Survey

A coding guide was developed for data entry from the survey, resulting in the entry of 258 variables. A total of 302 records was entered. Qualitative data from Q1, Q7, Q8, Q23, and Q25 (Appendix A) were categorized and entered by the number of occurrences. Descriptive statistics were run on the survey data for the purpose of providing an overview of the retail craft industry. Means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions were calculated on the total response data and then on the subgroup that would comprise the interview sample frame. This process provided a basis of comparison between the two groups in order to determine the feasibility of random versus purposive sampling for the interview sample. The two sample groups were very similar in their characteristics (see Tables in Chapter 4). Therefore I decided to select the interview sample randomly from those meeting the criteria and who indicated they were willing to be interviewed.

Factor analysis is a method for identifying conceptual commonality across a series of questionnaire items. Separate factor analyses using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) were run on the seven sets of scaled items in the questionnaire in order reduce the number of items and to group similar items together. The seven sets included business strategies, personal qualities and characteristics, considerations in selecting which wholesale market to attend, influences on purchase decisions while at market, individual styles of shopping at market, situations causing anxiety, and factors in the selection of vendors. Principal components factor analysis using varimax rotation was applied to the data. Scree-tests were used on each group of scaled questions to determine the number of factors. Items loading with a minimum of .45 were included in a factor. A difference of at least .20 from other loadings for the same item was established to increase conceptual clarity among the factors. The resulting factors were used as conceptual dimensions for describing buyers attitudes toward the concepts in each of the seven questions. Items omitted from factors due to insufficient loadings were not
considered in this analysis. Each factor was named to describe the salient content across items in the factor. Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was applied to each factor to determine reliability. Cronbach’s coefficient alpha is an indication of the internal reliability or consistency of a measure. A Cronbach alpha of .60 is considered a good indicator of internal reliability (Borg & Gall, 1989). Respondents’ mean scores within factors were summed, not weighted, to give an indication of buyer agreement with each factor.

**Interviews**

Each tape was transcribed by a hired individual or by the researcher. Two different word processing programs, Word for Windows and Microsoft Word, were used to transcribe and save the tapes. Each was printed on hard copy and backed up on a computer disk. Questions asked during the interview were highlighted in bold and answers of respondents typed in a normal font. After transcription, each of the interviews was transferred to Data Collector V2.02 (1992) for management in analysis. Data Collector (1992) allows the researcher to retain the original text while coding. Like codes are then sorted and placed into separate files for coding into more abstract themes. Identification with the original transcript is retained in the process.

Five transcribed interviews were selected for initial study in developing a coding guide. Interviews were selected based on business types and sizes, range in percentage of international-U.S. craft, and buyer gender in order to elicit a broad range of responses. First, each interview was read completely as a whole by the researcher and then by a second reviewer who was experienced in qualitative data analysis. Then four to six summary statements were written describing the person. The holistic statements provided a narrative hint about an individual buyer’s philosophy of craft product and relationship to buying. The unit of analysis in the first reading was the person. This initial reading allowed me to practice thinking broadly about the range of experiences and types of businesses in the research and to avoid forming extensive sub-categories too early in the coding process.
After the initial reading, the transcripts were more systematically read in two stages. In the first stage, I identified major themes within each response among the first five questions of the interview. These five questions related to a more global level of experience and dealt with the buyer's definition of crafts, the relationship of crafts to the business and to the individual, buying experiences, results from business decisions, an individual qualities and characteristics, and his or her perspective of a recent wholesale craft show. In a second stage of reading, the remaining six questions were studied in detail, and major themes and subthemes identified within each. The second set of questions dealt with specific buying experiences and addressed the person's experience with specific wholesale markets, including planning, shopping the market, purchases of craft, and evaluations of craft purchases. An additional five transcripts were purposively selected from which to continue development of the coding guide.

The constant comparative process was applied throughout each reading, resulting in groups of extracted narrative with similar meanings (Glaser, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985;). This process entails unitizing broad meanings within the data, while also identifying as full a range of ideas as possible. Once the range of ideas is established, more precise ideas are isolated and grouped into themes and subthemes. Through each level of reading and coding, ideas and passages of narrative containing codes are compared to one another to ensure the distinctiveness and similarity of concepts. Following this method of qualitative analysis all passages were coded and compared with one another in order to refine the meanings of emerging themes and subthemes.

Several steps were necessary in arriving at a conceptually emergent coding guide for all 45 interview transcripts. Initially 10 interviews was reviewed (see preceding paragraph), resulting in four major themes and several subthemes of global concepts which paralleled parts of the interview. These were then reviewed by an expert in qualitative research to confirm the level of conceptual thinking. Each of the 10 interviews were again coded for more concrete subthemes. The resulting concepts were grouped according to the relationship of themes and
subthemes to one another across all categories of original coding. In the process, words and phrases used to define concepts were constantly compared and reworded to more accurately fit the concept. A coding guide was developed using seven major emergent themes and 24 sub-themes. The coding was confirmed at each stage of the process by a second researcher to establish the credibility of the process and the analysis.

As coding of the 35 additional transcripts progressed, the major themes were reduced to four major themes and 15 subthemes. Sample narratives for each major theme can be found in Appendix C illustrating the development of themes. These themes became the structure for the revised model of retail craft buyer decision making. Confirmation that the data were valid was established through triangulation using multiple sources (individual survey data was used to confirm information reported in the interview), verification of experiences across multiple buyers at markets, my own observations at two wholesale markets, and the analysis of Stage 1 data. Units of analysis were now single ideas that conveyed attitudes, behaviors, experiences, knowledge within each buyer’s interview.
CHAPTER 4: CONTEXTUAL ENVIRONMENT FOR THE STUDY

One of the primary objectives of the study was to develop a more accurate description of businesses who buy and sell craft in the United States. Data from the questionnaire used in Stage I (n=302 craft retailers) contributed a substantive description of craft businesses and participants in those businesses throughout the United States. The questionnaire asked buyers to share information about their craft related businesses, their role as buyers, perceptions about their target customers, experiences at wholesale gift and craft markets, and demographic information about themselves. Information in Chapter 4 is intended to give the reader a sense of the “state of business” environment in which the 45 interviewees in Stage II participated on a daily basis.

Small Business in the United States

Initially, this study was not designed to be a study of small businesses. However, as the research progressed and responses to questionnaires were analyzed, it became evident that the businesses involved in craft retailing were indeed small businesses. In fact, by standards of employment and sales, the majority of retail craft firms were very small businesses. The content of this section will provide the reader with a definition of small business, demographic evidence of its importance in the U.S. economy, and indicators of changes that are occurring in this business sector.

A small business is defined as “one which is independently owned and operated and not dominant in its field of operation” (Scarborough & Zimmerer, 1993, p. 27). The Small Business Administration further defines retail small businesses as having sales no greater than $3.5 million to $13.5 million annually (Pickle & Abrahamson, 1990, p. 14; Scarborough & Zimmerer, 1993, p. 27). Very small businesses are considered to have fewer than 20 employees, compared to 500 as the ceiling on employment for a small manufacturing firm (p.
Of the 21 million small businesses in 1993, 5.8 million of those businesses had fewer than 20 employees (The State of Small Business, 1994, p. 36). Ninety-eight percent of the businesses in the United States are small businesses (Pickle & Abrahamson, 1990; Scarborough & Zimmerer, 1993). Among all businesses, small businesses account for 38% of the United State’s GNP (Scarborough & Zimmerer, 1993, p. 25) and 42% of the country’s business sales.


Ownership of small businesses has changed since 1981. Minority and women-owned small businesses have increased dramatically. Women-owned sole proprietorships have increased 7.2% in the last 10 years compared to 3.8% for male ownership (The State of Small Business, 1994, p. 17). In 1991, women owned 5.5 million businesses (p. 14). In the wholesale and retail sector, women own nearly 40% of businesses (p.14). Minority owned businesses have also increased. In 1987, black-owned businesses numbered 424,000, while Hispanics owned 422,373 small businesses (The Third Millennium, 1993, p. 1). This was an increase of 80.5% from 1982 for Hispanics, and more than double the growth of black-owned small businesses (p. 1).

Small businesses face increasing competition in the global marketplace. Technology utilization in small business is forecasted to increase. Small businesses will be affected in the future by changing consumer characteristics, increasing global competition, advances in technology, and transitions in the job market (The Third Millennium, 1995). Detailed information on small businesses is considered inadequate. The following description will contribute important information on one segment of small businesses in the United States, those retail businesses that market crafts to consumers.
Craft Buyers and Their Businesses

In this study, retail buyers of craft were predominantly women, with men representing less than one-fourth of the sample (Table 4.1). The majority were Caucasian with only a small representation of minorities. Buyers were middle aged, had been in a specific craft business approximately eight years, and were well educated. Greater than three-fourths had completed education beyond high school. Twenty-nine percent had at least some graduate education. Travel to foreign countries was a part of their lives, yet only one-fifth of the sample spoke a foreign language.

Buyers held three dominant roles within craft businesses. Within the Stage I group, 72% of buyers were also owners of their businesses. Fifty-seven percent of buyers were managers, while 79% of buyers indicated their role as buyer. The majority of buyers were not the only buyers for their businesses, yet over half indicated that they made buying decisions independently. Buyers remained in their current positions an average of eight years, but brought to their current jobs relatively limited experience, averaging three years of buying in any other type of business.

Buyers were frequent attendees at a large variety of wholesale gift and craft shows and retail craft shows annually (Table 4.2). There was inconsistency in how buyers identified the markets they attended. Some used show names, while others identified markets by their locations. The most frequently mentioned markets were American Craft Council markets, the New York International Gift Fair, and Rosen shows. Though buyers ordered craft from a variety of places, the dominant methods of ordering were from wholesale markets, individual artisans, sales representatives, and product catalogs (Table 4.3).

Business description

The businesses with which craft buyers were involved were stable businesses with an average of 12 years in operation (Table 4.4). They were located in moderately large cities in all except six states. The businesses were predominantly sole proprietor ownership,
Table 4.1. Buyer demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Stage I</th>
<th>Stage II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>76 %</td>
<td>74 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>94.0%</td>
<td>89.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afro American</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean age</strong></td>
<td>47 yrs</td>
<td>46 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 yrs. Voc., Tech, or college</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.S. degree</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some grad school</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed grad school</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean number of international countries visited in the past two years</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage speaking foreign language</strong></td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>26 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of years as buyer for craft business</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Stage II descriptive statistics are presented in the same tables with Stage I statistics as a point of comparison. Discussion of Stage II occurs in Chapter 5, Qualitative Analysis of Buyer Behavior.

*bRespondents provided non-standard terms in describing race.*
Table 4.2. Buying trips in 1992-1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean number of wholesale markets attended in the past year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage I sample</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage II sample</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of markets attended* (n=584)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most frequently listed market names</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACE</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beckman's</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buyer's Market</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Markets</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Intern’l Gift Fair</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosen</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most frequently listed market locations</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley Forge</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington DC</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Respondents indicated total markets attended and then listed all applicable markets or locations. The totals for market locations and names do not equal the total markets attended.
Table 4.3. Sources for craft ordering

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale shows</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>93 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual craftspeople</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales representatives</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalogs</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail craft shows</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional material</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone contacts</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buying service</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online computer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Respondents checked all sources that applied. Total percentage is greater than 100.

Numbers in this column reflect only those respondents indicating a choice; thus, n may be less than 302.

reinforcing the concept of buyers who were also in owner roles. Craft businesses were usually located in single building sites in downtown areas. Though the mean square footage was large, the range in size was 100 sq. ft. to 250,000 sq. ft. A very small percentage of businesses had multiple stores in their organization. The craft businesses were very small businesses, employing an average of 3.5 full time and 6.3 part-time employees. Seventy percent of the employees were paid and 30% were non-paid.

Financial data were intended to provide a benchmark of sales income for small retail craft businesses. The financial data were provided by retailers from 1993 income tax returns. The majority of craft businesses reported profits in 1993, while a smaller percentage of businesses indicated an increase of less than 20 percent in sales from the previous year.

The profitability of small retail craft businesses was low in comparison to the ceiling of $13.5 million allowed in the definition of small business (Table 4.5). Costs of goods sold included not only crafts but any other products that were sold in the business, such as furniture or gift items not considered handcrafted. The beginning and ending values for inventory
Table 4.4. Business demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Stage I</th>
<th>Stage II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business location</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single building</td>
<td>46 %</td>
<td>42 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strip/mini mall</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger mall</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown area</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean population of business location</strong></td>
<td>797,155</td>
<td>562,311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean years in business</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean square footage of business</strong></td>
<td>3,508</td>
<td>1,923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of ownership</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole proprietor</td>
<td>42 %</td>
<td>47 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporation</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subchapter corporation</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Respondents checked all applicable locations. Percentages total to greater than 100%.

Table 4.5. Financial characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Stage I</th>
<th>Stage II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Profitability status for 1993</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made a profit</td>
<td>63 %</td>
<td>57 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broke even</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost money</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial characteristics for 1993</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross receipts</td>
<td>$501,306</td>
<td>$375,652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of goods sold</td>
<td>178,600</td>
<td>208,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning value of inventory</td>
<td>97,547</td>
<td>85,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total purchases</td>
<td>142,972</td>
<td>143,578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ending value of inventory</td>
<td>93,339</td>
<td>79,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of crafts inventory</td>
<td>65,281</td>
<td>76,817</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
showed only an approximate $4,000 decrease, indicating the level of annual inventory that craft businesses maintain. When comparing the gross receipts to the total purchases, these craft businesses earned an average profit of $360,000. These figures are skewed by the large size of some businesses.

Perceptions of target customers

Buyers provided information on their perceptions of target customers (Table 4.6). Customers were believed to be predominantly female and middle aged, with the largest group in the 31-55 year age range. The female-to-male ratio for customers was almost the same ratio as female-to-male buyers. The income level of customers was described as “middle income”. Terms used by the buyer to describe the type of customers indicated a more professional group of customers (e.g., lawyers, doctors, etc.) buying craft. When asked to categorize craft consumers, buyers indicated a cross section of purchasers. Tourists predominated in purchasing groups. Consumers’ end uses for craft focused on those for decoration and gifts. Customers paid a wide variety of prices for craft, but the most frequently paid price was less than $50 per item.

Product mix and craft media

Crafts represented over half (60%) of the products in the 302 businesses (Table 4.7). U.S. crafts were predominant, reflecting the commitment of many buyers to U.S. products and artisans. Buyers considered U.S. craft more profitable than either international crafts or a combination of the two. When asked about the likelihood of purchasing international craft in the following year, buyers indicated a slightly higher (51%) likelihood of including international craft than not including it (47%) (Table 4.7).

Crafts were present in differing proportions of media (Table 4.7). Fiber, wood, and clay media were slightly more favored by buyers as compared with metal, glass, and stone. Within fiber, decorative fiber craft was dominant over wearable fiber. Some buyers commented that “jewelry” should have been included as a media category.
Table 4.6 Buyer perceptions of craft target customers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Stage I</th>
<th>Stage II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean age</td>
<td>42 years</td>
<td>42 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>77 %</td>
<td>77 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. income of customers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000-$74,000</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms used to describe target customers:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well educated</td>
<td>13 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special interests</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discerning</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophisticated</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic perceptions of target customers?:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-30</td>
<td>24 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-55</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55+</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper, high</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper middle</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle and below</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categories of customers types</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourists, vacationers, seasonal shoppers</td>
<td>44 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local /permanent residents</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectors</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who are well traveled</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuppies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft buyers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer uses and descriptions for crafts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorative</td>
<td>26 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gift</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handcrafted</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic, valuable, useful</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality design</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prices paid by customers for crafts/per item</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under $50</td>
<td>41 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$51-$200</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$201-$500</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$501-$1,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,001-$10,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Responses were generated from open-ended questions asking the buyer to describe target customers.*
Table 4.7. Craft inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product categories</th>
<th>Stage I</th>
<th>Stage II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total crafts</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. crafts</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International crafts</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Varieties of craft media:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiber (wearable)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiber (decorative)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tendency to purchase international craft orders in the future:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very unlikely</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlikely</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat unlikely</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither unlikely nor likely</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat likely</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Likely</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total crafts was a separate question from percentages of U.S. and international craft. Only U.S. and international craft will total 100%.

The typical retail craft buyer

The typical buyer for craft retail businesses in the United States can be characterized by several variables. The buyer is likely to be the owner of the craft business, female, and in her mid to late forties. She is experienced in buying crafts but has minimal buying experience in other product categories. The average buyer attends five markets annually and is interested in both U.S. and international craft, but prefers U.S. craft. Most craft orders are placed through wholesale markets, yet other sources of craft are important as well, such as ordering directly from artisans, sales representatives, or through wholesale catalogs.
The majority of craft businesses are profitable, averaging a half million dollars in gross receipts. Crafts represent 60% of the average business inventory, with cost of craft representing 40% of goods sold in these businesses. U.S. crafts are preferred by buyers, yet they seem considerate of placing future orders for international craft.

Craft customers are predominantly educated women of moderate to upper income, who are between 31 and 55 years of age. Customers are characterized as tourists who pay less than $50 for a craft, use their purchases for both decorative and gift uses, and seek authentic and useful products.

Craft businesses in this study were reflective of trends in U.S. small businesses discussed earlier in this chapter. The craft businesses were very small in size and fell far below the maximum sales level. They tended to be owned and operated by individuals or families, with women dominating in those roles. In contrast to national trends in other types of businesses, minority participation in craft businesses was minimal in this sample.

Craft Buyer Behaviors and Attitudes

Factor analysis was conducted on seven sets of multiple-item questions (using a 7-point Likert scale) addressing business strategies, personal qualities and characteristics, selection of wholesale markets, influences on purchasing crafts in the wholesale market, shopping styles, conditions of uncertainty, and vendor selection criteria. Factors emerging in the process were named according to the concept described concerning craft buyer behavior and attitudes. The Cronbach alphas for 14 of the 17 factors met the criteria of .60 for acceptable reliability. The remaining Cronbach alphas were .50, .55, and .59. These factors need further study if they are to be entered into statistical equations in the future.

Business strategies

Business strategies employed by craft buyers were addressed in a 17-item question. Three factors emerged which best explained the importance buyers assigned to the use of the
strategies in managing their craft businesses (Table 4.8). The first factor, customer orientation, included six items relating to methods the buyer utilized in serving customers. These items reflected a desire by buyers to offer the best information on the product, the producer, and the store; and to fulfill special customer needs and requests. The five items in the second factor,

**Table 4.8. Factors for business strategy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor Title and Items</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Customer orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Customer service</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promoting the identity of artists' work</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Educating customers about store's uniqueness</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Minimizing use of outside financing</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Providing specialty products/services</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Serving special customer groups</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue = 3.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach's alpha = 0.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score = 5.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Innovative marketing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Innovation in operating procedures</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Building brand identification through a line of craft products</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Innovation in marketing techniques and methods</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Involvement in the product design process</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advertising</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue = 2.53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach's alpha = 0.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score = 4.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Inventory and pricing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Maintaining high inventory levels</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Competitive pricing</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Offering a broad range of products and services</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stocking products in lower-price ranges</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue = 2.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach's alpha = 0.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score = 5.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
innovative marketing, concerned the buyer's means of marketing and promoting craft, use of advertising, and product development. Finally, the four items in the third factor, inventory and pricing, related to the breadth and depth of craft inventory and to the use of pricing strategies.

Buyers' summed mean scores on the three factors indicated that an orientation to and serving of customers was the most important strategy for managing their stores. Maintaining an inventory that met customer needs was also viewed as a way to manage effectively. In contrast, management activities for building innovative product lines or store promotions were considered less important. Overall craft buyers appear to attend to their customers and inventory but do not consider innovation as a necessity for business management.

**Personal qualities and characteristics**

Three factors emerged in a 13-item question asking buyers to reflect on their personal qualities and characteristics (Table 4.9). These factors best explained the skills buyers utilized in their businesses. The first factor, business skills, included seven items that the buyer used related to timing the orders for craft, communicating with vendors, and salesmanship. The four items in the second factor, initiative, related to personal skills that affected a person's drive to make a business succeed. They were reflective of personal traits in managing time, money, and a business. The final factor, creativity, was composed of two items related to a buyer's ability to use innate talents in the business.

The buyers' mean scores on the three factors indicated that buyers utilize a variety of skills in their craft businesses. Buyers consider initiative an important personal characteristic, while communication, planning, and forecasting are necessary business skills as well. Creativity is also seen as a personal quality present in craft buyers. In general buyers agree that one's personality and skills are useful for managing craft businesses.

**Selection of a wholesale market**

How buyers selected which wholesale markets to attend was addressed in a 15-item question. Three factors emerged which best explained buyers' selection of markets (Table
4.10). The first factor, sponsor influences, included six items related to the information and services that market promoters provided to buyers. These items included publications, services, lack of crowds and pressures, parking, and general sponsor information. The four items in the second factor, networking, concerned the buyer’s use of the marketplace to contact

Table 4.9.  Factors for personal qualities and characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor titles and items</th>
<th>Item loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Business skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Able to buy right product at right time</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Skilled as a business person</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Skilled as a salesperson</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An effective communicator</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Able to forecast trends</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An effective negotiator</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Good at math</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue = 3.23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s alpha = 0.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score = 5.45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Initiative                         |              |
| • Ambitious                          | .62          |
| • Hard working                       | .72          |
| • Self-disciplined                   | .74          |
| • Organized                          | .72          |
| Eigenvalue = 2.38                    |              |
| Cronbach’s alpha = 0.72              |              |
| Mean score = 5.84                    |              |

3. Creativity                         |              |
| • Creative or artistic               | .82          |
| • Skilled as a craftsperson          | .84          |
| Eigenvalue = 1.74                    |              |
| Cronbach’s alpha = 0.69              |              |
| Mean score = 5.25                    |              |
vendors and artisans and also to meet product needs. The third factor, colleague, time and location, were indicative of the locational and collegial characteristics of the market that determined if a buyer could and would attend.

Buyers’ mean scores on the three factors indicated that market selection was influenced by a market’s product history, and by opportunities to network with the maximum numbers of

Table 4.10. Factors for selecting a wholesale market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor titles and items</th>
<th>Item loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sponsor influences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information provided by the sponsor</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Services from the sponsor</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fewest crowds</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of pressure to actually place orders</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Available parking</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information provided by trade publications</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue =3.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s alpha = 0.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score = 4.41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Networking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunity to network with the greatest number of vendors</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunity to make the most of direct contacts with artisans</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Market’s reputation for introducing new crafts</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Where product needs can be met</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue = 2.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s alpha = 0.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score = 5.93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Colleague, time, location</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Where my business colleagues go</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Location of the market</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The time of year</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue = 2.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s alpha = 0.59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score = 5.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
vendors and artisans in order to meet product needs. Also affecting a buyer's choice of markets was market location, timing, and competitors choice of market. Buyers were less influenced by large attendance and by sponsor services. Overall buyers seemed more interested in selecting a market that fulfilled immediate business needs.

**Influences to purchase craft**

A 24-item question addressed buyer influences on purchasing craft. Two factors emerged as the best explanation of the kinds of influences that might affect buyers as they considered the purchase of craft (Table 4.11). Promotional information, the first factor, involved two sources of information that could influence buyers' ordering. One dealt with the buyer's own craft philosophy and the type of printed resources chosen to read. The other related to product promotion in terms of packaging, display, and videos. The second factor, customer needs, concerned buyers' perspectives of what was needed to succeed in business, involving customer demand, sales goals, and new merchandise.

Buyers' mean scores on the two factors indicated that customer demand, meeting product and sales goals, and personal preference were more influential in a buyer's decision to order craft. In contrast, promotional materials, specialized packaging, display of craft, and an artisan's craft philosophies were not likely influences in ordering craft. Buyers apparently are concerned with meeting both personal and customer needs within the business, rather than being swayed by external approaches.

**Style of shopping the market**

Buyers indicated in a 19-item question their preferred methods for shopping the wholesale market when ordering craft. Three factors emerged as the best explanation of buyers' shopping styles (Table 4.12). The first factor, product, included six items relating to the buyer's search for new products. These items reflected buyers' attempts to locate craft and vendors that potentially would fulfill their product needs. The second factor, convenience ordering, concerned how a buyer combined the search for craft with ordering of craft. The
third factor, planning, explained how buyers planned their visits with vendors and how they located vendors in the market.

Buyers' mean scores on the three factors indicate buyers' interests in shopping for new products, actually visiting with artisans, and planning shopping strategies that support current vendor relationships. Convenience in shopping at market is not a high priority of buyers. Overall craft buyers seem to plan strategies that support the business and artisans.

### Table 4.11. Factors for influences on craft purchases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor titles and items</th>
<th>Item loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Promotional information</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The business magazines I read</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The personal philosophy of the craftsperson</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Availability of customized packaging</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The display of products</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Videos shown of the product being made by the artist</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue = 4.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach's alpha = 0.78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score = 3.97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Customer need</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The needs of my business for its continued success</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The majority of my customers' needs</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The need to meet my sales goals</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Customers' demands for unique products</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The need to continually introduce new merchandise</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue = 3.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach's alpha = 0.59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score = 5.96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.12. Factors for style of shopping market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor titles and items</th>
<th>Item loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Product</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Buy new product lines</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consider all categories of product</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Order products regardless if they are crafts or not</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Add some new product lines</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Visit trade show sections not likely to feature crafts</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Visit trade show sections featuring products that reflect the lifestyles of my customers</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue = 2.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s alpha = 0.65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score = 5.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Convenience ordering</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shop the whole market before I place an order</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Place orders with vendors as I go through the market</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make on-the-spot decisions</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue = 2.59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s alpha = -.96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score = 4.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Planning</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Visit the booths of my favorite vendors</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Check the layout of the market before I actually enter the exhibit area</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Visit with actual artisans</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue = 1.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s alpha = 0.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score = 5.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Uncertainty**

Uncertainty in craft buying was addressed in a 20-item question addressing situations that cause feelings of uncertainty. Three factors emerged that best explained the types of anxiety-causing situations (Table 4.13). Lack of familiarity/independence, the first factor, included seven items related to situations at market when the craft selection was extensive,
Table 4.13. Factors for creating uncertainty in craft decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor titles and items</th>
<th>Item loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lack of familiarity/independent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When there is a mixture of craft media from which to select</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When I am the only one responsible for making buying decisions</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When I see too many new products at a market</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When I buy American made crafts</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When I see a specific craft that is really appealing</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When I see there is a wide variety of craft products</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When I buy crafts that are at low price points</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue = 4.71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach's alpha = 0.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score = 3.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Time and order terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• When I find myself short of time to shop the market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When I buy in cash terms, rather than credit terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When delivery by a specific date cannot be guaranteed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When I buy without considering my business' long term plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue = 3.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach's alpha = 0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score = 4.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. International/decision dependent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• When I buy international handcrafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When I rely on an associate to make a buying decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When I buy a craft that has a definite ethnic appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue = 2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach's alpha = 0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score = 3.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

there was strong product appeal, when decisions had to be made independently, or price points caused concern. The second factor, time and order terms, related to issues that the buyer could not control, such as time limits, credit terms, and delivery. One item concerned the buyer's lack of self-discipline in failing to consider business needs. Finally, the third factor, international/decision dependent, was composed of three items related to the ethnicity of craft
and making joint craft decisions with an associate.

The buyers’ mean scores on these factors indicated that buyers expect to make independent decisions and encounter risks. The ethnicity of craft does not appear to cause anxiety for most buyers. Buyers are less sure about themselves when pressed for time, dealing in credit and delivery terms, and projecting business needs. Overall buyers seem resilient to the pressures of market.

**Selecting a vendor**

A 22-item question asked buyers to consider how they selected vendors from which to order craft at market (Table 4.14). The resulting three factors best explained the criteria buyers use in vendor selection. The first factor, artisan attachment/vendor image, consisted of six items related to the vendor’s image and the buyer’s need to support the artisan. The second item, vendor interaction, included seven items relating to aspects of communicating with the vendor. Indirect communication occurred through product offerings, vendor promotions, and credit terms. More direct communication concerned terms of the order, looking at products in the booth, and talking with sales representatives. The final factor, vendor history, included four items related to a buyer’s prior experiences with the vendor.

The buyers’ mean scores on the three factors indicated that vendor history is most important when making vendor selections. A vendor’s ability to interact with the buyer was considered by buyers to be less important. Also critical in selection was the impact of the decision on the artisan, direct interaction with the vendor, and the visual image of the vendor presentation. Overall buyers are most concerned with vendor’s dependability in delivering craft.

**Summary of factor analysis**

The factor analyses provided a profile of buyer behavior at market that was shaped by personal abilities and skills as buyers apply them to managing their businesses. Buyers’ business strategies focused on customer service, inventory, and pricing. Business skills,
Table 4.14. Factors for selecting vendors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor titles and items</th>
<th>Item loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Artisan attachment/vendor image</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How my decision will affect the producer</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The artisan’s story in making the product</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Being able to buy directly from the craft maker, not a sales rep</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The vendor’s ability to suggest alternatives</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vendor booths that have a professional image</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vendors that have booths arranged by color, product type, or that tell a story</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue = 3.42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s alpha = 0.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score = 4.62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Vendor interaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The variety of products offered by a vendor</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The length of time it takes to negotiate an agreement with the vendor</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My ability to negotiate changes with a vendor</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vendor’s promotional efforts</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How the sales representative approaches me</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Whether the vendor lets me browse and decide on my own</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The credit terms required by the vendor</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue = 3.37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s alpha = 0.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score = 4.91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Vendor history</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Previous experiences with the vendor</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The quality of products offered</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My specific buying requirements</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vendor’s sales history in my store</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue = 3.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s alpha = 0.71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score = 6.14</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
initiative, and creativity are explanatory of traits that buyers possess in creating and running a craft related business. Criteria of networking and colleagues, and time and location factors are used by buyers in selecting which wholesale market to attend.

When selecting craft products, customer demand and the buyer’s personal preferences were important criteria in the selection process. A buyer’s method or style of shopping the market seems contingent on product (searching for new product) and planning (knowing where to go and who to visit at market). Selection of vendors was strongly influenced by the buyer’s prior relationship with the vendor. Buyers generally do not perceive uncertainty to be an issue.

Buyers in the craft business seem self-confident, take initiative to make their businesses successful, and apply creativity in the management of the business. The typical buyer searches for vendors using past experiences as a gauge of dependability. Buyers search for new products, rather than repeating orders. Buyers in this study believe in their products and their businesses.
CHAPTER 5: QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF BUYER BEHAVIOR

In Stage II, 45 buyers were selected for in-depth interviews. The purpose of the interview was to elicit a description of the decision making process that buyers use in selecting craft. The typical craft buyer in the Stage II sample had several characteristics similar to those of buyers in Stage I. Buyers were similar in age, race, gender, experience, travel, and markets attended. Stage II buyers were slightly more educated and more individuals spoke foreign languages. Buyers in this group were also more likely to be owners and buyers (82%) rather than owner/employees (9%). All buyers ordered craft through wholesale markets. However, buyers indicated using other sources of ordering, such as directly from artisans (93%), through sales representatives (73%), from catalogs (67%), and through retail shows (47%).

Craft businesses in Stage II tended to be owned by one individual (49%) and categorized as gift store (60%), gallery (40%), craft store (37%), or a specialty store (20%). Over one-half of the businesses were located downtown in single buildings. The craft businesses in Stage II carried similar percentages of craft to Stage I businesses, yet were less profitable than businesses in Stage I. Twelve buyers indicated losing profit in 1993, compared to 25 making a profit. However, buyers in these businesses were optimistic about craft, indicating they would likely purchase international craft in the future (70%). In summary, these businesses and their buyers were similar to other craft businesses in Stage I, which supports the representativeness of the data in Stage II of this study.

Constant comparative analysis of the interview data from the 45 retail craft buyers contributed to the emergence of four “superthemes” related to how retailers make buying decisions. These included individual perspective, business environment, global market, and the wholesale market environment.
Within the supertheme of individual perspective are several subthemes that explain the buyer's craft belief system and its effect on product choices and relationships within the craft marketing system. The supertheme of business environment involves six subthemes that defined the conditions inherent in the craft business. The third supertheme, global market, characterizes the buyer's attitudes concerning international craft trade. Market environment, the fourth supertheme, contains the concepts related to conditions and processes of making craft decisions.

Collectively the themes clarify the issues with which the buyer is associated and must address in the decision making process. The reader is reminded that the earlier buyer models proposed by other researchers and the integrated model I proposed in Chapter 2 are linear models indicating a directional flow of information and criteria culminating in a conclusive decision. The model emerging from this study does not appear to be linear, as will be explained in the grounded theory section of this chapter. None of the emergent themes is exclusive of the others; nor do they represent a hierarchy of thinking. Instead, they are interrelated, with the individual buyer's attitudes and beliefs serving to dominate and integrate every segment of the process: what the business is; how it is defined by the buyer; how the buyer relates to other buyers, vendors, and customers; and how the buyer relates to the market environment.

Individual Perspective

The individuals in this study were unmistakably buyers for very small businesses. In 41 of the 45 businesses, the buyer was also the owner. This fact placed the buyer in a critical position of responsibility not only for product decisions, but also in implementing the remaining merchandising decisions that affected the direction of the business and inevitably its viability. The individual buyer was key in defining a business image that incorporated crafts along a continuum of craft media and quantities. The position of craft on that continuum became an interpretation of the buyer's personal interests and beliefs about the function and
value of craft for themselves, the business, and consumers. Three subthemes addressed buyer ideology, aesthetic beliefs, and relationships which evolved because of craft. The individual's perspective became a focal point in the emergence of a grounded theory of retail craft buyer decision making.

**Buyer ideology**

Buyer ideology consisted of an individual buyer's life experiences and perspectives that resulted in a philosophy of craft. This philosophy represented a buyer's intellectual beliefs that defined an identity with craft and provided the buyer with self-confidence in selling craft. Included in this concept were buyer attitudes about roles and responsibilities enacted in the culture of a craft business. All of these concepts contributed to the formation of a buyer ideology that guided the individual through the decision making process.

**Life experiences with craft**  The life experiences that buyers encountered shaped the foundations of their beliefs about crafts and how they viewed the functions of craft in a culture. These experiences from childhood, during travels, with artistic endeavors, and from changes in jobs contributed to shaping the image of a business as well. For some, childhood memories of craft encounters left indelible impressions of other parts of the world and other people. One buyer related her first memories of a visual encounter with crafts:

...I was exposed as a child to many forms of crafts. I think the biggest thing that ever happened to me was when I went to Scotland, and I had a cousin who was much older than me. [She] used to take me to...a tearoom...I absolutely fell in love with this place. I always wanted to go there and it wasn't until later on that I realized why. Maybe you know the craftsman, Ronnie McIntosh and McMurdough. These were the fore runners of even before art deco, and this tearoom is still decorated in his style. And it's these things throughout my life, is seeing things, I think that made me appreciate it. (17)\(^1\)

---

\(^1\) The numbers appearing at the end of quotes indicate the interview participant. The variety of numbers appearing throughout the text provide supportive evidence that the interpretations are drawn across a variety of participants.
Another buyer's experience with crafts during childhood expanded her world beyond the neighborhood in which she lived. Walking into a business filled with crafts transported the person to other places and provided enriching life experiences. Encounters with craft in the childhood home were particularly poignant in creating a desire to share what the rest of the world was like through a business. The quotations illustrate how buyers shared these experiences through their businesses:

Let's see if I go back into my childhood, I used to haunt a street in Boston called Newberry St., where there was a store called Audus Inn and I spent every penny I ever had in that store whether it was on an Indian silk scarf, camel nose plugs. I mean it was a store of the most bizarre and wonderful things. I mean the owners traveled all over the world and I remember just being, when I went in there I was in another country and another place and always felt transported. And, ah, I have always had a love of ethnic things...And I got a degree in dress designing and ended up getting a job as a buyer for Dayton Hudson Corporation out in Detroit. I was a dress buyer, and then I became a glove buyer. Then I moved to Boston, became a jewelry buyer for Filine's in Boston and then I moved to Australia. And while I was in Australia for 11 years I opened two boutiques carrying crafts. I actually had bought an existing shop carrying Indian clothing and it was sleazy. You know old Indian madras skirts and incense and bongs for smoking marijuana. And I literally closed the store for about two weeks and I did like the Crate and Barrel look and I kept all the handicraft, but I ironed all the clothes and put Berber carpet and I put beautiful new fixtures and I really took the, I want to say McDonald's took the grease out of a hamburger; I took the ethnic out of ethnic, that whole connotation of, you know, it's from India, it's gotta be cheap. I felt I elevated crafts to something else. And people started looking at the business quite differently. (39)

My grandfather, my mom's dad, he put in steel mills all over the world. He was in India, he was in Russia, he was in England and Ireland. He probably hit almost all the continents except I think it was Antarctica, and he never made it to Greenland. So he brought home all this stuff and so my mom had a lot of it too. So we had these weird carvings, tables, bronze work from India, we have stuff from Russia, stuff from Africa and there's all this bizarre stuff, so I really have always enjoyed that look. And it wasn't until I was maybe 11 or 12 that I realized that other people didn't live with an elephant head in their house. So what I've done in the store is the same thing, it's just kind of traveled over. I've tried to show people too how they can incorporate some of this into their look showing that you don't have to have a Shaker look and not be able to put something else into it. Or a Scandinavian look, that you can actually mix a lot of these looks together if you do it correctly. Just have fun with it. That's how I got into it. I really have a degree in forestry. (38)
In addition to childhood experiences, travel also contributed to buyers' life experiences with craft. One buyer experienced a life-changing direction through an international work experience that shaped her definitions of business and culture.

...I was living overseas and I started working in a refugee camp in Thailand and I was running a handi-craft project. It was funded through the U.N. through Oxfam. I did that for a year and a half where...we lived in the camp and we supplied the raw materials to the women. They had tons of time, they were hanging on refugee camps and they were concerned too, [with] added income and also keeping the traditional arts alive; and they were displaced and depressed and by supplying the raw materials...they would work them into their traditional crafts and then we marketed them around the world on a non-profit basis. And then it was successful, but from that experience I grew to appreciate handicrafts and folk art of other cultures. From that it grew into my business. (10)

A large percentage (40%) of buyers came from artistic backgrounds. Buyers with no artistic background believed they were able to "look at work without dissecting everything"; others with artistic backgrounds felt they were better equipped to evaluate the medium and the process. For some, interest and enjoyment in crafts fulfilled a personal need. Wanting to share the enjoyment of craft with someone else contributed to the development of a small business:

I really wanted to make gifts so people could buy them. The way I started was my daughter was pregnant and I wanted to do a Moses basket. I started with a small one and people have seen it and that is how it started. I have always sewn. (14)

Another buyer saw the potential of including other crafters with her own craft production to expand a business:

I was a crafts person so I was selling my own crafts and we decided to open a retail outlet to sell our craft and we needed more to sell...so we took on friends.[work]...As a crafts person, I had gone to the big craft fairs, so I had already made those contacts...A lot of shop owners that I know are in fact crafts people. (2)

While interest in art and art-related subjects provided the impetus for initiating a craft business and for defining the type of business, e.g., gallery, craft store, etc., accessing the information to run a business when the buyer had no business background was problematic for
several buyers. Frequently they relied on the premise of “learning by doing”. One buyer related her transition from art-related academia to a craft business.

Well, as I said I was an art historian and an art museum curator. But I had never worked in a store. In my last job, well I had been teaching art history and then because I didn’t have a Ph.D... but I don’t know I took a little course in how to start a small business. You know offered by the small business administration and a six-week course. And most people in that course were too miserable to make anything happen. They were casino employees, they’re absolutely miserable. But I went to this course... I mean you weren’t required to do homework, really, but he would give you things to do. I found that I was doing these things constantly, I mean I started developing a business plan and stuff. The thing that was the hardest was buying, because that wasn’t explained in the course. Because everybody was going to do a different kind of a business. You know some of them might be opening a restaurant or something like that. How do you get the product? So I started off by calling all over the country with labels from things I owned. I looked at the back of cards, I get Marselle Sherman from that, a piece of clothing that I had must be in New York and that kind of thing, so that I started with some hit and misses. (40)

Business skills from one type of business were transferred to owning and managing craft businesses. A few buyers acquired positions in galleries with little or no craft selling experience, but applied concepts from other disciplines to buying and selling craft. Two buyers had apparel design backgrounds. Several buyers inherited a craft business when working for someone else. Others, desiring to live in particular locations, bought existing businesses. For many of these individuals, buying was influenced by a previous owner or buyer, by the individual’s own search for craft that sells, and a deep interest in craft itself.

I used to teach history of art at a local university and one of my quote ‘students’, who was actually an administrator in dental school, took me to this place, the gallery. And first I was just a customer, then I started doing some PR work for her on an ad hoc sort of basis, and she had a kind of assistant who basically did everything. And one day he just sort of walked out. And she said, ‘do you want to take over his job?’ And I did... I used to go with her to the shows and I’d sort of watch her. I don’t know, I just slid into it. (41)

The experiences of buyers revealed a diverse set of circumstances in which they were exposed to crafts. Childhood encounters provided memories from which to draw cultural images of craft. Work experiences defined the world of craft for future buyers; while for other
buyers, education expanded their horizons to craft. Detours in work experiences provided new avenues of work involving crafts. Without realizing it craft buyers' lives were changed as a result of encounters with craft. Buyers' life experiences grounded them in an individualistic relationship with craft that was expressed in the craft business, the image, its operation, and how and what they bought. As discussed in the next section, the business became an extension of the individual and his or her close association with the product.

**Perspectives**

The subtheme of perspectives emerged as two concepts. The first concerned the buyer's identity with a craft definition and how the buyer operationalized that definition. In the second concept, the buyer's perception of craft resulted in an intangible level of confidence concerning the kinds of craft that should be ordered and sold. Both of these concepts formed a perspective that seemed to guide how buyers operated within the context of craft businesses and the larger craft retail environment.

**Identity with craft**

Buyers in this study maintained a definition concerning the role crafts performed in their lives. The craft business reflected the buyer's craft beliefs, especially in circumstances where buyers were also owners. Most buyers were protective of their craft image, and seldom compromised that identify in order to simply please the public. Buyers sensed that their customers trusted and were attracted to the business because of the craft image projected by the buyer's craft decisions. For most buyers, maintaining the integrity of the store's craft image represented success and self-fulfillment.

...my philosophy right now is I buy what I love and what I like. I have to admit I wouldn't take home a hundred percent of what's in the store, but overall that's how I look at things when I buy. And so I think that if you're in a position where you can buy that way, it's really good. But I know that someone that's buying for a broader scope than I am, you need to be aware that there are a lot of variable tastes. And that sort of thing. But I think that's one reason why we're a specialty store. You can come in here and tell that everything is special and hand selected and that sort of thing. That's what I would tell someone as a buyer if they had the opportunity to work in a place like that to really buy what they love and what they felt good about. Not try to buy just because they think something is going to sell. (23)
A few buyers were less dogmatic in their definition of craft. These were individuals whose definition of craft was broader and customer driven, rather than a personal investment in a particular kind of craft. These buyers seemed more willing to compromise commitment and satisfaction with the realistic need to maintain the business as a viable entity.

But I would suspect that I am more businesslike. I mean I think those people in this industry I'm sure it's unlike being in the tire industry. I don't think anybody would love tires. But in this industry, there are certainly people who have a love for their crafts. I'm talking now about retailers, instead of crafts people, by their love for the merchandise and to such an extent that they may not balance it out against business needs or dictates....Most of us probably fall in between and I would say I fall pretty much in the middle. My wife and I really enjoy what we buy. It's very important for us, but we also know that unless we can make a business of it, we can't continue doing it. (18)

Buyers identified with craft as a visible expression of their beliefs and interests. They ordered craft that they believed would project a particular image. The buyer's involvement in and adherence to a strong craft definition injected a particular craft identity into the business.

Perceptions of confidence

Buyers' perceptions of confidence were related to their experiences with craft and how they defined its role in their craft businesses. Buyers developed confidence in different ways. They drew from past experiences, explored options, listened to fellow craftspeople, and developed levels of confidence in decision making that met their needs as individuals and their images of a craft business. Some buyers were very self-confident in buying decisions, while others were cautiously calculating in developing confidence. Varying levels of confidence can be identified in the following narratives:

I find it [buying at wholesale markets] very relaxing. Ah, I mean my day-to-day experience in my art gallery is far more high pressure than going to a craft show....Nobody's pressuring me to buy anything....I just do feel confident. I trust my judgment. (41)

I am extremely conservative, not willing to take a chance. I have to be sure of something....If I have a product that sells great, I stick with that. (14)

I think I have a definite goal which is to concentrate on a few categories, not to have a few things of lots of things, but to within the category expand and make it thorough. (11)
I think because I am a good forecaster, I'm good at guessing what the customers are going to be looking for next. Probably I am picking fun things at the same time that are also creative... (6)

Buyers were confident, when initiating new craft business ventures, that other people would like what they liked, particularly when the buyer possessed artistic skills that other people found attractive.

We started selling pieces for people and also with our work had bad experiences with other galleries representing us. We thought we could do it better. What works and didn’t work. After researching we thought we could take the positive and negative and format [of] what would be fair to the artist, gallery, and public and let each of those people win and let the gallery profit. (15)

Some buyers gained confidence through previous business failures, viewing these as “learning experiences.” Poor economic conditions tended to reduce buyer confidence. Less confident buyers initially ordered conservatively, then followed later with stronger orders. As a buyer’s dedication to a defined craft image grew stronger, and as the number of years in a craft business increased, buyers’ levels of confidence increased. Some buyers linked confidence to their knowledge of customer interests. The prospect of making new product choices at future craft markets increased buyers’ levels of confidence. Only a few buyers questioned whether any buyer could really ever be confident when buying craft because “it’s a different form of gambling.”

Buyers denoting a highly defined craft image, particularly with higher priced craft or more culturally pure craft, were more confident about their product and their craft businesses. Buyers expressing less confidence in their buying abilities were generally less experienced, had a less well-defined craft image, tried to please broad customer interests, and dealt in lower-priced crafts. Buyers’ perspectives framed their definitions for craft, the images for their respective businesses, and instilled them with confidence as they made business decisions.

Cultural attitudes Retail buyers had definite opinions toward U.S. or
international craft. The decision to include either or both types of craft depended on the philosophy of the buyer concerning the purpose of craft and how that was portrayed in the business image. The majority of buyers believed that craft served the purpose of education, enjoyment, or utilitarian function for the consuming public. The decision to include international craft was related to accessibility to international vendors and sensitivity to political issues. Buyers who dealt in higher concentrations of international craft contended that crafts from diverse cultural environments were important cross cultural communication tools.

Some buyers, categorizing craft by the country in which they were produced, expressed views concerning the producers of craft. These opinions were indicative of buyers' perceptions about society's view of the position of women, cost of labor, and conditions in handcrafted production. A few buyers, ordering more mass produced crafts, believed that items from less developed countries tended to be less handmade. One buyer associated lack of consumer attention to internationally made craft with the gender of craft producers in many developing countries:

I sell handmade boxes, things that are handmade in China, you can't get away from that. I don't think the public looks at those as crafts. I think they think of crafts as flower arrangements, quilts, door decorations. I don't think it has a real quality meaning here. I think because people associate it as women's work. (13)

Within retail businesses, crafts became an expression of buyers' political views on labor and fair trade. Some were very vocal concerning the need to "buy American", while others simply stated that "art is always underestimated as an importance" in expression of freedom. A few buyers adhered more closely to U.S. craft production stating, "if it's made in the USA, I always look first". These buyers believed that selling U.S. craft supported U.S. creativity and jobs. A few buyers reflected on the negative impact that U.S. and global economics have had on consumer buying patterns. One of the stronger buyer beliefs addressed an opposite view by supporting the issue of foreign aid through artisan support:
...You know there are some people who have a problem with buying something that's foreign. I had a man recently who had to buy a piece of clothing that had to be made in America. And I wondered how much, when he goes to the hardware store, does he require the same thing. I think we are a global economy, whether we want to think of that or not. And most people who are educated understand that. We got jealous over cars, but we don't have to apply that with everything that we make or is sold. And I think, now I'm sitting in the living room looking at a Kilim rug and I'm thinking what character this has versus the Sears and Roebuck carpet. You know it's because I like this stuff. And I keep bringing it in. I mean we give aid to foreign countries, why can't we buy their products. (40)

Buyers held definite perceptions concerning the production of craft and its value in the market place. These opinions, reflected in the craft philosophy of the buyer, were not always founded on a clear understanding of cultural differences, but more frequently on individual buyers' perceptions due to limited experience with other cultures. Only a few buyers were willing to overlook cultural differences and consider the worth of craft “because we see something terrific”. Concern for the inclusion of all types of crafts and vendors in the craft marketing system was expressed by one buyer:

I think that the one factor is going to be the common recognition of all the different marketers and outlets that in order for the craft movement to continue to thrive, that there has to be strong communication and working relationships between everyone. The mutual benefits as a buyer and dealer have to be recognized from everyone's level. (15)

Buyers' attitudes about other cultures, whether outside the United States or within, shaped the craft image of businesses and the types of crafts ordered to fulfill that image. The buyer’s personal interest in craft products, their origination, and their meanings within a cultural context weighed heavily in the minds of buyers as they processed decisions that would determine their merchandise mix.

Throughout the data, the individual buyer seemed to have the greatest influence on how the business was defined through the type of craft ordered, operated, and promoted. The individual brought to each business life experiences based on a memory, an incident, a talent,
or some feeling associated with craft. Individual buyers translated these experiences into a philosophy of craft. Buyers' individual perspectives were affected by their view of the function of craft in culture.

**Aesthetic beliefs**

Aesthetic beliefs became a critical point of departure in retail craft buyer decision making. The term aesthetic, used frequently by buyers in the interviews, was applied to craft description, “they are just hand-made, aesthetic things”; to explain a criterion “...it doesn’t meet the aesthetics of our store...”; to describe a business, “I have an aesthetic place here...”; or to respond to a craft,”...my aesthetic response to the work...”. Aesthetics were enhanced by the buyer’s perceptions of the value of an object as a craft. Crafts were interpreted by buyers as an aesthetic meaning of culture. Other concepts in aesthetic beliefs were related to elements in the design of a craft or in the design of a vendor booth at market. Preferences for particular production methods used in craft also took on meaning associated with the buyer’s aesthetic beliefs. The origin of craft was related to originality of work, and thus its appeal to the buyer.

**Personal aesthetics** Individual buyers had definite ideas about what craft should be and acted on those characteristics as they were encountered in buying for and managing a craft business. The buyer’s ideology characterized in the previous section shaped individual aesthetic interpretation:

...an awful lot of it is just done on what stands out, because each item is unique, and not going through it buying bathing suits and knowing blue bathing suits are in this year or short bathing suits, or long bathing suits, or two piece bathing suits....You don’t have that kind of a situation, you go through and see some work that appeals to you just as an individual and that is what you buy. If you need pottery desperately and you don’t find pottery that reaches out and says, ‘buy me’, then you don’t buy pottery. (2)

An individual buyer’s personal aesthetic included many different components. Among them were definitions of uniqueness, creativity, merit, tastefulness, beauty, a “look”, and
intimacy. The term “appeal” was used by many buyers in describing their reactions to craft.

The following excerpts describe buyers' experiences with aesthetic appeal:

Ah, I always look at the design, just the creativity of the piece. I mean, I always want pieces that are a little more unusual. I always want pieces that are fun. (23)
I just go at it in a more creative fun approach, as the product moving me toward the direction of merchandise that I purchase...It's all visual...Sometimes its kind of like radar. (6)

...the most important thing is that it has to be, it has to be unusual, and beautiful and tasteful. My major thing is to not, I mean I own a high-end art gallery, and I don't want anything tacky in my gallery and there's plenty of tacky stuff out there. But that doesn't mean that, I mean it can be inexpensive, but it just has to have a certain totally indefinable thing. Ah, and that's the most important thing. (41)

[It's] a positive feeling I get when I look at something. Something that grabs me and says, 'Look at me a little closer.' (5)

...When you are buying crafts or art it has to hit you. You have to feel something for that piece. (8)

Price was almost always mentioned by buyers as one of several criteria on which they made decisions. However, after their initial attraction to a craft, some products were bought because their inherent characteristics created an impressive gestalt in the buyer's mind; price then was no longer an issue:

...Price is a consideration in many cases...some things are just too expensive. But then some things are so unique that they'll sell at whatever price that they are. So I do have to take that into consideration. I would say that something's I'll just for sure purchase and I'd probably won't even look at the base price or the wholesale price. (16)

The buyer interprets for the consumer how crafts “fit” together. The buyer's personal aesthetic influenced a craft's potential for selection and how it was to be placed in the store environment. A buyer's personal aesthetic created a new experience for craft business customers.

There is a man...doing some outrageous lamps, very clean, using metal, like a mess. And these bizarre lamps, well, I bought them to go with the Chinese furniture and I
sold them all. And people like, it was contemporary and modern. And here it’s sitting on something that’s 300 years old. And it went. It went! (39)

Textile crafts were particularly tempting for buyers. One buyer admitted that textiles were “based almost completely on my personal taste...I have a personal collection of textiles.” Another buyer, referring to tapestry, indicated that “it was a personal thing”. It appeared that even if buyers bought textiles and they did not sell, their personal involvement with the aesthetics of the textile craft remained undaunted. For some buyers the appealing aesthetics of textiles placed them at price points beyond the reach of most customers. Textiles, as appealing as they were to buyers, were a “tough sale” because of the “personal use” component of the craft. Buyers explained the unique nature of textiles this way:

...people have to want to use [textiles]. It is not what Aunt Mary would like. You might do that with Peruvian pottery, it is only $12 and Aunt Mary would think it is cute. And you give it to her. Textiles are something you are going to put on the wall or bed and it is something you buy for yourself and it generally is expensive. You have to be much more careful about it. (10)
When I first opened the shop, I had more textiles in clothing. But I found, and I’m very attracted to it at shows, but what I did find was that my location...with all of the major clothing retailers was too much competition. It just wasn’t a good category...(30)

The buyer’s personal aesthetic created a standard for comparison as decision making progressed. The aesthetic was an aggregate of preconceptions about craft, as well as responses to craft as the buyer encountered them at market and in the business environment.

**Value** The perceived value of a craft intensified a buyer’s aesthetic attraction to a craft product. Buyers considered the value of craft in relation to its uniqueness, price, function, quality, originality, and the artisan. Each of these characteristics seemed to be considered as separate entities by buyers.

The artist as creator of a unique craft and where or how it was produced contributed to a buyer’s sense of value. Value was related to understanding the technique employed in production of craft. Uniqueness also assumed meaning when related to how long it remained
appealing to consumers. For buyers, the longevity of craft appeal made crafts unique among all other products. One buyer described value this way, “It’s something that withstands the test of time. It’s not trendy”. The value of craft was found in its appeal to individuality.

To me crafts there are a functional use, which also have aesthetic value. I would say crafts are something that transcend that value or functional use, even if they are pots, musical instruments, or toys. I think it has an individual artistic value to it. I think what I am saying is opposed to mass produced items. (11)

For many buyers the value of craft united the price paid to the quality of workmanship. However, excessively high craft prices were not necessarily indicative of good quality, “I think frankly a lot of people want too much money for something that they haven’t put enough care into”. Some buyers’ perceptions of craft value were thought to be different than what their customers wanted in value. One buyer bought simple crafts, enhanced them with additional materials, and obtained a higher sale price. Some buyers’ customers were not willing to pay the price asked, and others were:

I think my customers when they come in know that not everything is going to be cheap, everything is going to be worth whatever the price is. (9)

Perceived value was an industry-wide issue for buyers who felt the need to convey a greater appreciation for the process of craft and meaning to their customers. The following statements are representative of the complexity and range of buyers’ views of methods they utilize to rationalize the value of craft:

...in comparing [non-craft and craft], there’s always an appreciation for the products that have a story. Not for every customer, but that’s what we’re hoping to fight against, we’re hoping to educate and have people understand why when it’s called a craft, there’s an innate sense that it’s a decorative art, like the fine line between galleries and a store like mine, because crafts are all signed and a gallery will mark up a craft up to $10,000, whereas we’re trying to make it available for everybody, not even everybody, but more people and the fine line between fine art versus decorative art, I mean these [craft] pieces will take as much time and effort and love as a painting that hangs from the wall. It’s just this perception is just very different. (19)
In the last few years it has changed because the market place has changed. The most important factor is value. We have to have, whatever it is we are showing, have a good value attached to it so the customer recognizes the value in it, of the artist and the materials or some justification of the pricing component. People in today's economy and the choices that are out there for them and the technology that is out there, if they are going to spend $300 for their home, ... They have to weigh whether or not they are going to spend a couple of hundred on a pair of earrings or are they going to buy that mountain bike. When people see them being made they know it is not made in a factory. The cost factors are different and it provides consumers with a lot more wide focused options. (15)

Some buyers were aware that they valued particular crafts more than their customers. For example, one-of-a-kind crafts were much more highly prized from buyers' viewpoints. Simply owning a unique craft enhanced its value for the buyer and the business image. Buyers actually seemed to establish relationships with craft; it became their "belief" in the worth of the product even at the cost of not selling it. The realization that buyers sometimes perceived the value of craft in different ways than their customers became apparent when the buyers' selections did not sell. The following statements put into perspective the reasons that buyers are faced with the value issue:

... somehow if something was over $300 it had to be magnificent. So that has affected my buying somewhat, cause now that I go shopping and I'm buying for the store, I remember that experience. If it's over $300, it better be wonderful, for one piece. Cause I think there's a limit [to] how far people, even people with money, will go on one piece. A lot of that stuff is risky. And then you have it and you can't even sell it at wholesale. (40)

Crafts are something that is not a necessity. I think it is considered more not essential, so I don't if I would be, there are things I can get really excited about if I see something, but then I will order that, but that doesn't mean that someone else will get excited. (11)

In comparing value for international and domestic crafts, international crafts were perceived by some buyers to be a better quality at an affordable price for both buyer and customer.

The quilts I feel are much of the same quality, the bears and a lot of the decision was the price points, we wanted to carry hand done American bears but the price points are too high. We know customers love bears so to fill a customer need we decided to [go]
with the hand done bear that was hand crafted in Korea so we could meet the market demand and the price we and our customers could afford. (12)

Buyers more committed to U.S. crafts defined value in association with the local culture (e.g., American Indian, Appalachia). Tourist craft was purchased from nearby markets where artists represented a regionally identifiable medium, method, or design (e.g., wood from Northern California). Craft, originating with its producer and the associated cultural setting, was valued by buyers. Originality of craft, rather than copies, was also an important value component in the buyer's sense of aesthetics:

For instance, like this is really kind of an unfortunate thing...the Guatemalan textile which is very unique. We got some backpacks that are Guatemalan or Indonesian, they are woven and they are beautiful and the next time we ordered them,...somebody was in Indonesia, brought them back, and they did very well. What I did was I reordered them through a catalog and with photographs you can't tell. We got them; and they were not woven, they were printed...so they sort of took a short cut, which really means that those people are really not understanding why something is selling. It is not copy; it is the original, the way it is woven. It is the process that is important. (11)

Though "value" is an abstract concept, it was identifiable to buyers in their evaluation of appeal and potential appeal to their customers. Buyer perceptions of value were modified as more was learned about the process, the artisan, and the culture in which craft was developed. Price was not necessarily an enhancement of value to all buyers. The buyer's appreciation of a product seemed to be the most important element to many buyers in estimating the value of craft as a product.

**Meaning in culture** The cultural context of producing craft provided meaning for many buyers about the lives of its producers. Most buyers agreed that crafts were formed by an artist or designer as an individual expression of creation. Thus, attraction of buyers to craft transcended beauty. The aesthetic component of craft became the process of creation that linked the craft buyer with the artist and the represented culture. For one buyer this connection with another culture was a critical factor in explaining why she and her customers bought craft:
I am about as far from a black African person as you can get, but yet I have black African folk art in my home...I appreciate it more for the aesthetics of it. Sometimes it is a combination, but I think because it is hand-made, it has meaning in other cultures, more people feel that they can bring that kind of meaning into their lives. (10)

A few buyers were specific in their interpretation of craft's use in culture. One buyer purchased Judaic craft for his Jewish customers. Another felt "American primitive" craft linked history to society, a sort of "nostalgia" experience in buying. Crafts were used by buyers as an educational tool through which they could teach customers about life in other parts of the world or about artists and their methods of production. Crafts from some parts of the world differed in quality. The need to explain the difference in production standards and conditions served as a method of conveying information that linked producer and consumer using craft as a medium:

It gives me far more greater respect and understanding for the origin of the craft, and I try to explain to people when they come up and they say, 'This has a scratch on it and this isn't perfect,' these are made by real people who live. They have dirt floors and they don't have any education; they are not using fine woodworking tools. They are using a knife. And when you consider, a lot of times these things are made by women who are not only doing folk art, and I have photographs of women, it is just remarkable, they are sitting by the fire stirring the pot, breastfeeding a baby, kicking the dog, swatting a chicken, and doing needlework all at the same time; it is incredible. Barefoot women with dirt floors and they are responsible for hauling the water doing all of the cooking, all the child rearing, tending a garden; they are responsible for everything, and somewhere in there they have time to do folk art and so I have to remind people constantly of where this is coming from. When you put this in perspective, a scratch is nothing. It is an absolute miracle it got here in the first place. (10)

Attraction to cultural meaning was diminished when women were associated with craft production. The craft meaning and its monetary value were degraded.

...[people] will not bat an eye to pay a $100 to have a picture framed, but they will give a lot of thought to paying a $100 for a quilt. And I can't figure out why one is valued so much different than the other. I feel one thing is because it is made by women in their basements, so therefore it can't have any value; in custom framing you use big equipment so that makes it more valuable. (11)
Buyers’ reasons for having craft in a business were related to their view of society’s strengths and weaknesses. One buyer remembered a conversation with an artisan from New Mexico and how the impact of that conversation, understanding the artisan’s lifestyle and her work, instantly tied the buyer to the history of Native Americans. Crafts served the purpose of transposing the purpose and depth of life from one culture to another, thereby enriching the recipient culture.

So when people see these things in my store it only reflects to them how empty our own culture is of meaning and how empty our art is and by seeing this they think by buying it and putting it in their home it will bring that kind of meaning into their life. (10)

Not all buyers in the study provided such insight into cultural meaning. The more closely aligned a buyer was to a well defined purpose of crafts; e.g., cross-cultural crafts or crafts production, the more frequently this view was expressed. Many buyers preferred to have information about the artist, their process, the materials they used, and why. This provided the buyer, and subsequently their customers, a personal attachment to the producer and his or her reasons for making the craft.

**Design components**  
Buyers usually described an initial general attraction to a craft before providing details of individual design. Yet, the physical elements of design provided distinctive characteristics in the buyer’s definition of personal aesthetic. In discussing attraction to particular crafts, buyers referred to color, form, dimension, shape, texture, and medium. The following represent some of the descriptions buyers shared when asked to describe what attracted them to a particular craft they ordered at market:

...it was some hand blown glass from an artist in California. It was something I’d never seen before. So that interested me. It was, well, the pieces were like wall pockets to put like flowers in and things like that. They were really unusual shapes and bright colors and she also did a vase that looked like a daisy flower with a curved stem and the stem is open. So you could like put a flower like down in the head of the flower. It was something that was real unusual. One other thing that attracted me
was...how unusual the pieces were and how interesting her colors and the combinations of colors that she put together that attracted me to it. (23)

...what struck me [about the Peruvian pottery] was the aesthetics, it was absolutely beautiful, the color, design, the shape and all that. (11)

they looked...hand-woven in these black coffee cream patterns and these pillow covers just blew me away as well as the throws. And they were made out of silk and linen. And to me the quality was beautiful, piping all around. But the thing that caught me was the pattern. I mean I passed the booth and I went, ah, this is gorgeous. (39)

Dimensionality was used to distinguish whether a product was a work of art or a craft piece, and thus whether it belonged in the business. Two dimensional work, such as paintings, graphs, prints, or paper, was not considered craft. Three dimensional work became a craft by contributing "textural quality". The complex usage of medium, technique, and design moved craft into the category of art work and higher price demands. A few buyers were unsure of where a particular craft medium fit in the overall definition of craft. Some buyers considered not design, but factors such as function in differentiating craft from art.

Ah, I saw this art work by this one woman in Santa Monica, but the only thing is that instead of being a craft it's almost economic proportions of true art in a gallery. So this stuff is like hundreds of dollars and so it's gone beyond like a craft. Usually to me a craft is something that is, it's something that can be done again. Something that you enjoy doing, where when I think of someone who oil paints, they do like one oil painting and it goes up in a gallery. She did this, it was like a scene, it was like a mountain and stuff, only it was almost like Monet kind of like those colors. It's all done in fabric. Like cut off, it's weird. (38)

It is more of the basis of intent, if it is going to be a coffee mug it can be a work of art and still fulfill the functional levels of the coffee mug but you put the same criteria on the mug as you would a painting whether there is a good sense of design, color balance, composition works well, is it functional, does it sit comfortably in the hand, is it the best the artist could create, technique, and execution. Does it fit the criteria of a piece of sculpture, work three dimensional, visual, does it work well with space. We view each thing on its own merit within context on expectations one could have if they were looking for the ideal art of the bowl, mug, wall piece, sculptor, or the garment and the technical needed to do all of that rather than saying painters, artists and sculptors are artists and craft people are not,... (15)

Buyers on the whole appreciated the work of artisans in designing intricately formed craft; however, many felt that the price of craft fell short of the quality of design. Buyers
referred to the shape of earrings in relation to how they frame the face; finishing techniques on
metal that created unique designs; combinations of colors; hand work in wearable art; and the
creation of texture in pottery. Most buyers were very discriminating in their evaluation of
design elements and extended their scrutiny to how the artisan created the craft.

In addition to product design, buyers were also attracted to booth design. Sometimes
it was the absolute simplicity of the booth that drew attention to the craft inside. For others, it
was a combination of the craft and accessories that was attracting. Some buyers sensed a
relationship between booth design, the artisan, and the product. The combination of a well
designed craft and a well designed booth was attractive to buyers.

...her booth did catch my eye, it had a real good feel to it, sort of like a very tastefully
done archeological pink, then really soft mauve and purple. The color feel of it, the
texture of the booth, the design of the booth was real yummy and her jewelry is kind of
metal structure, some with Formica mixed with metal, necklace and earrings,...just the
whole feel; it felt good, it was just a really organic looking. (6)

If there's something about an artisan's booth that attracts me, and often it is the display,
how they have set their booth up or how they have displayed it that catches my eye. If
it's creative, graphically interesting, if they've done a really good job with that. That
will attract me. If it's pretty standard and not a particularly innovative or interesting
display, it might not attract my attention as much. So often it is how the booth itself is
set up and how it's lit, and how the product is displayed. That also says something
about the artist. And then of course, it's the item itself. (30)

...some people have sort of bizazzy designs that it almost... overshadow the objects
that they're showing. But this one wasn't like that at all...a lot of what is making the
particular thing look so wonderful is the lighting and the way it's displayed...I have a
temptation to just sort of take it out into the aisle and look at it without all that glitz. To
see if still looks good. I certainly have had that feeling a number of times. But this
was a very simple, not a particularly large booth. Very simply laid out, I mean they
were like tables with white cloth on them or something and these bowls sitting on them.
But it was the things themselves that I liked. (41)

The holistic design of craft was attractive to buyers. The individual elements of craft
design seemed to be secondary. Buyers recalled individual design elements, but the overall
effect of the craft on the individual buyer created greater impact than individual design
elements. Design elements of vendor booths were evaluated by buyers and symbolized for
them the artisan’s interest and ability in presenting a complete craft idea. Elements within a craft design created a cumulative effect in attracting buyers to craft.

**Production factors**

Methods applied to the production of craft were among the more important criteria for distinguishing a craft from a mass-produced product. Three categories of techniques, hand production, traditional methods, and technological innovation, were distinguishing criteria.

**Hand production**

The majority of buyers referred to crafts as “handmade”. It became evident that one of the strong attractions to craft for buyers was the element of human involvement rather than machine production. Handmade craft represented an artisan’s intentional creativity. Only a few buyers were willing to accept less, stating, “[crafts are] either made by hand or appear to be made by hand, normally of natural materials.”

The majority of buyers expressed an overwhelming commitment to the handmade characteristic of craft:

To be a craft item human hands have to have something to do with it besides pushing a button on a machine. (7)

...something that we either know is personally made by someone we know or...we’ve seen at a show, that’s hard to mass produce it. That is what would consider handmade craft. (43)

I mean, you know, something about the machine today that, the hard edge, you know that sort of thing. My stuff doesn’t look that way. I know that some people make things to look machine made too, but ah, there’s a warmth...a warmth to these objects, too, because they are made by a person...Interconnectedness with perhaps with the artist through the object. (40)

There was a range of acceptable levels of “hand” involvement across buyer responses. At one end of the spectrum was a single individual producing a craft using simple, non-electric tools or implements. A combination of hand and machine techniques was acceptable to some buyers, as long as the “hand” of the artisan was apparent in the resulting craft. At the opposite end of the spectrum was mass production, including assembly-line technology to reproduce the
appearance of handmade craft designs. Most buyers were sensitive to the difference between a truly handmade look to a craft, a mass-produced handmade look, and a homemade appearance of craft. Individuality in the production technique appeared as an important criterion in buyers' selections of craft.

...In many cases they are produced by one individual as opposed to many...Like say for instance, if we have stone carvings from Kenya, an adult in the family may do the actual carving, but the children may do some of the sanding and things like that. So it's a cooperative effort in some of those cases, but it's still all made by hand and generally in small groups. Ah, also in the American crafts that we carry in our gallery, generally those are single artists that are doing art work or art craft. But it's generally a single person doing it as opposed to an assembly line. (16)

I like things that have a real hand feel to them, not necessarily a lot of craft work that is slick, almost too well done. I like stuff that you can see the imperfections to some degree. I don't want it to be junky or sloppy, but there is sort of a line there between handmade and homemade. (9)

...We really like to have our crafts done by the craft person themselves, and that is how we like to define a craft. Where folk art and some of our primitives can be more of an assembly line type thing even if they are all hand-crafted by various people. We think of a craft done by a single craft person. (12)

Some buyers were discriminating in the number of individuals involved in craft production. While a husband/wife team was acceptable for one buyer, a small group of six or seven artisans became more like an assembly line, with the craft losing its handmade characteristics. Other buyers, who viewed craft as a complement to their primary product mix, tolerated less "hand" involvement in craft production.

**Technological involvement**

Buyers were cognizant of changes in technology that affected the quantity and quality of craft production. Buyers appeared to monitor production transitions within the craft industry. Though some mass production was acceptable to a few buyers, most buyers established limits of acceptability in crossing the line to manufactured craft.

We have things like Twin Oaks hammocks, which are made in quantity and their design is very good, but not terribly original. Some of the sweaters we carry are knit but not
handknitted. They are made by knitting machines and recently the knitters have added machine...motors...because it increases the efficiency for a variety of reasons. In any event they are moving a step closer to being manufacturing. (2)

The term “production craft” was used by many buyers to illustrate the reproducibility of craft while retaining its handmade characteristics. The medium used in producing a craft lent itself to more advanced technology in production methods. The appeal of a “one-of-a-kind” characteristic disappeared with increased technological involvement. Pre-made components used in the creation of a craft were unacceptable to many buyers. “Production” craft satisfied the need of many buyers to reorder fast selling craft.

In my mind when I think of a production piece, it doesn't necessarily mean it isn't handmade. What it means to me is that I can go back and order that piece again and it will be very close to the piece that I had before....So in a way I suppose they're production pieces, but in my mind they're not really, because they don't come out the same...because you can say please send me vase #C310. So when I order something, I don't expect it to look like it looked the last time. (41)

One of the things I do with my jewelry, is I consider crafts in jewelry that somebody has done work on a material itself. I don't carry people who have assembled pieces that they have purchased from somebody else. They may complement what they're doing with pieces or findings that they have found in somebody else. I don't carry anybody who has assembled a nice, but good-looking grouping of bead work because there isn't enough handwork involved in personal identification with the artist. (42)

Traditional methods

Traditional methods of craft production were associated with specific cultural groups or types of craft. The use of traditional methods inherent to a culture or its history was appealing to some buyers. The method of production was viewed as much a part of the craft as were its physical characteristics. Standards for international versus U.S. production varied. Some international production situations created unacceptable craft (e.g., rough finishes, flaws, non-identical finishes). Yet, these features were part of the attraction for other buyers dealing in international products. U.S. craft was expected to meet high production standards as quality products. In either situation, the traditions associated with the artisan's abilities were valued by most buyers.
They may not be professional craftsmen opposed to American craftsman where you think the technique is superb. The quality of the technique may not be the way it is, there is kind of a primitive technique to it. At the same time it is where they are making something that is a form of personal expression. (11)

...it was beautiful, but I think the decision was important because it was made by these Indians by the same way they have been making them for 100's of years. I felt that here is a craft that has not changed. (11)

Requirements for traditional production methods included simple equipment, such as rocks, chisels, and little or no electricity, with evidence of the artisan's ability as the focus of production. Folk art was associated with traditional methods to create functional craft from a by-gone era, from a "native" culture, an international situation, or as an interpretation of life circumstances. Traditional production used indigenous materials.

I usually use the word folk art, I don't actually use the word craft, because I associate the word craft with handicraft, which is often, sort of more functional items and less decorative and not necessarily something that is traditional of the culture. My friends in Bangladesh have a lot of [it], I associate crafts with cottage industry. (10)

...to me folk art doesn't have to be primitive because folk art doesn't have to be a realistic reflection of life. You could take a tree and an interpretation of folk art you could see a tree in it but it might not necessarily be primitive. Sometimes the folk art can be contemporary in the styling. (12)

Identification with the producer, the natural materials of the culture, and the adaptability of an indigenous product to Western standards were very attractive to some buyers. For others, the "realness" of a craft in relation to its alignment with traditional production methods was a critical variable. Craft production in other cultures was appealing to those buyers who were more interested in international handicrafts. Buyers considered small-scale craft production more characteristic of less developed countries, whereas large scale production was associated with countries such as Taiwan, China, Singapore, where buyers perceived less tradition and individual artisan involvement.

Attraction to and belief in the people of other cultures and their need for income made
traditional production methods more acceptable to some buyers. Some buyers compromised
their concept of "imported ideas" from other countries.

But Guatemala is a good example of an indigenous craft which is weaving or needle
work, that sort of thing. It's a textile craft that's been developed to our modern world.
So that it's not something that's contrived and something that someone came in and
said, "Why don't you do this?" kind of thing. We also have batik clothing, but it's real.
It's not printed. It's not a batik print; they're real; they still smell like wax. Sometimes
they stink...Because it's real. But ah, that's good. (37)

Everybody was painting stars and moons, in the brighter colors, for a year or two, but
this last year they have them in the darker colors that I like and I bought a lot of it and it
has sold like crazy. I can not say this is traditional of the culture, this is just a design
thing that white people like and they are making it in Indonesia and I am buying and it
is selling very successfully. It is one of those compromised things you have to make.
(10)

Retail craft buyers were discriminating in their definitions of production methods.
Variations in production techniques differed according to the country in which craft was
produced and the medium used. They paid a great deal of attention to method of production in
order to maintain an aesthetic that was meaningful to them as individuals and as craft dealers.
Involvement of the "hand" of the producer was a critical link in establishing authenticity and
value of craft for buyers.

In summary, the aesthetic beliefs of buyers transcended crafts beyond function and art
because of their uniqueness among the myriad varieties of products in the market place. When
buyers considered the plethora of mass produced products on the market, the worth of a craft
became even more important. Crafts provided a sensory stimulation in the market place.
Buyers' attachments to crafts were a reflection of their beliefs about aesthetics. They were
attached as much to the process and the person producing the craft product, as they were to the
craft and its intrinsic characteristics. Regardless of the kind, craft became for the buyer a single
expression of life, beauty, and purpose.
Relationships

Buyers established relationships with key participants in the craft marketing system. Different types and levels of relationships developed based on an individual buyer’s interest in satisfying a personal and a professional craft need. Relationships with artisans and vendors were key elements in many craft decisions. There were relationships within the business that revolved around the market and the act of buying craft. Relationships with customers were valued because of the need for a dedicated clientele in order to increase the profit potential. More subtle relationships became apparent as buyers shared their feelings of attachment to craft and the producer. The following discussion of vendor/artisan relationships, market partners, and customer relationships reflects the importance of the depth and breadth of those relationships in the decision making process.

Vendors

Relationships with vendors and artisans in the craft buying system were critical to buyers. Most buyers when mentioning vendors were actually referring to the artisan. Buyer/vendor relationships usually originated at the wholesale market, whereas others were initiated by the buyer on regional visits within the United States, through visits with artisans at exhibits and retail craft fairs, or on trips to foreign countries. Buying in non-market situations occurred frequently as buyers supplemented wholesale market craft in order to obtain more unique products. Buyers established relationships with vendors to meet the craft needs of the business, fulfill the buyer’s need for a connection with the producer, and share a mutual interest in craft.

A buyer/vendor relationship revolved around trust. To the buyer, trust meant that the vendor would send products at the time agreed upon, the product seen at market would be the product that was delivered, packaging would be more than adequate to ensure safe delivery of

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2 Throughout this section the term vendor will be used to indicate an artisan, sales representative, or other individual who is selling craft.
the craft, and the vendor would be willing to assume responsibility for correcting faulty situations. Trust, accompanied by an attraction to craft, became the foundation of many business relationships.

He is the company and I am the company. And that was very important. We have an incredibly good close [relationship]; we’ve got each other’s home phone numbers, rather extraordinary in commercial business... but the flexibility...to modify my order and my specifications... that’s important. He’s a small enough operator, he’s right at that optimum size where I can adjust [my order]... without dealing with bureaucracy... When he comes back to me and says there’s going to be a two week delay... that cooperative relationship... that was the biggest attraction besides being just a great product. (21)

... if a snap breaks off of a vest that I am trying to sell, I want to be able to turn right around and send it back to the craftsperson and know I will get a replacement right away. If a customer brings in an earring that is broken, I want to be able to get it fixed immediately... So it is the willingness of the craftsperson to work with the dealer that is very important. (2)

Artisans’ personalities and abilities promoted or discouraged relationships with buyers. Buyers detected when artisans were too impersonal in their approach to buyers or did not express an interest in their own craft. Sales representatives were a source of dissatisfaction to many buyers. Though somewhat tolerant of new crafts people, costly mistakes by vendors resulted in broken business relationships for both vendor and buyer. Many buyers doubted the business skills of vendors.

... we like people that are excited about what they are doing. If people just say, ‘Sign on the dotted line, and I will send you 50 of them,’ and it has no soul to it, we just pass it by. You have to have excitement, inspiration to create and if you don’t have it, then it is not what a crafts person is all about. We want to see the spirit of the person in what we buy... (12)

I’m looking for people who can respond quickly to the market. If I call them up and say, ‘Gee, I just sold all your things out, can you bring some or can you ship some?’ And if it’s two weeks, three weeks, I can do it; I might miss a whole group of people if it’s a couple of months. (42)

Satisfying the terms of delivery were important factors in maintaining vendor relationships. Failure to fully disclose shipping and handling costs was a source of frustration for many
buyers, while others experienced problems with packaging of crafts for delivery.

Inexperienced artisans were tolerated by some experienced buyers. The attitudes of vendors were important criteria in the decision to maintain business relationships.

It seems that things were backordered and then they don't call, we have to call them and then a couple of months later you have to keep calling, so we do have problems getting merchandise we want. When people have asked for something we would tell them we would order them, and then find out we can't get them in two weeks or whatever. (11)

...from both sides the artists have certain needs and the buyers and the store have certain needs, sometimes those two needs, we have a hard time coming together. You look at a product, it's got a price on it...$24.00. You order it...by the time it gets here, it's going to cost me a couple of bucks to get it here. I'm going to be able to sell it right around $50...most artists put on a packing and handling fee. Not all, but a lot do. And some are real up front and tell you right off that they're doing that and others don't. So...you get it in and they've tacked on 10% and it pops up to a price point that you didn't think [would happen]. (20)

Buyers wanted communication with vendors to be a dual responsibility. Buyers experiencing slow periods of sales, needed reassurance that they would be able to postpone delivery of craft to a later date, or to reassure artisans that payment would be forthcoming.

Reciprocity in specifics of orders was a factor for some buyers in vendor relationships, “I told her [the artisan] I would give her until the 10th of December before she would have to cancel the order.” The flexibility of vendors in those situations was critical in maintaining a working relationship. Keeping an open line of communication created long-term relationships with vendors even when vendors had to reduce the number of clients with whom they dealt. Shared communication and understanding was believed by many buyers to strengthen the buyer/vendor relationship.

...but I do think that it is important to talk to the crafts people, and hear about what they have to say about buyers, because it is very much with crafts more than any other business, it is a two way street. It is a one on one. I have a crafts person I buy from who has a store also, and he just decided to cut back his wholesale account [from] 24 to 4, and we're one of the four he kept. I think the reason we were one of the four is that we are close friends and that we get along very well. So it was a very personal decision on his part as to who he continued to sell to. Crafts people make a lot of the same decisions when they decide to sell to somebody. A lot of it may be very personal
and have nothing to do with the bottom line. You can’t keep up the bottom line forever and you can’t ignore it forever. It is sort of a combination. You tend to lean over more for somebody that you like and you tend to promote it more. If they mess around and mess up, you tend to promote them less. (2)

Buyers were dependent on the ability of the vendor to provide cultural information about artisans, production, and product usage within the culture. Buyers also depended on vendors to deliver flawless craft and to maintain adequate stock for immediate delivery:

I ordered things from her before and she emphasized the fact that she goes to Peru and personally selects each piece. She is not just placing an order and shipping things out without looking at things carefully. There is the little things made out of clay and it has doors and these little miniature things and they are all signed because they are made individually by two brothers; and she explained to me and went to the trouble of showing me this brother and this one and the other one did this. There was another artist who made another kind and as you glanced at it you would not know the difference, but you began to appreciate the detail that is involved and there is a difference in style. We do have these little labels and people do ask. (11)

Many buyers preferred working with a variety of small artisan vendors, rather than with sales representatives for large companies. Buyers sensed they received better service from small business vendors, more direct contact with the artisan, more accurate production information, and less pressure to order.

I think sometimes when the sales representative really doesn’t know the process or doesn’t know the artist or what’s going on. A lot of times when we’re selling the stuff in our gift shop, we’re not only just selling the pretty item, or the unique items. We’re selling the artist, the location of the artist, we’re selling the method that the person used to make that product...actually selling that as part of the store. And our sales people, we try to know as much of that as we can. That’s why when a rep doesn’t know that or isn’t going to be able to supply that to us, that doesn’t move very well for us. Cause in most cases the craft is more expensive than the stuff that comes from the Orient. So you’ve got to show that there’s value. So the knowledge of the product is real important. (27)

However, a few buyers reported problems in working with small vendors. A criticism mentioned by several buyers was the short-term existence of artisan companies. There was a sense among some buyers that artisans lacked professional business skills in managing their
craft production businesses. Buyers gravitated to vendors who gave them the results they expected and needed.

It is not businesslike. So many think if they make one thing a week that they are doing good. I talked with people that are successful and they are the ones that go to the job at 9 and don't quit till 5. Some think they are doing good getting 1 to 5 items a week. They don't look at it as a job. (13)

Relationships with vendors sometimes developed into personal friendships based on a shared interest as craft producers. On the whole, buyers desired to know, understand, and appreciate the artisan as a person. Some buyers were willing to postpone orders to allow a novice artisan time to develop a mature business and become a reliable craft source. The greater the depth of buyer knowledge about an individual producer, the more interesting the craft became for the buyer and the consumer. In only a few instances were relationships with an artisan actually avoided:

Most cases I don't care if I meet the artist. I like the fact that they are there in these shows. It's more hand-on and real than going to a gift mart where you know nothing. Some like it but I don't get off on it. I like the work better than I like the people and I would rather not meet them and find out that they are jerks or something, and then, I really wanted to carry their work, but they are such a pain in the butt. I don't want to know, the artist doesn't really matter to me, unless they turn out to be really fun and nice...It's like, oooh, I hope I like them. There aren't very many instances like that. (6)

The majority of buyers were willing and successful participants in establishing satisfying relationships with vendors. Craft served as a medium through which buyers and vendors met business needs, expanded cultural horizons, improved communication skills, and received personal satisfaction, both with the relationship and the craft. For many buyers relationships with vendors were the most important part of having a craft business.

When you do something that is handcrafted you can see the heart and soul of the individual that made it, almost their whole viewpoint on their life or on their view of life in how they create something. It's almost like so personal because a little bit of the craft person or the artist is in everything they make. And I think that makes the gift
more valuable than something that was stamped out of a machine because the
carefulness and the feeling of being proud of the product is there...

The individual buyer was the motivation behind vendor relationships. The link
between a vendor and buyer could be based on a working relationship, the individuality of the
artisan, or the skills applied in the creation of a craft. Regardless, the buyer’s belief in the
product and the person usually made a convincing decision to create and sustain vendor/artisan
relationships.

**Market partners**  Individual buyers formed relationships built around a mutual
purpose: to satisfy a buyer’s individual need for support in craft decisions. Whether a buyer
had a market partner was based on a buyer’s strength of opinion that the business of buying
was strictly individualistic and that another individual would not have similar tastes or interests
in craft. Thus, 22 buyers worked alone in the buying experience. The remainder chose to
work with another person (n=23). Those individuals included owners (n=4), business
partners (n=5), spouses (n=10), business employees (n=2), and non-business friends or
relatives (n=2). These individuals were people whose opinions buyers respected.

Only two buyers related a more complex buying situation due to the size of the
business. For these buyers, the responsibility of buying was extensive and addressing
aesthetics made it even more challenging. One of the larger craft businesses developed a
complex but necessary organization for preparing and accomplishing buying:

> It is difficult with any partnership when you have aesthetics involved; they are
subjective. The things we agree on are the best, but we each have the ability to take a
wild chance on things we believe in without the other person’s full agreement; if it
doesn’t cost too much. We don’t do all the buying any longer. We have 26 people on
staff and we have an executive team of 9 people. We represent over 600 artists, and it
impossible with a gallery our size to personally track each artist in terms of their sales
response, customer response, making sure the inventory is here on time. We divided
our gallery up into the different media. We have a manager in charge of each medium,
[and] 5 artists to do the tracking, they pass us information to review. (15)
Those buyers that chose to shop alone were usually adamant in that position. Aesthetic tastes differed. The “outsider” was viewed as a hindrance in the relationship between buyer and artisan; they were unable to understand the burden of responsibility in spending large amounts of money that represented the yearly investment of a business. While “outsiders” viewed the market as one big “shopping spree”, buyers submitted to the tremendous pressure of determining the future of their businesses.

It’s very high pressure. That’s why I just don’t any...all your friends always want to go. And they think, ‘Oh, that is Hollywood or something.’ But I, when I let people come with me I tell them flat out, ‘Do not bother me. Don’t take anything I say personally.’ But this when I go to these shows, the buying, it’s like all of the money the rest of the year right there in what I see. So I really have to concentrate; I’m really concentrating. And I’m walking fast and I’m not there to fool around. And a lot of people don’t understand that. Cause they think you’re spending all this money and buying all this stuff, so it’s like going to a mall, a spending spree. But it isn’t......I mean I have a lot of people that are really depending on me to buy the right things, to see them so they earn a living too. (37)

Buying relationships involving a spouse were more numerous (n=10) than non-spouse market partners. The buying relationship, built on mutual respect for each other’s aesthetic preferences, involved balancing ideas, protecting the integrity of the business image, protection from overspending, and encouragement that the “right” decisions were being made.

...I’d say we generally, we both normally like or dislike something. That’s the normal case. I’d say 25% of the time when I will like something she won’t, and she won’t like something, or she will like something and I won’t or I don’t think it’s right, whatever. If the other person has an extremely strong negative feeling, 90 or 95% of the time we won’t buy it....I’m more impulsive about it....she’ll say, ‘Look, we won’t buy today; we’ll come back tomorrow,’ and now that we don’t feel quite as much pressure, we find that we’re able to do that and I think it is a better buying practice. (18)

One spouse partner felt that he and his wife “looked at it [buying craft] from a male and female standpoint.” Their clientele required them to consider gender preferences for gifts. Some couples saw benefits of one craft over another and negotiated differences or agreed to disagree if one preferred a particular craft and another did not. In two situations husbands attended
market with the spouse to help in locating vendors, keeping records, and generally reacting to the buyer’s choices.

Non-spouse buying relationships had many of the same characteristics (n=13). These relationships included business partners, owners, and a few relatives who were involved in the business. Partners in buying reduced the chance of missing outstanding craft at market. In the following situations each partner supported the other, and acted as a buffer when decisions were made:

...we balance each other out. He tends to be a little more conservative than I do. And he tends to go with a lot less expensive items than I do. So we really do balance each other out. He actually wasn’t able to go with me on my last trip to New York. And it was a real challenge to control myself (laughs) because I knew I would have to come home and show him all the orders. (23)

This time I had somebody who is now working with me. I hired for the reason that she seems to be a good business manager, which I thought complimented me. I basically knew and we had discussed the kinds of things that were selling before the things we should reorder, the things we should be looking for, so that is what we did. (11)

When you’ve been a buyer with someone for a long time, you get to the point where you just look at each other and you know, you just respond. I think that having someone provides you with a meter to read yourself by. I think, ‘Am I responding to this appropriately?’ But then I’m in charge of finances, so I have to weigh how the other person is responding against how I feel the finances are. (20)

Owner-buyer relationships occurred four times in the study. Buyers usually reported that each person went separate ways in the market and would regroup to compare notes and discuss potential decisions. Owners could always overrule a buyer’s response to an order. One buyer expressed frustration that the owner was more concerned with costs than appealing craft that attracted customers. Another buyer respected the position and power of the owner. Yet the buyer sensed mutual respect from the owner for the employee’s perspective on craft decisions:

Well, our owner was with me and basically I would say, well, what do you think, should I get two of these and she’d say, why don’t you get four. Mostly that. Once again I am generally more conservative and she’ll go ahead. It’s her money, I mean, I
mean she’s paying the bills. She can go ahead at that point and make a decision, ‘No, I think we ought to get more than that. Or I think rather than just getting 6 of these, I think we ought to have a whole dozen. That way it will look better on display. People will feel like they have more choices there’, whatever. So that’s where the sort of system of checks and balances comes in, you know. Or she may say, ‘Well, what about that thing up there?’ And I’ll say, ‘No, I’ve had those before and they don’t sell for me or whatever.’ (16)

In four situations a friend or relative accompanied the buyer to market. In these cases the buyer was confident that this individual had similar tastes or knew the business well enough to be a complement in the buying situation. There were advantages and limitations of having a second person at market, but the quantity of product present in the wholesale situation created an almost impossible task for one person:

She usually tags around. We hit these shows and she’s right behind me, and then what I miss she usually picks up. So we usually decide on what we’re going to do together - always. And I mean usually too, I’m the final say as far as it goes, like she always says, ‘Now you’re going to do what you want to do anyway.’ But I usually listen to her pros and cons. Because to me that’s the way I’ve always kind of stayed on the straight and narrow. It avoids a lot of mistakes by having someone else kind of echo what you’re thinking anyway. And we’re so close in thinking anyway. So it’s usually pretty good. (38)

Market partnerships appeared to be more critical to the individual than to the business. These relationships reinforced and encouraged buyers as they encountered ordering situations in the market. In all except four situations, the individual buyer retained the privilege of deciding who would make product decisions and how those decisions would be negotiated with others in the relationship. Market partners represented extensions of individual buyer’s interests and shared craft purpose.

Customers

Buyers valued their relationships with customers as these relationships were critical to the success of the business. The relationship for many buyers was built on mutual appreciation for a handcrafted product. For others it was founded in service to the customer.

Craft served as a medium to attract and educate customers. Customer relationships
provided satisfaction for buyers as consumers enjoyed their encounters with craft. One buyer conveyed that special craft in the store actually functioned to draw people into connecting with other products in the business:

...I have a lamp in the store right now that's a $6,200 lamp. And I know, well I don’t want to say it’s never going to sell. I would like not to sell it because it gets so much attention that it has paid for itself a thousand time. So even though we got a large investment in that piece, it’s paid for itself...because if I put it in the window it brings in 20 people a day to ask about it. So it’s things like that even if something doesn’t sell if it gets people's attention in the long run they do pay for themselves. (23)

Buyers listened to customers in order to gain reactions to craft being sold in the business. They also used customers’ comments to strengthen their relationship with vendors in order to convey concerns and ideas. When lack of craft exclusivity in a retail area threatened a business with loss of customers, buyers became protective of their customer relationships. Buyers felt a professional commitment to support the needs and interests of most customers.

I ask questions when they complain, try to find out what’s going on already, because sitting in the gallery I don’t know what women are going through, in styles or colors or whatever. So the only way is by asking questions. I guess that’s where communication is really important, knowledge...trying to gather that knowledge to be able to make a decision....I’m one of those people in my own gallery that’s not too busy yet, that I can still spend time with the customer. It works and people come back and say they feel good about their previous decision. They weren’t pressured...I’ve built my reputation on finding people [artisans] that aren’t everywhere. But when they drive two hours [customers] really need to feel that what’s in my gallery, they aren’t going to find when they go to the store when they go back home. (42)

A few buyers were unsure of their market and tended to compromise craft orders by succumbing to as many customer requests as they could handle. This strategy caused some buyers to refrain from purchasing craft they preferred, instead searching for craft to fill those requests. The ability of customers to pay for increasingly high priced craft caused other buyers to overlook craft that might be more appealing to themselves. Relationships with customers sometimes dominated the reasoning of buyers to the extent of jeopardizing their own finances to satisfy customers:
Of course, there is the old thing of having everything in blue, pink, or green and someone wants it in reds and it is a minimal for wholesalers usually 150, 200, 250, and you go around that route. Do you please the customer and order a whole new supply or do you turn the customer down and disappoint them. I tend to order a new supply.

Buyers' attachments to craft enveloped them in a web of relationships as they attempted to satisfy their personal and business needs for crafts. All of the relationships were based on an individual perspective regarding the importance of craft to people. Those relationships revolved around the vendor or the artisan, others in the business environment who took part in buying, and ultimately consumers. Relationships were businesslike and personal. Because of the hand involvement in creating them, crafts took on a deeper meaning for buyers than usefulness, beauty, value, and or just something that was a "good sell". Crafts created an invisible bond between individuals in a culture whose boundary was the wholesale and retail business market.

In summary, the supertheme of individual perspective was a combination of a buyer's ideology, aesthetic beliefs, and relationships concerning craft. A buyer's ideology included life experiences and perspectives that permeated every action taken in the small businesses of this study from establishing the business, to identifying a craft image for the business, and maintaining the business. The aesthetic beliefs of buyers were founded on a personal perspective of beauty and function, the value of craft, meanings associated with craft and culture, elements contained within craft designs, and methods of producing craft. These beliefs guided the choices of buyers as they planned, developed, and maintained their craft businesses. Relationships within the craft marketing system were established based on an individual's purpose in fulfilling craft needs for themselves and their businesses. The relationships with vendors, market partners, and customers enabled individual buyers to experience craft to its fullest.
Business Environment

From the supertheme of business environment, six subthemes emerged concerning buyers within craft businesses. The subthemes included internal conditions, retail competition, perceptions of risk, product salability, store environment, and consumers.

Internal conditions

Almost all buyers’ actions mirrored the buyers’ intentions in utilizing craft to create a business image that reflected the cultural context of the buyers’ experiences, beliefs, and responsibilities. Within the subtheme of internal conditions were issues related to tracking inventory and finances.

Tracking inventory

Buyers used a broad range of techniques for managing craft inventory and in preparing to order at market. Buyers’ educational and business backgrounds in accounting and mathematics appeared to influence inventory management techniques. Some buyers related detailed accounting methods for managing the business. Organizational skills were reflected in this buyer’s techniques for tracking and planning inventory:

Prior to going [to market] I look at my current inventory level and my current sales to date, and I break down my sales as a percentage by department; and then I break down my inventory by percentage by department and then I relate the two. Is my current inventory level in jewelry roughly 20%? Or if my sales are roughly 20%, then I know I have enough. I am buying the correct amount of jewelry and where I am over I try to adjust. And then I look at what my sales for the year have been in relation to past years, what the general percentage of increase or decrease is and then I project for the remaining months of the year based on that - percentages, growth, or whatever - what my sales will be. And I break it down by department according to the percentages that I just worked out in the sales and inventory percentages. Then I know about what I am going to sell in each department in each month. And I divide that by my standard mark-up rate and I find how much inventory I need to have in each department in each month in order to meet my projected sales. (10)

Many buyers used minimal methods of tracking sales and inventory, and then projecting needs. Two types of record keeping systems emerged in the interviews. One
utilized computers for maintaining inventory records. The other relied strictly on paper and mental records of sales and invoices. The following excerpts typify those methods:

I have to look at what is in stock in the store. I have an inventory that I keep on computer, but I go around and do a visual look at like vases and bowls and things like that because I remember better visually than by numbers. I write down numbers of say, chop sticks that I need from my computer because those are usually ones I don’t have anymore, cause I’ve sold out or...things like that I need to order. I think through the sales of the year and what is needed immediately, what is coming up. (40)

The other things are just like invoices and stuff, we just file. And [we] keep handwritten records. (43)

Records of sales and orders were important tools for tracking the progress of the craft business. Less confident buyers did not seem to know and use sound management techniques including record keeping. They had few resources for making decisions based on factual sales and inventory data. Many buyers mentioned that they were knowledgeable of at least an approximate budget, usually based on the previous year’s spending.

Finances Financially, craft buyers were constrained by spending limits based on some sort of budget and space in the store. The “bottom line”, as several buyers expressed it, or the need to meet budgetary needs, could not be avoided forever. Yet many buyers believed that the artistic characteristics of craft gave it value beyond the necessity of making a profit on every sale. One buyer stated that she sold craft to “pay the rent.” Others were frustrated with the difficulty of restraining their desire for craft, not being able to accurately anticipate need, and having to balance their spending. Making a business a profitable endeavor was linked to the goals of buyers toward making a profit or purely enjoying craft. The following quotes are indicative of buyers’ frustrations with budgetary limitations and how the constraint affected their choices at market:

...I saw these beautiful design eggs [at market], they were goose and ostrich. There was an egg that was carved like lace work, it was absolutely beautifully done. I thought I might get one. There is a minimum. I have to get other things. The problem
is, I can't get just things I like. The finances are a very important part of decisions. (11) [the frustration is] when you see nice products and can't buy them. (14)

Inventory concerns were linked to seasonal demand due to tourism or holiday sales. When other buyers were at their peak buying times at market, tourist buyers were planning for final summer sales of crafts, rather than buying new craft. Many of the more tourist oriented, seasonal businesses stocked more expensive crafts because they drew a clientele who demanded better craft and were willing and able to pay the higher prices. Some buyers were willing to “trade off” price points for more affordable craft to meet both the business and customer needs. One buyer explained the rationale:

...being conscious that the world is getting smaller, we thought it would be good to have things from other cultures. There are other people that carry crafts. They are beautifully done, but they are expensive, which is fine for other towns, but we are more of a working people's town and we wanted to keep the prices down. And we felt we couldn't carry the main craft, but because in the beginning we were thinking we could have both, but unfortunately it didn't turn out from the financial point of view. (11)

Pressure generated from the uncertainty of knowing if crafts would actually sell was mentioned by several buyers as an issue. Doubts about the economy as it affected customer demand and costs of craft arose when discussing planning for orders. Some buyers combated this sense of economic uncertainty by compromising on the quantities of orders; others buyers ordered regardless of economic risks because of their strong attachment to certain craft items. Still other buyers were limited due to the space within the business and the type of business (i.e., gallery versus craft store):

I buy very selectively because of the space factor, well, also the money factor. Even if I had more money, I wouldn't have more space unless I moved. I must say in the last couple of years that it's occurred to me that I probably ought to have more craft inventory because that seems to be what people are more willing to buy. I mean, they're very reluctant to spend the kind of money you have to spend to buy art. (41)
Buyers' abilities to plan spending and ordering affected their business decisions. Though the majority of buyers had some idea of a spending figure, only a few actually arrived at market with a definitive budget. The business background of buyers, their experiences with technology and budgetary management, and their competitive spirit seemed to drive the buyers' use of techniques to track inventory and manage finances. Many buyers in this study seemed to lack business training, but had adequate creative skills. The internal conditions of every business seemed to be affected to some degree by the requirement of making a profit in order to remain a solvent business.

**Retail competition**

Craft buyers were in positions of competition with other retail craft businesses. The competitive environment created the necessity for buyers to promote unique store images. Buyers created uniqueness through individual product selections:

> We try to have a lot of products here that you wouldn't find in like the airport. And we call it 'airport art'. And there's a lot of import stores that carry a lot of airport art and that's what's generally the touristy stuff. We try to get away from that as much as possible. (16)

> ...most of the things I have or have had and still try to get are because they are unique and they don't generally carry in gift shops and catalogs. (17)

Competition also prompted buyers to strive toward obtaining a larger customer share. Several craft retailers were especially competitive in attempting to retain the right of exclusivity to a particular artist's craft work. Galleries were more frequently in this position than other types of craft retailers. Exclusivity in terms of price, quality, limited production, and artist enabled some businesses to develop a competitive advantage. Buyers sought sources for one-of-a-kind craft in order to "beat out" other retailers. However, the prevalence of wholesale craft markets and increasing duplication of craft limited craft choices for buyers who sought exclusivity. Buyers sensed an increasing lack of power within the wholesale market system in the effort to retain competitive advantage.
But it is harder because I have to, we’re constantly getting a phone call from either a customer or an employee, somebody who’s been shopping around and saying, ‘You know that this other store has this too.’ That’s a disadvantage of dealing or buying through gift shows and things like that is we have little control over the uniqueness of products that we buy in the shows. Now we do buy in other areas too, in order to try to keep that uniqueness alive. (16)

So that is one of the stresses, is competition between galleries, exclusivity is a big thing, crafts people in galleries have spent hours and promoters have spent hours talking about exclusivity, how large it should be, how important it should be, how long it should be, how much you should have to order to get it, things like that. So that is a big stress, usually. (2)

Some buyers perceived competition as just a matter of business. Though many buyers were not interested in vendors’ “best sellers”, they were observant of what other buyers were ordering. One buyer who was interested in what her competitors were ordering learned to listen to vendors with confidence in their advice,

Just by talking to the vendors and being like, ‘So, what did so and so order? What lines are still open and what aren’t?’ And even just finding out from them, sometimes, I seem to go into a booth and sort of have an idea immediately what I like and what I want, whether it’s a trend or not. And they have told me that other buyers go by what they say. So now I listen to [vendors] very closely...because I know other people are as well. I’ve always tried not to do that, but it’s pretty important. (19)

The concept of competition seemed to extend far beyond the bounds of a business’s retail community. One buyer expressed a sense of competition even within the international community because of the limited kind and number of craft produced.

The first day [of market] is ultimate competition because not only am I competing with some of the stores that are in our area, but I’m also competing with all the stores that carry this kind of stuff here in the United States and probably in some other countries, too. And there’s only so many one-of-a-kind of things to buy. (16)

A non-competitive perspective was shared among a few buyers. Rather than competing with other galleries, these individuals had a mutual interest in stimulating artisans to provide higher levels of productivity and quality of work. They were interested in maintaining an
image of integrity, even within the bounds of limited market selections. All segments of the craft industry profited from this type of buyer support.

We travel a lot around the country. We jury art fairs and festivals, and we lecture on art marketing, professionalism; act as consultants to art organizations, profit and non-profit, which exposes us to a lot of crafts that are being done around the country. We also network heavily with a few other galleries that are quality and have similar integrity. We trade names back and forth to keep our artists active, and we find people through that, as well, but...if we find 3 dozen new people a year that is a lot. (15)

I go with basically what's out there, you know, what are other people selling, and I want to be a little bit different. I want to make sure that my quality is kept to the same level. (45)

Retail competition affected how buyers shopped the market and when and with whom they placed orders for limited craft designs. A competitive spirit shaped the actions and decisions of buyers in the market and in the manner in which they positioned their craft businesses.

**Perceptions of responsibilities**

Buyers' perceptions of their responsibilities in craft businesses were diverse. Responsibilities included forecasting trends, maintaining resources, (e.g., magazines, other businesses, and customers) from which to monitor trends, creating displays, managing personnel and budgets, paying CODs and other bills, and handling the myriad of other decisions that confronted the buyer daily. In addition to merchandise planning for the business, owner/buyers were also involved in balancing the demands of ownership.

...you have to take the risk, so it's that level of risk, I think, that puts pressure on me. And because I think a buyer who was not an owner and not responsible for the financing would feel it only in the sense of protecting their job, but for me I feel it for the whole sense of keeping my business alive and functioning. (20)

Buyers did not appear to be as organized in their responsibilities as buyers for larger retail organizations are reported to be. Traditional buying terms, such as "open-to-buy", were not used by buyers in this study. Buyers applied a variety of methods in utilizing business
information as they prepared to make buying decisions. These methods ranged from highly
detailed to loosely organized. Investment in computerized management systems was minimal
among buyers in this study. Some buyers understood the value of the technology, but had not
yet made the transition, inferring that lack of time and money were restraints. A few more
highly organized buyers made detailed charts by month and product category, projecting needs
for future purchases. Most buyers relied instead on sales receipts, records of past market
orders, notes, cards, photographs, and mental images of inventory as they planned and
shopped for market.

I usually do a quick inventory of the shop. I don’t even have to write it down. I just
want to see what’s still sitting there, what hasn’t turned over...just do a bottom line of
what we’ve got. And then sort of project from last year’s sales how much we
need...that I have to order. Then I usually go through the payables and see what we’ve
actually bought from vendors. Get an idea of volume of business with different
vendors. And then I keep a file of new ideas...something I saw that caught my eye I
thought somebody might be producing...but I do keep a budget of what I’m buying.
But if something hits my fancy, I’ll go over the budget. (44)

I also prepare for how much I spent at the previous show, as far as dollar amount and if
I was able to turn that over, once or twice or three times. And I try to get a handle of
what I feel comfortable with a budget, if I’m going to be spending, you know, $5,000,
$10,000, $15,000, right away on the spot at the show. So I have a limit of a budget
that I need to stick in there. (42)

Seasonal types of craft businesses or tourist-dependent crafts businesses seemed to
require more detailed planning due to the varied interests of customers. The seasonal nature of
wearable art (considered a craft by those who carried it in their businesses), required retailers to
plan in advance in order to have capital to invest in the next season’s clothing.

I bring in clothing first, which can be pretty expensive cause you have to have different
sizes and things, and usually it’s just a more costly item....which then starts wiping out
some resources for later. And...you have to really plan out and have capital so you can
work this. If you don’t bring it in then you don’t have a good season, because you
always have to put clothing on sale the end of the season. (40)
The results of disorganization and lack of planning resulted in failure to know when products were being shipped and having too many CODs. Many buyers admitted forgetting what they had bought, thus recognizing the need for improved organization to fulfill their buying responsibilities. Disorganization was a source of anxiety for some buyers. A variety in perspectives of responsibilities is expressed by the following buyers:

I find myself caught up in a circle of taking the money that I take in one day taking it to the bank the next morning, but that very same day writing out CODs in excess for what I took in. So maybe I am not so experienced in that area. (3)

One of the biggest pressures is when I finish at the end of the day is the way I buy. Panic kind of starts of how much did I spend? How much did I order, when did they schedule it to come in and what have I done, now if I were that other person [organized] I would know all those answers. (6)

The most important decision is how much you need to buy for a period of time. We break it up by month and in the month we break it up by what we want to have on the 5th of the month, 10th of the month, 15th, 20th, and I guess that’s about it. That I think is the most important thing. I think that is the hardest part of this business is that you have to make buying decisions many months in advance of receiving the merchandise. (18)

Selling was considered an important part of most buyers’ responsibilities. The ability of buyers to sell craft seemed to be related to a buyer’s artistic and salesmanship skills. Yet, buyers were mixed in their opinions about their effectiveness as sales people.

I sometimes don’t think I’m the best sales person in the shop. But I’m probably better than I think. I mean some people get attached to the owner, you know. And I’m not there right now, so I think that has something, it does something. But most of the time I’d rather somebody else go out and sell it. That I’d rather sell it by displaying it. And by buying it and by doing that sort of stuff. Because I almost sometimes feel guilty selling something to someone cause it’s my store. Isn’t that awful? I mean I don’t like to do a heavy sale. (40)

...you know, I will say I am a musician. And part of the reason why we have done so well with musical instruments is that I’m extremely skilled in demonstrating them. (18)

Perceptions of responsibility were developed as a part of an individual’s life, business, and academic experiences. Within the context of the craft business, buyers reflected their
beliefs concerning role responsibilities through their planning and execution of decisions in craft ordering. These responsibilities were concerned with organization, planning, selling, and managing the craft business.

**Salability**

Retail craft buyers recognized the need to buy craft that would sell in their businesses. Salability required that buyers balance their interest in a product with the anticipation of business needs, particularly in relation to pricing the product for resale to customers. Salability was comprised of three concepts: affordability, sales projections, and buyer confidence.

**Affordability**

The wholesale price of crafts in the market was considered a limitation in the ability of buyers and customers to afford the craft. Price points of craft often excluded orders because the buyer believed that the eventual retail price was beyond what many consumers could afford. Most buyers knew their clientele, the area, and the economy; they did not buy what could not be projected to sell:

> Price. It is very important. We are a conservative community. Things are slow. (13)
> But my decisions have entirely to do with two things: my aesthetic response to the work. You know, do I think that this is beautiful? Ah, and can I sell it? (41)

The responses of these buyers are indicative of the intensity of balancing all of their interests and the reality of making a business successful. Though aesthetics and quality were important factors for almost all buyers, price emerged as a poignant reminder of the business function, to make a profit.

**Assortment**

A second concept in salability was projecting the craft assortment. Past sales were frequently used as indicators of adequate assortment in terms of sizes, colors and prices of craft. The buyer’s aesthetic responses to craft, rather than projections based on customer need, were also used in assortment selection. It was important to most buyers that they buy enough assortment in particular sizes and prices to be able to create a pleasing display of the products from a particular vendor. Available space and finances limited the assortments
many buyers ordered. Assortment in price levels seemed to be a more important factor for satisfying customers. Some buyers considered assortment after other considerations, such as appeal and price:

Then secondarily I check price and then maybe array of the item, like if they only have one or two items of a whole set that I can sell, chances are I may not carry the work because I would never get up to their [minimum] order. Also if their price is just out of my market. (6)

**Environment of risk**

The confidence level of buyers varied according to the degree of perceived risk associated with a craft. Almost all buyers agreed that dealing in the unknown area of customer response created an environment of risk for buyers and their businesses. Risk was associated with unknowns in affordability and appeal of craft to consumers. More experienced buyers seemed knowledgeable of their market and were more inclined to take pricing and assortment risks. Uncertainty became a factor if a particular craft was priced beyond what buyers assumed their customers could or would pay. These buyers represented some of the more salient approaches to managing risk and pricing:

...just the whole feel, it felt good. It was just a really organic looking wonderful product. I looked closer and it was a high end of what I sell price wise and then I kind of took my time and looked at everything in the booth. I just kept thinking I want to carry this but it is too expensive and then I decided to buy it anyway. If you don’t try some of these things you never know. (6)

I have a philosophy. I look at something and can instantly tell you what someone will pay for it. I look at something and say that it is a hundred dollar item. Or that it is $75, or $50, that’s a $10 item. Then when I ask the price, if I feel that I’m going to get the markup based on my first assumption at what I think it should sell for, I would never say, ‘What a great price. I can make a little bit more money on this.’ (39)

Risk associated with assortment diminished as confidence in sales increased. Confidence seemed to be associated with the degree of satisfaction a buyer experienced when crafts sold as projected and with the length of time necessary to sell the craft.

I have pretty high confidence. What makes me more confident? When the items that I purchased sell. That’s it. (45)
My buying is definitely affected by what I think I can sell my customers...I'm a merchandiser; I love to put things together, and so I tend to see things as they relate to other things that I've purchased and I can usually see them in the store. Sometimes I just love something, and I figure if I like it that much, I'll just make it work... (20)

Dissatisfaction with sales resulted in disappointment for some buyers who wanted to be supporting to artisans who were counting on reorders. Though sales were an underlying goal for the majority of buyers in selling craft, a few were not dissatisfied if a high end, high quality, and unique craft remained in the store.

In summary, predicting craft sales took place in an environment of risk for most buyers. Salability of craft was contingent on pricing and on external factors such as the economy. Successful craft sales engendered satisfaction, a reduced sense of risk, and buyers' confidence in reordering craft. Careful selection of craft resulted in better sales and potential profit for buyers and their businesses, all of which directly affected the business environment of the buyer.

**Store environment**

The store environment mirrored the image of the buyer's aesthetic beliefs about craft. The physical characteristics of the business created a “sense of place” where customers could join in responding to craft. A variety of terms were used by buyers in describing the store environment: decorative, inviting, satisfying, “a look”, intimate, unique, interesting, high end, and international. Conceptualizations of store environment were based on the store location, type of product carried, ambiance, and space.

A store's location contributed to the buyer's desired environment for craft. Though most businesses were located in single buildings, a few were located in different settings such as a mall kiosk, home, or mini-mall. These later businesses were less definitive in presenting a clear image of craft. In contrast, galleries were more explicit in explaining how their craft function was reflected in the store environment:
...we have chosen the role of gallery rather than gift shop. Our goal is to search out artist craftspeople who are making dinnerware or flatware and linens, all those things that are available in the general market place. Have a certain signature style to them.

(15)

Types of craft media varied greatly among craft businesses. A few businesses focused on folk art, handmade, international, or U.S. craft. Other buyers described craft in their stores as decorative in use, usually in relation to home decorating. Buyer terminology provided insight into the relationship of craft to other products, such as “totally craft”, or a “variety of craft and gifts combinations.”

Irrespective of the location, buyers wanted their environments to be inviting and interesting to customers. They attempted to project, through the use of space and product, satisfying experiences for those entering the store environment. A few buyers combined craft products with other types of products, such as furnishings or frames. Other buyers combined U.S. and international craft. How these two categories combined to create the desired “look” was sometimes problematic for buyers. The importance of the store environment is heard in these comments from buyers:

Because when people come into our shop we want them to feel like they are coming home. It is friendly; it is a nice place to stay, to visit not just to run in and buy a card and run out. We want it to be an intimate experience that we can tell you about us and our business and we can tell you about the craft person that created that particular product and this is so important. You can’t get that from Midwest Packaging all up and down your counter. You just get that feeling of warmth and spirit of the American experience. We are very big on what we call it folk art tradition, and family traditions that you just can’t get without a type of product like crafts handmade and hand done items they exude themselves before we have to say anything about them. (12)

Most retail locations deal with mass produced objects that you could buy the same object in J. C. Penny’s in Dallas, as you would be able to buy it in Kansas City or anywhere else. And some people, I mean the consumer generally, in my opinion gets used to having a certain sameness. So when they walk in a store, like where everything is different than what they’ve seen, then it strikes them as a very unique and different kind of experience. (16)
Some buyers had separate areas for displaying craft; others were remodeling to create more space. Two buyers provided a description of how craft were used in the store environment:

[Crafts] make it more interesting. We don’t sell a lot of pottery, but it adds texture to the store. If you only had wood it makes it too masculine. I try to add lighter things to give it more texture and to appeal, to make it more feminine. The gift shop side is paneled with redwood, ceilings, wood beams; it is neat looking, so if you just had wood only it would dark and dim. So the other things lighten it up. (7)

Most buyers were interested in creating consumer-friendly environments in which the craft could be appreciated for its worth. The store environment was the buyer’s method of attracting customers. The projected image of the store was influenced by the buyer’s image of craft and its function in society. The decision was made by the buyer to create a specific store image through the product decisions made at market.

**Consumer response**

The sixth component of business environment concerned the buyer’s perception of consumer interests. Without customers the craft business would not exist. Buyers were keenly aware of the importance of customer sales. Gallery buyers expected less frequent turnover of craft than, for example, retail gift stores that carried a much broader assortment and lower price line craft. Concepts associated with consumers focused on predicting consumer interests, product information, types of customers, and perceived customer needs based on special requests and type of store.

Anticipation of consumers’ product preferences was handled in a variety of ways by buyers as they processed through decision making. Most buyers used past sales as a measure of consumer interest; others relied on resources, such as magazines, to understand trends, while many “listened” to their customers. Only a few buyers were less trusting of customers’ craft preferences and relied on their own instincts in making product decisions:

But as far as getting into certain aspects of it [understanding consumer preference], no I tend not to go. People seem fickle to me, one week they’ll say they want it. You get it
for them, the next week they don’t want it. I usually just do my own thing, I don’t listen to anyone else. (8)

Many buyers vacillated in their judgment of anticipating consumer preferences and deciding on a craft image for the business. The kind of craft to order revolved around the attraction of customers to the store image rather than a specific craft product. Anticipation of customer need was linked to whether the target customers were tourists or local residents. The majority of buyers recognized the difficulty of meeting the needs of such diverse groups. With tourists, products would be more expensive and more unique in styling. Local customers, less willing and generally unable to pay the high prices, were the focus of end-of-season sales. Repeat customers challenged buyers to purposely seek unique craft in order to maintain customer interest.

...we had a customer that saw us in our store and she mentioned she used to love to purchase dolls but she could not find them anymore. So we thought, ‘Hey, she is a collector.’ So we started carrying that line as well as others because of a direct demand for that product. We had other people come in and say they wanted a pottery line, but we are tired of the blueberry pattern from Maine, so that is when we got involved with pottery. We try to listen to our customers. (12)

Buyers filled both business needs and customer needs when they ordered craft. Some engaged in repetitive buying of “good sellers”. Others focused on a specific medium of craft, while still others maintained quality as a consumer interest above other alternatives. A perception among most buyers centered on the ease of selling craft versus art. Viewpoints among buyers differed concerning crafts’ appeal to customers as functional craft or decorative craft. Regardless, craft appeared to buyers to have a broader customer appeal than art:

The fact is that selling art it is to a much smaller audience. It has to be a much more secure audience. You have to have a lot more name, a piece of craft is a much wider audience. People find it much easier to buy it. More comfortable to buy it, even though it’s really a piece of art. (2)
Product information was of interest to buyers and to their customers. Buyers provided product information, such as a history of the artisan and the production method, to increase attraction of consumers. Environmental issues surfaced when discussing natural materials used in the production of craft. The cultural context of production and the meaning associated with some craft was viewed as a personal connection between the consumer and the artist.

Yes, people want to know where this comes from, what is it made of, how was it made. We do have labels that say handmade inside and sometimes the suppliers supply us with little explanations. Yes. People do read them. (11)

Consumers were a necessary focus of craft businesses in order to justify buyers’ interests in craft. Business success depended on attracting and fulfilling customer needs. Anticipation of consumer needs and interests were nearly always difficult for buyers to project, even though many buyers were able to profile what they perceived to be their typical customer.

**Global Issues**

Craft buyers held diverse opinions concerning the importance of international and U.S. craft in society and particularly in retail businesses. Though the majority of buyers in this study indicated strong inventory commitment to U.S. craft (n=32 businesses with greater than 75% U.S. craft), six businesses invested 90% or more of their inventory in international craft. Buyers attended markets that reflected their commitments to U.S. or international craft. None of the buyers discussed attending a completely international wholesale craft show, unless they dealt individually with vendors or traveled to Europe to attend market. Buyers with a greater commitment to international crafts more actively sought vendor sources for foreign made craft than buyers with a small percentage of international craft. Three conceptual subthemes influenced buyers’ decisions to select international or U.S. crafts or some combination of the two. The subthemes included international production, pricing, and the craft market system.

**International Production**

The first subtheme, international production, addressed cultural authenticity, social
responsibility, accessibility, product quality, and value and price factors. The lower cost of international craft satisfied the quality and price needs of some buyers and their customers. Thus, the inclusion of international craft in those situations was economically rather than philosophically oriented.

Buyers expressed several viewpoints about where international crafts were produced. Buyers who were more interested in cultural authenticity of craft relied on developing nations for their sources of craft. These individuals sought craft that used indigenous materials and processes, as well as culturally functional items. A few buyers dealing in less expensive international craft offered the opinion that international craft from far eastern countries such as Thailand or China were not really handmade crafts:

   Somehow I don't consider it [jewelry from Thailand] a craft. I guess it is because I could order 40 of the same earrings and everyone of them would look practically identical... (7)

The issue of social responsibility to producers emerged as a point of concern for several buyers. Some of the businesses with greater concentration of international craft had adopted this philosophy of supporting international producers, particularly in developing countries. Buyers in those businesses considered it “humbling” to work with artisans from those countries. Included in social responsibility were production conditions, “I just came back from China and I was quite appalled at the working conditions there”, and benefits extended to artisans, such as fair pay to artisans, particularly women:

   I carry handmade dolls from other countries...I like the idea of supporting women in their native craft, no matter where they are being made. Peru, Ecuador, Thailand, Europe. (7)

   They are helping other people in Romania. They are making money and able to live because of this business and I thought that was a worthwhile cause to be involved in. (12)
Accessibility to international crafts for many buyers was influenced by the wholesale market they chose to attend. The presence of international vendors at some markets and not at others limited buyers' accessibility to foreign craft. Buyers with less conviction about the value of international craft seldom sought alternative sources for international vendors. Increasing buyer interest in international craft was attributed by one buyer to demand for "low-priced merchandise":

...but our demand and our greed and our need for low-priced merchandise pushes us deeper an deeper into the third world. And...if you don't have a social conscious, and I do believe that crafts people are part of that microeconomic structure, that more of us hold up the trade between countries... (39)

For a number of buyers, low quality and poor delivery of international craft reflected a need for producers to develop higher standards of production. Buyer's failure to receive consistent products that are well constructed was a concern. The packaging of international craft sometimes affected the quality of the product eventually delivered to the buyer. Though buyers were sensitive to the production and environmental issues, they seemed to view these as an impairment to the quality and salability of international craft:

Poor packing I find a sad thing. And I know one of the things, a lot of craft importers are also very environmentally conscious and they'll shred or they'll use any alternative packing material to avoid bubbles or Styrofoam and sometimes they can't...It's a tough one, especially when you're talking about developing countries and their limited supplies to pack like that. (39)

Some buyers' perceptions of quality were related to the country of origin. Crafts ordered from Pacific Rim countries often arrived damaged, leaving buyers with high returns and with dissatisfied customers:

...What our experiences are with buying stuff from Taiwan, China, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand is that we probably send back 15% of what we get for poor quality. And that doesn't count what the customer probably gets after he gets home. (27)
A few buyers purchasing craft overseas, felt that craft designs actually originated in the U.S., but production occurred in many other countries, such as India or China, due to low wages. Only a few buyers believed international craft to be better than U.S. craft. For a small number of buyers, international craft from Europe satisfied elite customer need. In one example, a buyer purchased hand blown glass from Italy. In another example, handwoven bed sheets of 600 count Egyptian cotton were brought to the United States for additional embellishment by a U.S. textile artisan.

Most buyers of international craft, as compared to buyers of predominantly U.S. craft, seemed conscious of promoting the international artisan's plight of poverty and the artisan's culture as much as the craft. These buyers were knowledgeable of political and economic constraints on craft production and were most interested in cultural authenticity. Craft from developed nations was perceived to apply more sophisticated production techniques and product designs. Buyers wanted importers to be knowledgeable of the cultural meanings of craft and production processes. Buyers with less understanding of foreign cultures seemed more likely to promote international craft as a lower priced product than for its value as a cultural tool of understanding. A small group of buyers sought reputable European and Canadian craft that created an elite store image.

Pricing

The price of U.S. craft was subject to criticism by craft buyers who considered U.S. crafts too "pricey". This viewpoint dealt with the positioning of U.S. crafts as an elite segment of the industry. Several buyers expressed disdain for the high prices and perceived superior attitudes of some U.S. artisans. Other buyers realized the costs of materials, shipping, and time required to produce craft. The costliness of U.S. craft was a prohibiting factor in the sale of craft for some buyers:

But I find American craft very pricey. I can't stand dealing with the egos attached to all that stuff. They all sit there in their high director's chairs, you know, they are the
person that's made it, but they're all a little too full of themselves. I'm sorry to say. You know I deal with such humble people in the Third World that sometimes I just feel that it's nice that we've elevated American craft to the place where it is, but I think we could elevate some imported crafts up also. (39)

I think that I feel a little sad, the fact that there are a lot of good American craftsman and they are beautifully made, but I know it takes time, material is expensive, therefore they tend to be expensive. Most people can't afford them as opposed to the international crafts... (11)

Among buyers, there was a sense that international craft would not be totally excluded due to their lower costs and excitement as a different type of craft. Other buyers were unsure how to handle both U.S. and international craft. They felt the two could not be sold together or at least not displayed together because of the price differential. One buyer expressed her opinion of U.S. craft, "[It's] nice stuff, but so much more expensive that it moves it into a different shop." Her "regular" customers could not afford most U.S. craft.

Some buyers felt international craft was priced below it's value in creativity, quality, and originality. Buyers dealing in nearly one hundred percent international craft were concerned that international artisans needed to better understand the potential market value of craft. A few buyers expressed frustration that some artisans failed to understand the concept of perceived value and priced craft too cheaply.

A few international craft buyers felt compassion for U.S. artists and were including more of the "reasonably" priced work in their selections. The value of any artist's work was an important criterion for some buyers:

...to me any artist...deserves some kind of place for their goods and I feel sorry for American artists. Cause I think it's very difficult in this country to be taken seriously as an artist. And to me your love of craft, you should be able to make a living at it. It's so difficult in this country. Because the cost of living is so high. (38)

Buyers, though critical of the high price of U.S. craft, offered no solution to decreasing the costs. Instead buyers seemed to adjust their decision making to include U.S. craft, to promote it as the business' primary focus, or to include the less expensive international craft.
The higher prices of U.S. craft limited middle income consumers from purchasing what one buyer called “good middle of the road craftsmanship” from the United States. Other more exclusive craft businesses chose to purposely limit their clientele base by selecting high-end U.S. craft.

Craft marketing system

The wholesale market represented the primary avenue through which craft buyers obtained craft. A few buyers were outspoken in their views of the craft marketing system. One buyer felt that only true artists, not “teachers and instructors”, should be selling craft, since for many artists it represented their only source of income. A few buyers considered the exposure of artisans’ work to a broader audience in the marketplace more important than even selling of craft.

Buyers felt that by limiting themselves to strictly craft wholesale markets, rather than gift and other kinds of wholesale markets, they would fail to remain competitive for consumers’ dollars. Other types of markets (i.e., boutique shows, gift shows, and non-craft markets) offered varying perspectives of consumer products and trends. Many buyers reported attending several different types of wholesale shows, some out of fear of missing opportunities to order new and unique craft. The smallest craft retailers seemed to limit themselves to specific craft markets because of limited budgets and time.

U.S. craft and gift markets represented a network in which buyers and vendors negotiated orders for craft, sought creative ideas, and competed with one another in the craft venue. The uniqueness of the U.S. craft marketing system was described by one buyer:

...the whole craft world is a little bit of a flea market, going to the fruit market, going to a third world craft bazaar, and it is an art fair. It is a unique mixture and it has never happened anywhere else. Whether it will continue is questionable. (15)

U.S. craft markets offered much more variety and quantity of products than many buyers needed. Some buyers supported wholesale markets offering specific product categories, yet a
few were critical of markets whose craft were “too country.”

Markets were considered increasingly repetitive in vendor and product content. Buyers sought other environments in which they could source craft and communicate with artisans about specific product needs. The overabundance of vendors and repetition of the same vendors at many markets was a concern of many buyers in the study.

...there seem to be a lot more sellers than there are buyers. There seems to be an imbalance between the number of people that are retailing and the amount of product that is available. It takes away from some of the excitement for me when there are not a lot of buyers because it sets a tone for the show...So when we go to a show and the artists are all standing around talking to each other, it makes it seem unprofessional and it makes us worry about what our future is financially...I think there are so many places for people to buy things now, it’s really hard for us to survive...unless you really have something really different to offer. (20)

Some buyers seemed open to the inclusion of more international craft in the marketing system. They recognized a need to expand their views in order to provide a product with value to the customer. One buyer shared his perspective on the need for the total craft industry to think more globally in the current economy:

...when you are dealing with a craft person you don’t get them to lower their volume and price by doing more volume because they still turn them out one at a time...We have to look at pricing and also talk to a bunch of other galleries who recognize world crafts...We have two or three items we are test marketing now. They are designed by American artists, but are produced overseas...We took a trip to Mexico in January looking for native crafts and found people not much different from American crafts people. The weaving villages, raising their own sheep, dying their own wool, you are equating craft people and that is more of a global economy, while our philosophy is preferred to be American crafts people. We are measuring customer response to how much their loyalty is going to be, is it just made in America and how much they are going to support our gallery... (15)

The craft system offered for buyers a method of networking in which “the mutual benefits as a buyer and dealer have to be recognized from everyone’s level.” The uniqueness of the marketing system for crafts was also criticized for failing to give to artisans a long term avenue of commitment. Other buyers expressed concern that the increasing cost of crafts
would put both buyers and artisans out of business, or make it too difficult to buy and sell craft. One buyer shared opinions on the problems within the U.S. system:

The sale market is a short term boost to the craft person. I see a lot of people producing garbage based on our standards. These shows are too big for a buyer to end up seriously looking at anyone's booth, you have a few minutes and you are looking for something outrageous, exciting, stimulating and good price; there is so much to see when you have artists that you are already working with, you have maybe the opportunity to smile and wave. It takes 3 or 4 days to do these shows. (15)

Retail craft buyers shared an excitement and commitment to the merchandising of craft from the United States and other areas of the world. Awareness of other cultures and experiences in other cultures seemed to be a factor in a buyer's allegiance to either U.S. or international craft. Pricing, quality, production standards, and product value were secondary to personal appeal and customer need when buyers made decisions in ordering craft for their businesses. The nature of the system in which crafts were marketed was a concern to a growing number of buyers committed to maintaining a worthwhile presence of crafts in society.

**Market Environment**

The market environment was the wholesale market in which buyers chose to participate in order to obtain craft. Four concepts appear to impact buyers' choices of markets and product. The first concept contains factors that define the physical characteristics of the market setting. These characteristics include the layout of the market, size, operating procedures, and surroundings that affect the conditions when ordering craft. Second, market climate represents a sensory response of the buyer toward markets. Buyer priorities, the third concept, explains how the buyer manipulates a plan for exploring the contents of the wholesale market. The fourth segment is the focal point of the decision making process, the actual ordering of crafts. Decisions at market related to the buyer's image of the business, how business parameters were defined, and the buyer's sense of which craft fit the buyer's interests, business needs,
and customer needs and interests. The buyers brought to the decision environment a set of
criteria on which craft decisions are based. These criteria affected which section of market to
visit, which vendors to visit, and which products to order. The craft order itself is the result of
a simultaneous interaction of these factors interfacing in the market environment.

Market setting

The physical conditions of each market contribute to the buyer’s selection of markets to
attend. The ease with which they could access and maneuver in those environments influences
to some degree the markets they select and the products they order.

The setting in which the markets occurred offered for some buyers an extra benefit of
combining business and pleasure. Locations of markets were considered important criteria in
selecting which to attend. The ease in reaching market was a factor for many buyers due to
cost and time away from the business. Buyers were interested in selecting markets that they
could coordinate with visits to other markets or independent artisans. Some buyers’ families
accompanied them to cities in which markets were held even though they did not participate in
the buying function. Amenities such as dining and entertainment, transportation, safety, and a
general sense of being a “pleasant city” apparently make the market experience more of an
enjoyment for some buyers.

I like Boston it is a nice city to go to. I probably wouldn’t go back if I didn’t like or
was not comfortable with it. It has enough artists at it to make a decent show, knowing
I will find something. That’s all. (6)

It is the timing and the location. It is easy for us to get to San Francisco, my husband’s
mother lives just north of there and we can combine a visit with our trip and probably
go to the one in Seattle or Portland; [that] would be great. Maybe we will get a chance
to go to one of those. We are always looking for something new because of those
repeat customers. (7)

Buyers were interested in maximizing their time at market. The organization of the
market, including the layout and location of vendors and specific product categories,
determines how buyers walked the market, organized their shopping, located preferred
vendors, and searched for new vendors and products. Almost every buyer referred to the physical demands and fatigue resulting from attending a wholesale market. However, only a few buyers seemed to limit the amount of time at market due to the physical factors. Buyers who are not owners tended to travel farther and seek more diversified markets. Most buyers seem willing to endure a few hardships to secure the best choice of craft for their businesses.

**Market climate**

The second concept in the market environment is market climate, which encompasses the responses of buyers to market conditions. Issues of accessibility to vendors and products, economics, pressure, socialization, and product are all of concern to buyers. How buyers respond to the market climate influences whether a buyer will return to a market in the future. Most buyers had attended more than one market and in most cases many. Buyers were able to relate their perspectives based on consecutive years of attending wholesale craft markets.

Market climate was characterized by location, product content, and purposes of market promoters. Some markets were viewed as being large, such as the New York International Gift Fair, or as in the case of Boston, small. Markets were evaluated by the quantity and quality of vendors accessible to the buyers and by the increasing or decreasing similarity of craft products. In most instances buyers perceived that markets were increasingly more similar, lacking original products or new products. Buyers noticed that vendors at some of the larger shows were also involved in many other shows. There was an overall sense of repetition and frustration for many buyers:

The last one was June and the feeling is there is a lot of people out there doing the same thing and nobody is making money out of it. There is a lot of duplication. The problem with wholesale markets is does it provide the artist with some economic base. At some level the art form becomes too market driven; people end up looking at what their neighbors are doing, looking at who is selling what. Artists have to come to a wholesale market with an idea they are willing to make 3,000 of these or whatever and they bring to those markets items that they feel comfortable making production on.
Buyers compare markets from year to year. Some buyers felt particular markets offered better crafts and more preferred categories of product, while others considered shows simply duplications of other shows. Some shows were avoided because they were regionalized in their product and vendors. Buyers were sensitive to the market environment, using terms such as pessimistic or optimistic to describe their feelings about how the market was behaving. The following quotes indicate the range of responses buyers expressed about the atmosphere of markets recently attended:

I usually like to walk through Accent on Design. Most of it I don't buy...but a lot of it it's too high tech, hard cold looking to me and there's an attitude problem I find in that section...They think they're hot shit. Some of them. It could be either [sales reps or artists]. You know, like the people in [name of vendor] will not put their booth in Accent on Design and they were the ones that defined it as 'there's an attitude problem there.' (40)

I would say that my previous experience with Boston was that it was very depressing and the market out there was very depressed, the economy in the city; and the previous market I had this ominous 'what am I doing here purchasing with everyone of doom and gloom?' I didn't have that feeling this time, you had the feeling of the economy is great, let's sell, sell, sell. (6)

I'm talking about the Baltimore ACC show. It's the best one...Quality, Expansiveness. Those are the two things that hit me about that show. Big! You just get a different feeling at that show from every other show. It's like the best of the best for the year, for the most part...And you feel like every booth is like going to be a surprise, something really wonderful there. (18)

Market selection and subsequently vendor and product selection were related to the variety of artisans who presented at a wholesale market. Some markets were considered for their contribution to keeping up to date on trends, opportunities to experience a variety of artisans, timing, and ease of access to other markets.

...where I go to the Philadelphia Rosen show, cause it's the biggest of the Rosen shows and it's a pretty fine show. And I go to the Baltimore ACC show. Those are the two primary ones I use for crafts. As far as trade shows go, I have three boutique shows to attend each year. And the boutique shows have led off into other shows, so there are subsidiary shows at hotels where they have things that might be a little more wearable art that go on at the same time. Then I have two New York gift shows a year. And sometimes I go to California, cause things are happening out there that aren't
happening here. I just can’t afford to put that one in all the time. These shows cost a lot of money. (40)

For a few buyers proximity to the market became a factor in attending or choosing other markets. Unlike some buyers the following retailer chose to attend wholesale markets far away from his or her business location in order to reduce competition with other retailers:

When I buy from that market because it’s in Minneapolis, a lot of my customers are from Minnesota, St. Paul, and they come down and say, ‘Oh, I saw this at such and such a gallery’...that’s the worst thing I can hear. So I’ve stayed away from that....There’s too much competition there. (42)

Buyers were keenly aware of product variety, new vendors, or the absence of new vendors. They sensed the effects of a slow economy on sales taking place in the market. The changing dates and locations of some markets created timing and access hardships for buyers. Though buyers have definite opinions about the markets they attend they expressed optimism about forthcoming markets:

Because I always give everything about three chances. They may change vendors for this, they may, you know, that’s what I’m hoping that there’ll be different vendors there. (45)

Pressure emerged as a factor in market climate. One aspect of pressure was meeting minimum orders, particularly when dealing with bigger companies offering prepackaging. For small craft businesses, buying “in bulk” and meeting high minimum levels created a sense of pressure due to the cost of investment. Other types of pressure were equated with the failure of buyers to see the kind of craft they wanted to see. Pressure was reduced when buyers sensed a broader craft selection.

Time was an element of pressure as well. The time length of markets placed buyers in situations of stress in attempting to see as much as possible. Scheduling of shows in
conjunction with other markets was expressed as both an advantage and a disadvantage to buyers:

Rosen is Philadelphia and then ACE is Baltimore and they are back to back, so that people can go do both of them in one trip. And one of the problems right now is the other shows that used to be back to back are no longer back to back. (2)

A few buyers sensed a negative attitude by market promoters toward children. One buyer shared an experience where she was asked to leave a market because she was pregnant. The buyer related that she had vendor friends who would hide their babies under tables in order to nurse them. One other buyer volunteered that he believed that a wholesale market was no place for children. However, buyers did not seem to avoid selecting a market because of negative experiences such as these.

Though buyers did not usually identify pressure as such, their comments about time, selection, and other experiences revealed some anxiety. The attitude of many buyers, though, was that the enjoyment of buying crafts overshadowed many of the pressures they experienced at market:

I don't have any pressure at all. Not really. No, oh, you have instincts, you buy something; it's the wrong thing, you buy something that's the right thing...No, I enjoy what I do. (17)

Market climate contained several elements dealing with the less tangible aspects of selecting and attending a wholesale craft market. Buyers selected markets because they were searching for new vendors and new craft products. Buyers were sensitive to changes in economic situations that affected both the variety and quantity of vendors and associated products, as well as the effect on other buyers. Buyers did not appear to be daunted by a slow economy, lack of new product, or few vendors. Optimism guided most buyers' market selections.
Buyer priorities

The subtheme of priorities emerged as buyers discussed how they approached the task of visiting and participating in the wholesale craft market. Prioritization applied to preshow preparation, shopping strategies, reviewing, and pressure.

Plans made prior to shopping the show maximized the time and money of the buyer and the associated business. Frequently buyers mentioned that show catalogs enabled them to locate specific sections of the market, vendor booths, new exhibitions, and other points of interest. Most wholesale markets covered large areas and were difficult or impossible to walk in one day. Because time was mentioned by almost all buyers as an element of pressure in attending markets, buyers’ plans enabled them to cover areas of interest to them.

Preparations for market also concerned arriving before the market opened in order to visit vendors who specialized in international craft and one-of-a-kind craft. This preparation entailed ordering outside the market in order to pre-empt competitors. Buyers had to maintain lists in order to avoid duplicating product categories bought during the pre-show. For a few buyers the pre-show preparations and activities were equally as important as the shopping and ordering at market:

...At the gift show you are not allowed to buy the actual piece and take it out with you, so they...they rent big rooms and set up big booths where you can basically go and pick out what you want. For the first day, I go to a private showing where I take my own stickers from my store with my store name, and I am moving so fast; you run around and you get there as early as possible. You are there when the doors open. You run around like a mad woman...you know who else is going to be there. They are the other people who have stable businesses who have been doing this for years also. I know exactly who they are. We are all frantically running around and licking stickers trying to keep the best pieces as fast as we can and then we go back with the owner of the business and invoice the pieces. The second day is still prior to the actual opening of the show. There is another private show; this is the person who imports from Africa who has good quality and one-of-a-kind. They actually have a house way out in the burbs and I rent a car and tackle the freeway, but you have to get there early because it is the same thing, and there are people who are doing the same thing. But [I] show up with my stickers and try to get there early. I run around and choose all these pieces, but it is hard. I have to keep within my budget and keep an on-going total going in my head. (10)
Buyers utilized different strategies for “shopping the market” depending on the market they were attending and the divisions within the market. Three groups of buyer shopping behavior seem to characterize craft buyers at market. The behaviors are identified as targeting, ranking, and random shopping. Although focusing initially on a single approach, buyers in all three groups use variations of these once they have achieved specific shopping goals.

The first shopping strategy, targeting, is used by buyers to select sections of the market or specific vendors to visit first. The products contained in those sections or booths were high on the priority lists of buyers using the targeting strategy. The targeting approach is used in buying one-of-a-kind craft before the competition arrives or to insure that orders are placed early with specific artisans. Buyers in this group seem to be technical planners, know their product needs, and have well defined craft images for themselves and their businesses:

We do the biggest emphasis for the show in those 8 aisles or 10 aisles [Accent on Design]...But just generally when it says, like General Gifts, I walk every single aisle in a show because you never know what you’re going to find anywhere. But I always do have a focus of what area I want to go to first in a show and usually I try to finish up in that area as well. I know that show also had a craft section as well. So those are usually my first two priorities...Then, of course, if I do like the ACC show and the Rosen Show, where it’s all crafts, I guess my emphasis changes to more...glass. Glass is what I start looking at first. And then sort of prioritize down. (23)

The second strategy, ranking, involved listing specific show sections, vendor booths, and particular people that the buyer wanted to visit. Targeting was also used as a precursor to ordering buyer shopping preferences. In this method the buyer was able to focus on product needs, accomplish specific goals, and avoid wasted time in areas where specific types of craft did not fit into the buyer’s merchandise assortment and store image. Buyers were concerned with being able to accomplish the goal of seeing as much as possible while achieving product needs. Prioritizing shopping needs empowered buyers to be efficient and effective shoppers:

I go see my friends first. I go to see them and at this time fortunately they’re also the people that I usually need the most. So it kind of works out well. But so I go to them first and then I will, then from there after I see my friends, then go to the three or four
specific booths, I really want to see and then I methodically go up and down all aisles. And then I go over to, at the end, to the cash and carry to get some items that I have to pick up by hand and take with me. Cause I don't want to carry them with me all day. (37)

A third approach involves randomly shopping without any plan of targeting or ranking sections or vendors. The concern of buyers in this category is to avoid missing any part of the market that holds potentially new vendors or products. Buyers in this group exercise minimal planning, relying on their intuitive sense to shop and select craft product:

No, I walk the isles, because there may be somebody, you know, what I do I really don't stop at each booth, I walk fast and I look and look left and right and if something catches my eye then I stop. There are a lot of things that do not catch my eye, but usually if there is something, a vendor that has other things that will interest me. (11)

Buyers adapted variations of shopping strategies at market. Some buyers shopped randomly first and then ranked vendors. Others targeted vendors and then shopped randomly to avoid missing new products. An example of a combination of strategies is related by one buyer:

And then I'll...go on down the line with the goal at the end of the time period I'll have all these people I'll want to revisit. This is just a preview. I'll have a list of people that I'll go back and pay close attention to. This is kind of a first screening. And then I'll go place to place. I'll only stop and talk to people who are really, if it really hits me because I want to get a real good impression on that to be able to remember to go back. It's really important that people have booth number, card, some sort of color information sheet or something that they can just hand out. (42)

At the end of the day, reviewing the day's accomplishments was important to nearly all buyers. Buyers reviewed where they had been, who they had seen, and what craft they had bought. Breaks in the day, meals, and evenings provided a respite in which they could concentrate and make additional plans to include sections and vendors they wished to review and products they wanted to order. Regardless of the strategies used by buyers, reviewing was critical in maximizing the time at market:
Usually Tuesday night you think you have everything, but you just go back and look and make sure and sometimes you find things that you overlooked. Many times over the years you all of the sudden you see some new product you were just too panicked or too busy to see and now that it is calmed down and the panic is over and the last day and everyone is relaxed and you see it. It is important to stay there and allow yourself every single minute and time you can. Right now we have great merchandise coming into the store and it is because we went through that fine tuning process. (10)

The buyer's immersement in the wholesale market created a number of pressures that were related to their use of priority strategies. As buyers discussed their planning, several issues emerged that illustrated the intensity of the wholesale market environment. One buyer reflected on the pressure of market:

For me it is the enormity of it. There is lots of ground to cover in a limited amount of time and most of the people I deal with are not real high pressure salesman types...I think it's mainly seeing so many things at once and trying to keep track of it. Also the physical aspect. Talk about shop till you drop! (7)

Buyers sensed the pressure of limited time in which to shop, competition with other retailers for sought-after craft, fatigue, and crowds. More experienced buyers realized the necessity to focus shopping to specific segments and therefore reduce some pressure.

Ordering

The placement of an order for craft represented the culmination of a lengthy decision making process. The placement of orders was the focus of the market experience for the buyer. Without orders, buyers failed to meet business needs and experienced disappointment in not fulfilling the personal enjoyment of craft.

Several conditions seem common among buyers as they shared how they ordered craft. Less crowded booths are sought by buyers; some buyers purposely avoid booths with crowds. The artisan/vendor is the preferred contact for placing an order. The craft being ordered must meet the needs of the buyer and the business. Finally, the buyer possesses an intuitive sense that a particular craft is the perfect fit. When most of these conditions are met, orders are placed. Buyers share a spirit of anticipation in placing orders. One buyer described the
feelings of enjoyment with ordering, "Well, I enjoy it. It's definitely something we look forward to."

Three types of ordering patterns emerged from the interviews. The patterns are characterized as spontaneous, calculated, and postponed. Spontaneous orders are characterized by on-the-spot decisions. Some buyers used the term "instant decisions". The following examples illustrate some of the reasons buyers order spontaneously:

If I am going to buy craft, I try to do that ordering on-the-spot. [If] they don't have a catalog or they only have a price list, it is difficult to remember when you get back. Also, if you don't make your order after the show, sometimes you don't place an order at all because the initial impact of what you saw can wear off by the time you get home. And then you think, 'I can't remember what it was;' or it was not as great as you thought, and then you get busy and forget...a craft item is easier to order on-the-spot because you can say I want that and that. You know what you are ordering and you don't have to try and reconstruct from the description. (7)

Now if I come upon something that absolutely knocks me out, I will order it right away, cause I have learned that sometimes if you wait when you come back they'll say, We're not taking anymore orders. So if I think something is really drop-dead terrific, I make the decision immediately. (41)

These remarks represent a range of motives concerning spontaneous ordering. For a few buyers the spontaneous order represents an effort to compete with other retail craft buyers for limited edition crafts at the market. For some it is a matter of instant product appeal, satisfying all the senses and needs of the buyer. For others, the instant decision is derived before rational needs can be weighed. Some buyers view the order as a risk. Several buyers relate spontaneous decisions as necessities, with pressure inherent in the process, "...there is this pressure to figure out what else should I order, and then trying to do it instantly..." Some buyers in the spontaneous category were frequently prepared with budgets and category needs, yet responded emotionally to craft and vendors without consideration of their total plan:

I do a lot of preparation and then I blow it all! I study all the inventory, so that I know what I have and what I need. I do a budget so I know when I should have stuff coming in. What months I should order stuff for. I know how much I should order overall dollar wise. I go through the stock pretty carefully, so I have a feeling for what
I need dollar wise of what I need and which categories and then I get down there and see 25 people in one category that I don't need that are really exciting and wonderful; I buy them all! (2)

Individual buyers in the spontaneous category are planners who also see the advantage of placing orders on-the-spot to compete with other retailers. Some buyers are fearful of losing the opportunity to buy fine quality craft, while others are swayed by the emotional appeal of a craft.

The second type of order is a calculated decision. This kind of order is placed by a self-disciplined buyer, one knowledgeable of budgetary limitations and craft product needs.

Normally, we'll walk along and come across a booth and see what we consider exquisite glassware. We inquire about the price. It's fairly pricey. Got a retail around $700, many items $600, $500; that's pretty pricey. But we definitely see that it looks like it's worth the money in our opinion. Once we get comfortable about that, we'll start to look at each piece. Try to figure out which one is the best to display, which ones would most like to be purchased by our customer base. We'd inquire whether anybody in the area is handling this, and if so, who. If they might, that way we'll find out right up front if they have any objection to us handling it, so that we don't have to waste anymore time. We're going to inquire as to their minimum order, first time order and reorders...when their delivery is. I guess all that takes place before we start selecting the individual pieces. Then we'll start looking at the individual pieces. Start learning from the artist how it's made, what's special about it, and then we'll probably order in several orders...I can't afford to buy a whole lot at once. So maybe I'll buy two pieces for June, two pieces when, normally June's a good month for us, two pieces for October and another two pieces for December. Something like that. That's pretty much how we'll do it. (18)

Some buyers who were more spontaneous in their ordering the first day of market became more calculating the subsequent days of market. Many buyers shared the feeling of "sensory overload" from seeing so much craft and other products at market. Buyers varied their ordering strategies to minimize stress and maximize efficient ordering:

That's when I make my purchases that I didn't make the first day. You know whatever decisions that I've made that night. You know in looking at how much I've spent and thinking, 'Oh, do you really want this?' Things that were a little iffy. The first thing I do...I write them down, and I go to those booths and I order whatever I'm going to order. And if I didn't manage to see everything the first day, sometimes that happens, I have to finish up where I left off. Then I make my purchases... (41)
The amount of lapsed time between the first and last days of market represent a time period in which buyers reorganize their thinking and planning. Buyers believe in using every minute of market to reflect on what they have purchased and what still remains to be ordered:

By the third day then I am kind of on auto pilot, you have already purchased from the people that were my initial 'Yeah, I'm going to sell that stuff,' then I kind of in my mind go over and think about in terms of like if I was looking for pottery and I had not bought any or I save the last day to go back and look at the things that hit me as so-so, they were nice but not like wow and I go back and order if I think I need that particular category. By the third day it is like tying up loose ends and I am probably more on sensory overload. It takes a lot to attract me that third day. (6)

The third type of ordering, postponed ordering, reflects attempts by buyers to reduce stress and confirm that their decisions are accurate. Nearly all buyers engage in some sort of self-evaluation of ordering. Buyers have the option to delay any orders until the return home.

...If there were things I was not sure about and I would ask for a catalog, and once I got home I could look through the catalog and try to remember what they were and order that way. (11)

Buyers who postpone ordering believe it allows them more time to contemplate decisions with fewer frustrations than at market where there are crowded conditions, high emotions, time constraints, less physical energy, and more pressure to spend money they may not have anticipated. Some buyers reflect on the intensity of making decisions in pressure situations at the last minute of the show:

Yes, and I feel bad about those decisions because I don't know if they were good ones, and I feel we were pressured and we might not have made the same decisions if we had more time. (12)

On that first day when my gut tells me, 'This is great.' If I find a lot of things like that I am more positive. If I have to go back that third day thinking I need more pottery or glass, then I don't feel that confident. Then afterwards...I think of maybe something that maybe [I did] not order, and I don't recall exactly. I think, 'Oh, god! Did I make a mistake?' Stuff will come in and I will think, 'What were you thinking?' It never happens, but I keep waiting for it to happen. (6)
Within the emergent theme of decision environment, four subthemes arose. They were market setting, market climate, buyer priorities, and ordering. Each of these subthemes contributes to understanding how the buyer selects markets and maneuvers in the complexities of the craft wholesale market. The stimulating environment tempts many buyers to react to product rather than to need. It is obvious that the power of craft appeal and even vendor appeal contributes to buyers ordering beyond their limit and without any reason other than personal interest in and attraction to the product. For some buyers the decision environment is a frustrating experience due to pressures of time, money, and sensory overload from the quantities of craft. The buyer combats these emotions by establishing priorities for shopping and strategies for ordering. The decision environment concepts give meaning to the buyer's decision making experiences within the wholesale marketplace, the buyer's primary source of craft.

**Toward A Grounded Theory of Retail Craft Buyer Decision Making**

Analysis of qualitative data offers researchers the opportunity to inductively interpret data for developing theory. The resulting theory is said to be grounded or imbedded in the data (Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In this study, qualitative analysis of craft buyers' beliefs and experiences emerged into a grounded theory of how retail craft buyers make product decisions. The emerging theory is based on the following assumptions:

- buyers predominantly order craft within the context of a wholesale craft market, the focus for the grounded theory,
- craft buyers purchase for small businesses and are basically buyer-owners,
- the components within the emerging theory (individual perspectives, business environment, global issues, and market environment) are highly interrelated,
- craft buyers do not possess perfect knowledge of all conditions, impacting on decision making.

Four components of a grounded theory emerged in this study (Figure 5.1). They
consisted of individual perspectives, business environment, global market, and wholesale market environment. The first component, individual perspectives, includes a buyer's ideology, aesthetic beliefs, and relationships. The second component, business environment, contains six subthemes that describe the working of the business: internal conditions, retail competition, perceptions of responsibility, salability, store environment, and consumer response. The third theme, global market, includes the subthemes of international production, pricing, and the U. S. craft market system. Finally, the fourth theme in the model is the market environment, with the subthemes of market setting, market climate, buyer priorities, and ordering.

Previous models of buyer behavior have proposed that the individual buyer is the primary actor in decision making, but have failed to understand the penetrating importance of buyers' beliefs and experiences in shaping the way decisions are made. Samli et al. (1988) suggested in their model of industrial buyer behavior that an individual's past experiences influence in some manner the choices of buyers (Figure 2.1). Sheth (1981) recognized the individual's role, but suggested that other business and market-generated factors diminish the influence of the individual in decision making (Figure 2.2). The emergent theory in this study presents the individual buyer as a pervasive element in every aspect of craft decision making.

The qualitative data in this study provide evidence that buyers behave individually. The decision to order craft results from the influence of one individual, rather than a committee, in assessing product needs for the business and satisfying self interests. The individual buyer brings to decision making an array of background experiences, beliefs, relationships, and attitudes about markets (both nationally and internationally). Their beliefs about craft are transposed into every aspect of shaping the craft business, selecting and experiencing the wholesale market, searching for vendors, and selecting and ordering craft.

Figure 5-1 illustrates a model for the emerging grounded theory of retail craft buyer behavior. The model is based on a single experience at one wholesale market. The four
Figure 5.1 Model for the Emerging Theory of Retail Craft Buyer Decision Making
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Components</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual perspectives</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buyer ideologies</td>
<td>Results of life experiences from which perspectives develop and influence how a buyer defines and identifies craft within the business, perceives confidence in selling craft, and forms attitudes toward international or U.S. craft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic beliefs</td>
<td>A buyer’s personal sense of holistic attraction to craft, including design components, the artisan, and production method; the relative value of craft to other products; the meaning ascribed to craft within the producing and consuming cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Interactions between buyers and artisans, market partners, or consumers that fulfill the buyer’s need to experience or own craft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal conditions</td>
<td>The concrete facts about a craft business that are influenced by inventory management skills and financial limitations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail competition</td>
<td>The buyer’s perception of how the business is positioned relative to other craft buyers and businesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of responsibilities</td>
<td>A buyer’s attitude concerning ordering, inventory, and financial management, display, and selling of craft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salability</td>
<td>The buyer’s sense of what is affordable for the buyer and consumer, the assortment necessary to stimulate sales, and the degree of risk-taking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store environment</td>
<td>A buyer’s image of how craft is to be displayed and sold, creating an store atmosphere reflective of a buyer’s ideology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer response</td>
<td>The fulfillment of the buyer’s craft goals through customers’ interests and purchases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Global issues</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International production</td>
<td>Issues related to accessibility to international craft, cultural authenticity, socially responsible production, product quality, and product value for price.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pricing</td>
<td>A buyer’s attitudes concerning how craft is priced and sources for various price and quality levels of craft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft marketing system</td>
<td>The interaction of artisan, buyer, and market sponsor in promoting and selling craft worldwide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wholesale market environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market setting</td>
<td>The physical conditions of a wholesale market affecting the buyer’s attendance at market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market climate</td>
<td>The buyer’s mental perception of a market (e.g., quantity of vendors, vendor attitudes, product variety, economic conditions, and other buyers’ attitudes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buyer priorities</td>
<td>Approaches a buyer utilizes in shopping a wholesale market as affected by time, competition, and physical stamina of the buyer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordering</td>
<td>Techniques used by buyers for ordering craft in the wholesale market.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
primary components to the holistic model, individual perspectives, business environment, global market, and wholesale market environment, are presented in a circular format to indicate the ongoing interaction of all the components, rather than decision making resulting from a series of linear or consecutive decisions. The larger outer circle represents the individual’s overriding interaction with all components. The spheres representing the themes vary in size according to the buyer’s knowledge of and impact, through decision making, on that component. The buyer’s knowledge concerning the themes varies before and after decisions are made. Though separate entities, none of the components operates in isolation from the others. Overlapping components are indicative of their interdependent and interactive relationships with one another. The actual craft decision appears as a smaller sphere among the larger circles, indicative of the flow of decisions, including the craft order, through the entire process. Components are defined in Table 5.1 and further discussed below as they contribute to the emerging grounded theory of retail craft buyer decision making.

**Individual perspectives**

The life-long experiences of buyers influence their opinions and feelings about culture and the symbols that emerge from those cultures. Two types of experiences dominate in influencing how buyers incorporate their craft beliefs into their businesses and decisions. The first group of buyers has strong cross-cultural experiences throughout life that create a need in the buyer to retain and strengthen those experiences. Craft becomes an avenue to share the experiences with others, such as customers.

For a second group, lifelong experiences include creating crafts or art and business and educational ventures. Life experiences seem to influence in an undetermined way the aesthetic beliefs of buyers. Buyers with strong artistic backgrounds seem to have more discriminating aesthetic sensitivity than buyers without an art background; sensitivity is defined in the criteria to which a buyer responds. Aesthetic appeal is frequently a criterion for selection of craft.

Relationships prevail in every facet of buyers’ decisions. They undergird the buyer’s
existence within a craft business, provide emotional satisfaction and support, and affirm the buyer in decision making. Relationships with vendors or artisans appear to be strongest. Relationships with customers are critical to the sale of craft, therefore buyers consider customer needs as well. Yet, the ultimate relationship seems to revolve around the craft and the artisan. Buyers’ relationships with other buyers (spouses or partners involved in the business) become more important as the business size increases in complexity, and responsibility and uncertainty of making decisions expands. However, despite the importance of relationships, buyers in this theory act autonomously in decision making. The individual in retail craft buyer decision making is the critical link to business survival and success.

**Business environment**

Buyers for very small craft businesses have the sole responsibility for shaping the business image and subsequently the merchandise mix. The buyer’s beliefs and attitudes are mirrored in the business image and are inseparable from every subsequent decision concerning craft product. The buyer determines the business’s budget and exercises decisions concerning the merchandise mix, as well as the daily management of the business. The buyer positions the business, through decision making and relationships, in a competitive environment. Knowledge of the business, its needs, and its customers creates a variety of strategies in which buyers operate as they made decisions. The business environment segment is comprised of all the information buyers possess as individuals, and how they believe those components should shape the business.

**Global issues**

The buyer’s involvement in a global marketplace is a choice each buyer makes and is a reflection of the individual’s beliefs, cross-cultural experiences, and understanding of foreign production and trade issues. The individual buyer makes decisions based on a preconceived philosophy of craft and its purpose in society. The buyer decides whether to incorporate international craft as a focus of the business or to blend international craft with other product
types. Three perspectives emerge. One type of buyer is totally committed to international craft and its meaning in culture. The second type of buyer blends U.S. and international craft as an alternative to the increasing cost of U.S. craft; and the third type prefers U.S. craft, but sources mass produced international craft as a monetary advantage rather than a cultural statement of artistic value. The decisions that buyers make concerning the selection of craft impacts sustainability in the production of U.S. and international craft and its availability at market.

**Wholesale market environment**

Markets create a context within which decisions are made concerning craft for the business. In the grounded theory, buyers assess the climate (e.g., economy, presence of new vendors and new product, and the amount of buying occurring) that creates a conducive environment in which to order products. Buyers negotiate the criteria and select markets based on product needs, accessibility to new vendors, the need to maintain relationships with established vendors, and business capabilities such as budget and time. Buyers make trade-offs in market selections, choosing one because of low product price points, choosing another because of reduced time away from the business, or selecting others because of the concentration of U.S. or international craft. Regardless of the reasoning, the buyer retains the decision making rights.

The shopping behavior of buyers is an individualistic enactment of their priorities for the business and themselves. Buyers use three strategies in shopping the market; they target specific vendors, not crafts; they rank those from whom they order; or they shop randomly to include as many vendors as possible. As they order products they utilize three strategies. One strategy involves ordering spontaneously, as buyers see and are attracted to craft. The second method is more calculating, utilizing a set of specific criteria that is recalled at the site of the order. The third method postpones decisions to a later date, thereby reducing the stress of decision making.

The market environment incorporates not only the conditions of market and the buyers’
strategies for operating within the market, but also overlaps the elements of business
environment, global issues, and the individual perspective. The accumulation of criteria
involved in each of the components of the theory is massaged by the buyer as he or she
prioritizes and rationalizes before making a craft order decision.

**Interrelationship of model components**

The decision making process emerging from this study seems to indicate that the
individual perspective of a buyer is the dominant influence in any decisions affecting the
business. The buyer's influence is enmeshed in every facet of the decision making concerning
the business and its product. Decision making within the craft wholesale marketing system is a
holistic process for craft buyers. The individual brings an accumulation of criteria based on
personal and business needs to market in placing craft orders. Craft decision making, rather
than the result of a linear progression of events, occurs within each of the components,
continually focusing decisions on the fulfillment of the buyer's craft need. Once an order is
placed, reverberations from the effect of the final decision to order reverses, affecting the
market, the business, the global conditions from which craft come, and the individual as he or
she responds to all of the subsuming events and decisions encountered in the process of
dealing with craft. The bold arrow in the center connecting the individual with the craft order is
indicative of the amount of influence the individual buyer's perspectives have in the final
decision to order.

The broken lines surrounding the components illustrate the interaction of craft buyer
decisions and the consequences of those decisions on the craft business, the marketing
environment, and the global economy. The degree of interaction between components varies
due to the buyer's direct involvement with the business, the market, and the order (indicated by
the overlap of the circles). The global issues component only slightly overlaps with the
business and craft order components because the buyer seldom has direct interaction with this
arena. However, the decisions made at market and within the business ultimately impact the
global environment. Direct buyer interaction between components varies according to the responsibility a buyer has to each component (i.e., the buyer is directly responsible for the business, but is only a participant in the market). This variation in individual interaction is indicated by the size of the circles.

Buyers respond to their ordering as individuals and as a business. They are satisfied or dissatisfied. The sale of craft creates positive feelings in the buyer and creates a need for reordering and maintaining relationships with vendors. Non-sale of craft does not necessarily invoke feelings of disappointment. Buyers respond with pleasure in simply having special types of craft in the store.

The emerging grounded theory of retail craft buyer decision making involves a complex array of criteria founded on the individual, the business, global understanding of craft production, and the craft marketing system. Buyers manipulate these elements, as they make decisions to order craft products. Their perspectives on the role of craft within culture and strong personal convictions concerning craft appeal affect those decisions. Among craft buyers there is a personal involvement with the product than does not appear to be present in industrial or retail buying models. The product of craft through its inherently aesthetic characteristics of design, process, and creator, establishes an intangible bond to the craft buyer. That bond links all of the craft decision process together.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the decision making strategies of U.S. retail craft buyers in order to understand how they make selection decisions for handcrafted products from the United States and other countries. Buyer decisions in the wholesale market affect producers and promoters of craft worldwide. The theoretical basis for studying retail craft buyers was a proposed model of retail craft buyer decision making that integrated buyer behavior theory proposed by Sheth (1981) and Samli et al. (1988). The Sheth model (1981), an organizational model, focused on a retail organization's buying behavior. The constructs in the model included merchandise requirements, choice calculus, supplier accessibility, ideal supplier/product choice, and actual supplier/product choice. The Samli et al. model, an industrial buyer model, positioned the buyer in a cross-cultural setting.

The initial model proposed for this research integrated new concepts about the individual buyer and the decision making process. In addition, concepts were incorporated that reflected the socio-cultural nature of international craft vendors, expectations of buyers as they considered craft purchases, and perceptions of buyers as individuals. The individuality of the buyer, rather than as a member of a buying committee, assumed a more important role in the proposed model.

The study was conducted in two stages. Stage I involved a mailed questionnaire to 779 craft buyers across the United States. The resulting 302 useable questionnaires provided a description of the retail craft industry, as a context for Stage II. Stage II consisted of in-depth telephone interviews with a randomly selected group of 45 craft buyers who participated in Stage I and met criteria for stage II. The criteria included the buyer's willingness to participate in the interview and being part of a business that carried both U.S. and international craft. Qualitative analysis methods were applied to the transcribed interviews resulting in an emerging
grounded theory of retail craft buyer decision making.

The emerging grounded theoretical framework within which retail craft buyers make decisions differs from previous models in several ways. First, Sheth's (1981) model of merchandise buying behavior and Samli's et al. (1988) model are organizational models that recognize the individual as part of an organizational effort. The emerging theory in this study is much more holistic, describing the integrated process of decision making for a single buyer. Second, the theory explains how the individual imbues every theme with his or her beliefs about craft. Rather than dissecting singular influences on individual behavior in a linear format, the emerging theory incorporates craft decision making as an ongoing interactive system. Third, buyers’ decisions generate repercussions among all components of the theory because of the individual’s perspectives about business image, selection of market, and choice of craft. Thus, the decision to buy craft at market is anticlimactical among all the decisions a buyer makes.

This study indicates that the buyer is an individual who is almost inseparable from the business. As one buyer stated, “...there is no difference between business or personal.” Thus, the buyer tends to view craft and decision making holistically, rather than separating personal and business needs, attitudes and actions, or work from cultural sensitivity. The buyer in this study establishes a profound role in decision making that is driven by a strong self-interest in craft.

The emerging theory contains some concepts that are similar to other buyer models. Cultural issues are part of the perspectives buyers bring to market. The new model delineates some important aspects of business (i.e., businesses were very small; buyers were frequently owners), markets (i.e., reduction in vendor and product variety at craft markets), customers (i.e., craft businesses are less driven by customer needs and wants than other models indicate), and producer culture (i.e., the variation in the range of buyer understanding concerning producers) that have not been explained. Uncertainty, though not a serious issue with craft
buyers, contains similar concepts to the industrial model, including time, risk, and value. Market climate and setting are portions of the Sheth (1979) and Samli et al. (1988) models that are also present in the new model. In summary, the new grounded theory expands the role of the individual, defines the individual, and describes decision making as an ongoing process utilizing a variety of methods and criteria. Buyers tend to recall and recombine rules from their experiences and perspectives in what Bettman refers to as “constructive” (1979, p. 174) choice heuristics. Additionally, the theory emphasizes the interaction among the components of the market system and the retail environment as decisions are made.

The emerging theory of craft buyer behavior is unique among the models discussed in this study. It is contextualized within small U.S. businesses, by the product of craft about which decisions are made, and through the individual’s goals of both possessing and owning craft as reflected in the business.

Interpretation of results

The primary objective of this study was to examine buyer decision making strategies that further understanding of buyer behavior theory. Three other objectives were included in the study as well. One involved comparing the new grounded theory with existing research on buyer behavior. A second objective involved analysis of the reasons that buyers prefer to purchase U.S. crafts and/or international crafts. The third objective addressed whether buyer decisions for textile crafts differed from other craft media.

Buyer behavior

Since there has been no study of craft buyer behavior, apparel buyer behavior research became the most closely related literature utilizing buyer theory. Sheth’s (1981) model of buyer behavior has been used as a theoretical foundation for three areas of apparel buyer research. They include the job content of buyers, buyer product decision criteria, and small store buyer behavior.

Job content of buyers

Though not the primary focus of this research, the craft buyer study provided support for the diversity of job responsibilities of buyers,
particularly in small businesses. The study confirms results in earlier research in that retail
craft buyers are merchandisers responsible for decision making related to controlling and
generating income for the business. The majority of craft buyers in this study also had the
primary responsibility of selling, which has not been reported in apparel buyer studies
(Wagner, Ettenson, & Parrish, 1989; Fiorito & Fairhurst, 1993). An issue in this study is
complexity of roles as owner/buyers in small businesses.

Buyer perceptions of pressures differ somewhat depending on the product categories
being ordered. Apparel buyers relate pressure to product quality, inventory quantity, and
decision making in general (Fiorito & Fairhurst, 1993). Though most craft buyers were
hesitant to refer to buying as pressure, they did identify with pressure in the intensity of market
decision making, uncertainty of product sales after ordering, terms of orders, delivery
schedules, and product quality. Buyers generally expressed pleasure in ordering craft.

Product knowledge was more important than business knowledge. Though craft
buyers generally lacked an extensive business background, they were very knowledgeable of
craft production related to a variety of media. Though quality was an issue with craft buyers,
fashionability was not. Craft buyers were generally confident of their decisions and satisfied
with their businesses. Whereas satisfaction of apparel buyers for small businesses was related
to aesthetics, quality, and fashionability (Arbuthnot, Sisler, & Slama, 1993), craft buyers
expressed satisfaction with their own sense of craft aesthetics, and the effect of that aesthetic
interpretation on the store image and their customers, even when craft did not sell.

Though the basic job content of craft and apparel buyers appears similar, the study
reveals additional characteristics that differentiate craft buyers from other buyer types. First,
few craft buyers have strong business backgrounds. Job turnover among craft buyers is low,
compared to apparel buyers. Relationships are an important component within the small craft
business. Relationships include buying partnerships with employers, spouses, partners,
friends, or relatives. Partnerships or the choice to shop alone do not seem to impede buyers’
decisions. The buyers in this study appear to establish close relationships with individual artisans, whereas little is known about apparel buying relationships. Craft buyers feel they more frequently interact with customers in order to establish working relationships than do other types of buyers.

**Decision criteria** The criteria utilized by craft retail buyers varies somewhat from apparel retail buyers. The most striking difference concerned crafts' power of personal appeal to buyers. Craft buyers were attracted on a personal level more frequently than apparel buyers to product aesthetics, uniqueness and quality, and one-of-a-kind craft that helped identify the business as distinctive. Exclusivity of a craft within a geographical area or to a specific business was mentioned as a criteria for many buyers.

Craft buyers considered quality, as do apparel buyers. The characteristics of craft quality, however, related to the use of an appropriate medium, the process of creation, finishing techniques, and cultural authenticity (e.g., use of indigenous materials and techniques). Quality was also considered in the context of the artisan creating the craft, country of origin, delivery schedule, price, quantity, and potential for selling. Though these criteria are similar to apparel retail buyers, craft retailers are less concerned with the product's selling history, and are more concerned with the relationship between the artisan and the buyer. Craft retailers establish relationships with vendors based on attraction to a product and the potential to deliver new products. Assortment as a decision criteria for craft retailers seems to be related to the type of craft medium and its potential for display. Quantity of craft ordered is small in relation to apparel, since the craft buyer prefers to stress hand production, limited production, and uniqueness. The craft buyer considers display potential, space requirements, and fit with the store image and existing merchandise.

Within the context of this study, Stage I and Stage II analyses indicate a dichotomy of opinion concerning certain criteria for vendor and product selection. When selecting vendors, buyers in Stage II appeared more interested than buyers in Stage I in the potential of a good
working relationship with vendors that would assure prompt delivery of craft. Buyers in Stage I were reliant on the vendor's performance history. Stage II buyers expressed interest primarily in the personal appeal of craft, and secondarily in the business's criteria for craft. In conclusion, the job content and decision criteria of craft buyers seem to differ on the basis of aesthetic appeal and the autonomy of decisions. More personal relationships seem to be established by craft buyers than by apparel buyers, perhaps due to the small sizes of both artisan and craft businesses.

**Preferences for U.S. or international craft**

Retail craft buyers appear to differ in their reasons for purchasing U.S. and/or international craft. Buyers who purchased large proportions of U.S. craft ranged from those who were almost totally committed to U.S. crafts to those who preferred U.S., but included international craft as lower cost alternatives to U.S. craft. A political connotation seemed linked to the purchase of U.S. craft. An ideological belief emerged that U.S. crafts offer better quality craftsmanship, are made by professional artists, and are supportive of U.S. jobs. It was not clear if buyers perceived that their customers preferred U.S. craft. U.S. crafts were perceived to be more polished and refined, offer better variety, and be more accessible at markets than international craft. Buyers of high percentages (greater than 80%) of U.S. craft seemed less willing to increase their proportion of international craft.

Buyers preferring almost exclusively international craft had a different set of criteria for purchasing those craft. A political statement of allegiance to international craft and its producers, particularly those in developing countries, was detected in buyers' comments. There was a sense among these individuals that the cultural authenticity of craft function (i.e., the craft was used by people in the culture) in international societies was being eroded away, as one buyer stated, by "white" ideas and increasing technological intervention in developing cultures. Buyers in this group were dedicated to the concept of social responsibility through support of artisans in developing countries. In addition to those buyers who bought almost
exclusively from artisans in developing countries, there were two other types of international buyers. One group included those individuals who were interested in the less costly craft and were accepting of lower standards of quality. These buyers tended to order craft from countries that used cheap labor resources, e.g., China, Taiwan, Korea, or India. The other type of buyer sought craft from developed nations such as Canada or Europe and demanded more refined, artistic types of crafts, such as glass from Italy, or sought more unique styling of craft than available elsewhere.

Buyers who included both U.S. and international crafts seemed more concerned with the craft as a work of art. Craft from either U.S. or international sources could be functional or decorative. Folk art was categorized as reflective of a culture or some activity within a culture. Craft buyers of both U.S. and international products blended the aesthetics of each type of craft successfully to create a unique store image. Buyers of both U.S. and international craft were concerned with the increasing costs of U.S. crafts and sought alternatives to increase the value of craft by sourcing outside the United States. These individuals also saw the potential value of lower product costs to consumers and in educating consumers about different cultures by offering international craft.

**Selection of textile craft versus other media**

Buyers were generally attracted to textile crafts because of aesthetic appeal. However, most buyers felt that textile crafts were more difficult to sell than other media. Some of the major categories of textile craft included fiber baskets, weavings (e.g., wall hangings, rugs, pillows), throws, handbags, wearable art, and scarves. Display space for textile crafts was difficult for many small businesses. Wearable art and other clothing types of craft presented sizing problems in meeting customer needs, requiring a large assortment of products in the store. Textiles tended to be higher priced and remained on the selling floor longer than other craft media. Woven textile crafts were viewed as more artistic and required a different environment than a craft store and, in many examples, than a gallery.
Buyer experiences with textile craft, though satisfying personally, appear to be less satisfying in terms of the business than with other types of craft. The decision to order textile craft was related to emotional appeal to a buyer, thus fulfilling personal requirements, rather than fulfillment of business need. Yet buyers’ satisfaction with textile craft orders seems to be based on the sales of textiles.

**Emerging definitions** The study, which began with definitions based on the literature, resulted in more refined meanings grounded in the data. These definitions provide a clearer understanding of selection processes and criteria since they are focus of decisions and relationships within the craft decision making process.

**Craft** The term craft is defined more broadly by buyers than originally identified at the inception of this study. In order for a product to be a craft, most buyers believed that some extent of “hand” involvement should be evident in the piece; the creation is an intentional expression of the artisan; and the product is three dimensional, rather than two dimensional. Craft can be reproducible or one-of-a-kind. Though the type of production process is considered, the number of people involved in the process is more important, though there is a wide range of acceptability. Some buyers prefer craft that is the work of one artisan. The closer a craft becomes to an art object, the greater the involvement of a single artisan. Many buyers accept crafts that involve several individuals as part of the production process, recognizing the need to produce limited quantities of craft. Yet, when production nears the characteristic of an assembly line, most buyers cease considering the product a handcraft.

**International craft** There appear to be three classifications of international craft as defined by cultural characteristics of the producing countries. First, crafts produced in developed countries (e.g., France, England, or Italy) have more refined characteristics established through a history of art production, such as Italian glass. Certain indigenous groups within these countries, such as the Eskimo in Canada, contribute a cultural uniqueness due to association with tribal customs (e.g., ancient techniques and rituals of life).
A second classification of international craft are countries which tend toward more mass production or use of low-paid indigenous labor. These countries include primarily the Asian and Pacific Rim countries, of China, Indonesia, India, the Philippines, and Japan. Some countries in this group produce craft using indigenous skills to produce a tremendous volume of reproduceable, inexpensive craft. The third classification consists of indigenous groups within developing countries who produce craft in smaller quantities, using simple and usually non-electric machinery, than the more frequently identified countries mentioned earlier. These crafts reflect less influence from “western” ideas and more from the cultural in which they originate.

Vendors Initially buyers refer to vendors in a generic sense as individuals who sell craft at a wholesale market. Yet, there emerged four types of vendors in this study. The first type is the artisan, who both produces and sells craft. Artisans from the United States were more frequently encountered at market than artisans from foreign countries. The second type of vendor is an individual representing the artisan at market. This individual might include an employee of the artisan, a friend, or relative (usually a spouse). These individuals may be alone or present at market with the artisan. The buyer is often satisfied to talk with these people at market. The third type of vendor includes people who are representing an international artisan or producer group. These may be importers who work with artisans in other countries and specify particular types of craft production; people who buy what is available from foreign artisans; people who have visited a country and return to the United States with craft hoping to sell it at market; or an organization that purposely works with artisans to help them improve their work and serves as an intermediary introducing craft into the wholesale market (i.e., Aid to Artisans). The fourth type includes “sales representatives”. Though generally associated with larger U.S. companies, sales representatives often “rep” the work of several artisans. Buyers preferred not to deal with
“sales reps” because they were generally less knowledgeable of the product, process, and artisan.

Methodological Strengths and Limitations

The strength of this study lies in the credibility of the data. Participants were asked to relate, as accurately as possible, accounts of buying situations involving recent market experiences and craft purchases. Data were confirmed through the use of triangulation across data collection methods. Stage I data and analysis was used to support the analysis of Stage II.

The sampling method was a limitation in the study. Stage I and Stage II samples were not stratified samples, rather they were selected randomly. The use of non-stratified sample limits the study because some subgroup of buyers (e.g., minority business owners, or specific classifications of stores) may not be adequately represented in the sampling frame. The original sampling frame was limited to available buyer lists from four sources. These lists of buyers’ names may not have been complete. There may have been other attendance lists that could have included additional buyers; however, those were not available in this study. The Stage II sample, though randomly selected, was composed of those buyers who volunteered to be interviewed.

One other limitation relates to the timing of interviews. The extended time for the questionnaire distribution delayed scheduling interviews into October and November, 1994. The delay may have eliminated some buyers from participating who met the criteria and were interested.

Recommendations for Research

The study on decision making by retail craft buyers has generated several questions worthy of further research. The next step in the research process might include delineating a set of propositions based on the emerging grounded theory of buyer decision making. These propositions could then serve as hypotheses for examining the interconnections between the model components and assessing each component’s impact on buyer decision making.
The second category of research questions concerns a re-examination of the existing data set with different research questions. Some of those questions include examining:

- the implications of gender in decision making,
- a systems approach to studying buyer behavior, and
- the differences between craft decision making in businesses handling 10% crafts versus 75% to 100% craft.

Within the craft industry craft retailers perform an important function of promoting and selling craft. The majority of businesses in this study were very small businesses who were keenly aware of the competitive arena for craft. Though not clearly identifiable and not a purpose of this study, there was a sense that some businesses were more successful than others. It would be an asset to existing businesses and future craft businesses, and particularly to artisans of craft, to be able to identify successful businesses, and to determine the characteristics that contribute to success.

Other research topics of interest, though not related to this data set, emerged from this study. Understanding the characteristics of long-term buyers in buyer-owned versus buyer-employee businesses would be useful in understanding the buyer's relationship to business success. The choice of wholesale market and its relationship to the size of small business and potential sales may also be affected by buyer tenure and the dual role of an owner/buyer.

Research in the area of female ownership of small business is needed (Brush, 1992). Three-fourths of the participants in this study were women buyers and owners. What factors contribute to differences, if any, in how each gender makes buying decisions and manages a small business? Research is recommended in the methods employed by individual small business owners in integrating the dual role of owner/buyer in a small business and how this affects decision making. In addition several owner/buyers operated family-owned businesses. Research is needed to understand the role of family in owning and operating a small retail craft business.
Research into the types of buying partnerships employed by small business owners of craft and apparel businesses is recommended. Do these relationships foster more effective decision making; how do partnerships affect buying patterns?

Several buyers in this study classified their businesses as a gallery, a craft store, furniture store, or other type of related craft business. Research is suggested relative to the differences in job content and decision making for each of these types of craft businesses; and to determine if store type affects the success or failure of craft as a product in these businesses.

Few buyers in this study utilized technological innovations in managing their craft businesses. Buyers were also hesitant in accepting increasing levels of craft production technology in the products they purchased. Understanding the factors that contribute to or prohibit the adoption of technology in both retail and artisan craft businesses could be helpful in overcoming objections, increasing the efficiency of businesses, and understanding the effects on traditional craft.

Textile crafts were more personally appealing to buyers, but were harder to sell than were other kinds of media. It would be beneficial to artisans, and particularly fiber artists, to understand why particular types of media are more appealing to some buyers than others. In addition, craft, as expressed by some buyers, are tools of communication. Research is needed to understand if and how meaning is transferred from the culture, to producer, to buyer, to customer.

Wholesale craft markets are a relatively unstudied area in the United States. Buyers in this study told about broad characteristics of several markets. A better description of these markets could result in improved understanding of how the system operates and is evolving in a volatile retail climate. Research conducted on the culture of wholesale craft markets would assist market sponsors, buyers, and artisans in implementing change, such as eliminating some of the vendor and product duplication, and developing more diverse outlets for craft products.

Finally, Bettman’s (1979) work on decision processing utilized protocol studies to
examine decision making. Such a research methodology would be useful in further delineating the different strategies utilized in craft buyer decision making. The wholesale market presents an ideal setting in which to conduct such a study.

The research on retail craft buyers has generated an abundance of perspectives concerning artisans. Similar research should be conducted with artisans in the United States and in international settings to understand their perceptions of buyers, buying, and the craft marketing system. This research should also be repeated with wholesale market promoters and vendors in order to gather a complete understanding of the effects of one segment of the system on the others participants.


ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the kind contributions of those who funded the research and without whose assistance this research would not have been accomplished. They are The Crafts Report, publishers, Lammot and Deborah Copeland; George Little Management, Inc., Alan Steele, Vice President; and Clare Smith, Executive Director, Aid to Artisans. Some very special individuals were particularly active as “believers” in the value of this research. I am indebted to each one of them for their perseverance in promoting the cause of understanding retail craft marketing: Clare Smith, Aid to Artisans; Carol Sedestrom Ross, Director, George Little Management, Inc.; and Marilyn Stevens, former editor, The Crafts Report. I also wish to thank the International Textile and Apparel Association for research funding through the Lois Dickey Fellowship. I am grateful to each of the buyers who patiently completed questionnaires, and especially to the 45 who shared so openly of themselves in the interviews. You gave me understanding far beyond this dissertation of the value of human involvement imbedded in the meaning of handcrafts.

Any endeavor in life that is worth doing is undertaken not in the context of isolation, but in the world with “others”. The “others” in my world have upheld me, encouraged me, pushed me, listened to me, and have been unbelievably patient with me. My gratitude for their faithfulness extends first to my major advisor, Dr. Mary Littrell, who could somehow always see the potential in my work. My advisory committee including, Dr. Mary Lynn Damhorst, Dr. LuAnn Gaskill, Dr. Grace Kunz, Dr. Robert Mazur, and Dr. Norma Wolff, gave fine direction to a mammoth project. Their belief in this project gave me courage to persevere. I am especially grateful to Debbie Durham and Heidi Scheller who gave their time and energy in listening to me, reading portions of the drafts, and walking the final deposits through all of the necessary steps. And, finally, my thanks go to some very special fellow graduate students
who endured with me in this experience and made it richer through our many shared conversations in person, by phone, and through e-mails.

My utmost appreciation goes to my family: my parents, Garvin and Dorothy Cooper, who have always believed in and encouraged me in anything I wanted to try; my children, Sara, Allison, Emily, and Graham, whose young lives were intertwined unwittingly in the "ups and downs" of graduate school for five years (yes, I'm really finished!), and to my friends B.G., Kathy, and Terry, who have upheld me in their thoughts and prayers in the final months of this effort. Finally, my thanks and love go to my husband, Steve, who while enduring medical school himself, was always faithful in giving me the encouragement and confidence to complete this task.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13, The New King James Version
APPENDIX A: STAGE I - QUESTIONNAIRE
TELEPHONE CALLING PROTOCOL

HELLO, MAY I SPEAK WITH ______________________?

(NOT THERE)
DO YOU KNOW WHEN I MIGHT BE ABLE TO REACH HER (HIM)?

(IF THERE)
MY NAME IS ___________________ AND I AM CALLING FROM IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY IN AMES, IOWA. IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY, IN COOPERATION WITH THE CRAFTS REPORT, IS CONDUCTING A STUDY ABOUT RETAILERS WHO PURCHASE AND SELL CRAFT PRODUCTS. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY IS TO PROVIDE A MORE ACCURATE DESCRIPTION OF THE RETAIL CRAFT INDUSTRY IN ORDER TO ASSIST CRAFT PRODUCERS AND MARKET PROMOTERS IN DEVELOPING PRODUCTS AND MARKETS THAT MEET YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS.

WE ARE CALLING A NUMBER OF BUYERS ACROSS THE U. S. TO ASK THEM TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY. IF YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE, WE WILL SEND YOU A QUESTIONNAIRE BY MAIL. IT WILL TAKE ABOUT 40 MINUTES TO COMPLETE. YOUR RESPONSES WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL. WHEN THE QUESTIONNAIRE IS RETURNED COMPLETED, YOUR NAME WILL BE PLACED IN A DRAWING FOR A FREE ROUND-TRIP AIRLINE TICKET TO ANYWHERE IN THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES.

WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO FILL OUT OUR QUESTIONNAIRE?

_____YES

_____NO

(IF NO) THANK YOU FOR SPEAKING WITH ME. GOOD BYE.

(IF YES) I NEED TO ASK YOU THREE QUESTIONS:

1. ASK THIS QUESTION ONLY OF THOSE MARKED WITH A RED ASTERISK
   DO YOU ATTEND WHOLESALE CRAFT SHOWS?

_____YES

_____NO
IF NO, THEY WILL NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE STUDY. THANK THEM FOR SPEAKING WITH YOU.

2. WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THE MERCHANDISE IN YOUR STORE (DEPARTMENT) IS CRAFTS? ________ (IF THEY HAVE LESS THAN 25%, TELL THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE RESEARCH SINCE THIS IS A STUDY OF CRAFTS RETAILERS. BE SURE TO THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME.)

3. MAY I VERIFY YOUR MAILING ADDRESS?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. WE APPRECIATE YOUR PARTICIPATION. WE WILL MAIL THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO YOU IN ABOUT A WEEK. DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS? THANK YOU. GOOD-BYE.
Prescreening call sheet

Name of caller: ______________________________

Instruction: As you complete each call, record the results below. "Lead" refers to a person you speak to initially that gives you a "lead" to make in calling the actual buyer on a second, or successive attempt. If the researcher needs to call the person back, please make a comments in the "Notes" column with what they are asking. If there is a question about whether they qualify for the study as a crafts retailer (<25%) make a note in that column as well. Any question at all, call Pam Brown, 294-3264, or home, 515-255-0983.

Use the calling card number.

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Outcomes:
- NA: No Answer
- OB: No longer in business
- NE: No longer the buyer
- DS: Disconnected
- I: Incorrect #
- RS: Resident #
Dear Craft Buyer:

Recently you were contacted by Iowa State University concerning your participation in a nationwide survey of retail craft buyers. Thank you for agreeing to participate. A nationwide study of craft buyers has never been conducted. The study is important because it will help us understand how your experiences in the marketplace shape your business, your products, and your customers. It is designed to help us understand who the buyers of craft products are. A more complete understanding of craft buyers will assist producers, market planners, and craft publishers to better serve you, the buyer, by providing you with information that will benefit your business.

Your name was drawn in a random sample of over 20,000 retail craft buyers in the United States. In order that the results truly represent craft buyers nationwide, it is important that each questionnaire be completed and returned. It is also important that you, the buyer, complete the form and not another person in the business. If you are unable to complete it, please return it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.

Your answers will be kept completely confidential. Neither your name nor your business name will be associated with the questionnaire. You may omit answering any question with which you feel uncomfortable; however, we hope you will complete the entire questionnaire. The questionnaire has an identification number for mailing purposes only. When your completed questionnaire is returned, your name will be removed from the mailing list. All information gathered in this survey will be pooled so that individual store names and buyers will not be identifiable.

When you return your fully completed survey form, your name will be placed in a drawing for a free roundtrip airline ticket to any U.S. destination. Remember, only completed surveys will be eligible. The study is being funded by The Crafts Report, George Little Management, Inc., Aid to Artisans, and Iowa State University, Department of Textiles and Clothing. A second part of the study will be conducted by telephone in August and September of this year. You may indicate your willingness to take part by marking the section at the end of the questionnaire. All participants selected for the telephone survey will receive two free issues of The Crafts Report.

Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope within one week. If you have any questions about the survey please call me, Pamela Brown, at 515-294-3264, or Dr. Mary Littrell at 515-294-5284. Or you may fax your questions to us at 515-294-6364.

Sincerely,

Pamela J. Brown
Ph.D. Candidate

Mary A. Littrell
Professor and Chair
June 1, 1994

Last week a questionnaire concerning your experiences as a buyer for a retail business that sells craft products was mailed to you. Your name was drawn in a random sample of retail businesses throughout the United States.

If you have already completed and returned it to us, please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. Because it has been sent to only a small but representative sample of craft businesses, it is extremely important that yours also be included in the study if the results are to accurately represent the experiences of retail craft buyers.

If by some chance you did not receive the questionnaire, or it got misplaced, please call me at Iowa State University, right now (515-294-2628) and I will get another one in the mail to you today. **If you complete and return the questionnaire, your name will be placed in a drawing for a free round-trip airline ticket.** Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Pamela J. Brown
Ph.D Student, Iowa State University
June, 1994

Dear Craft Buyer:

About three weeks ago I wrote to you seeking your response to a questionnaire concerning your experiences as a buyer for a retail business that sells crafts. As of today we have not yet received your completed questionnaire.

This study is being undertaken because of the lack of information about retail craft businesses in the United States. Your role as a buyer places you in the position of significantly contributing to the success of the business. Your experiences and opinions are important in helping craft producers, market promoters, and trade publications in better serving your business's needs.

I am writing to you again because of the significance each questionnaire has to the usefulness of this study. Your name was drawn through a scientific sampling process in which a list of over 18,000 buyers from retail craft-related businesses throughout the United States had an equal chance of being selected. This means that one out of every 24 buyers from the list are being asked to complete this questionnaire. In order for the results of this study to be truly representative of buyers and their businesses, it is essential that each person in the sample return their questionnaire. The questionnaire should be completed by you the buyer for the business.

In the event that your questionnaire has been misplaced, a replacement is enclosed. Please remember that when you have completed and returned the questionnaire, your name will be placed in a drawing for a free round-trip airline ticket to anywhere in the continental United States.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Pam Brown
Ph.D. Candidate

Mary Littrell
Professor and Chair
Buyers of Craft Products

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

This study is being conducted by the Department of Textiles and Clothing at Iowa State University in cooperation with:

THE CRAFTS REPORT
THE ALLIANCE JOURNAL FOR THE CRAFTSMEN

Aid to Artisans
Buyers of Craft Products

The following definition of crafts is given as a guide for you to consider as you answer the questions in this survey.

For the purpose of this survey, crafts are defined as products that are made by an individual or small group of artisans using hands or simple machinery. They do not include products that are mass produced nor craft supplies used to make crafts.

The survey you are about to complete has several sections dealing with you as a buyer for a business that sells craft products. The sections are divided according to information about 1) the products your business sells, 2) the customers who buy from your business, 3) you as the buyer for your business, 4) your general experiences at wholesale markets, and 5) general business and demographic information. Please follow the directions given in answering each question.
I. INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CUSTOMERS

Customers are necessary for a business to succeed. In this section we are interested in learning more about the customers who buy from your business. Please read each question and provide the best answer.

Q-1 Thinking of the customers you are trying to attract, who is your target market?

Q-2 Typical age of your business customer:

_______ YEARS

Q-3 Approximately what percentage of your customers are men and what percentage are women?

_______ % MEN

_______ % WOMEN

Q-4 What types of customers are attracted to your business? (Circle all that apply)

1. TOURISTS
2. BUSINESS PEOPLE
3. CONFERENCE ATTENDEES
4. COLLECTORS
5. ARTISTS/ARTISANS
6. OTHERS: BRIEFLY DESCRIBE

Q-5 In the space provided below, please describe the kinds of crafts your typical customer buys.

PRICE RANGE FOR CRAFTS PURCHASED...

END-USES FOR WHICH CRAFTS ARE PURCHASED...

TYPICAL COLORS AND DESIGNS OF CRAFTS...

Q-6 What do you think is the average household income of your customers? (Circle one)

1. LESS THAN $24,999
2. $25,000 TO 49,999
3. $50,000 TO 74,999
4. $75,000 TO 99,999
5. OVER $100,000
11. **INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRODUCTS YOUR BUSINESS SELLS.**

There are businesses selling many different craft products in the U.S. In section two, we are interested in the types of craft products you sell in your business.

Q-7 Describe the image your business is trying to project through selling the products you sell.

Q-8 Please list the names of catalogues and magazines you read that come closest to defining your image of the business?

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<th>CATALOGUES</th>
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Q-9 Please check all of the categories below that represent at least 10 percent of your business's product inventory.

- HOME FURNISHINGS
- APPAREL
- KITCHEN
- TABLE TOP
- RUGS
- GARDEN
- HOME ACCENTS
- GOURMET
- JEWELRY
- BED AND BATH
- DECORATIVE ACCESSORIES
- OTHER: List

Q-10 Approximately what percentage of the total merchandise in the business is crafts?

- PERCENT

Q-11 Thinking now just of the percentage of crafts you listed in the question 10,

a. What percentage is U.S.-made crafts?

- PERCENT

b. What percentage is international crafts?

- PERCENT

(The answers you gave should total 100%).

Q-12 If you buy both American and international craft products, which of these categories is more profitable to your business? (Circle one)

1. AMERICAN CRAFTS
2. INTERNATIONAL CRAFTS
3. BOTH ARE SIMILAR IN PROFITABILITY
Q-13 How likely is it that you would buy an international craft item for your business in the next year?
(Circle one)
1 VERY UNLIKELY
2 UNLIKELY
3 SOMewhat UNLIKELY
4 NEITHER UNLIKELY NOR LIKELY
5 SOMEWHAT LIKELY
6 LIKELY
7 VERY LIKELY

Q-14 Of your business's total retail dollar volume, what percentage is assigned to the following craft media?

% WOOD
% CLAY
% GLASS
% FIBER (WEARABLE)
% FIBER (DECORATIVE)
% STONE
% METAL
TOTAL % 100

Q-15 Using the words listed below on the right, check in the columns on the left all the words you use to promote American and international crafts:

AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL
TRADITIONAL
FOLK
ETHNIC
HANDMADE
MASS-PRODUCED
INDIVIDUALLY MADE
COUNTRY
AMERICAN
INDIGENOUS
CONTEMPORARY
OTHER: PLEASE LIST

III. INFORMATION ABOUT YOU THE BUYER
The buyer for a retail business plays a critical role in the success of a business.
We are interested in learning more about you, the buyer for your business. Please read each question and provide the best answer.

Q-16 What is your role in the store for which you buy crafts? (Check all that apply)

OWNER
MANAGER
BUYER
PARTNER
EMPLOYEE
BUYING COMMITTEE MEMBER
FAMILY MEMBER OF OWNER OR BUYER
FRIEND OF OWNER OR BUYER
OTHER: DESCRIBE

_________
Q-17 Are you the only buyer for the store? (Check one)

YES
NO

Q-18 Do you make the majority of buying decisions alone or with others? (Check one)

ALONE
WITH OTHERS

Q-19 Number of years you have been a buyer in this particular business?
YEARS

Q-20 Number of years of previous experience you have had as a buyer?
YEARS

Q-21 Each of the following statements relates to a different business strategy which you as a retail buyer might use in your craft business. Please indicate how important each strategy is to you. Circle your answer.

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<td>1. Customer service</td>
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<td>2. Promoting the identity of artists' work you sell</td>
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<td>3. Innovation in operating procedures</td>
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<td>4. Maintaining high inventory levels</td>
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<td>5. Competitive pricing</td>
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<td>6. Offering a broad range of products and services</td>
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<td>7. Building brand identification through a line of craft products</td>
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<td>8. Innovation in marketing techniques and methods</td>
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<td>9. Involvement in the product design process</td>
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<td>10. Stocking products in lower-price ranges</td>
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<td>11. Educating customers about the store's uniqueness</td>
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<td>12. Minimizing use of outside financing</td>
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<td>13. Serving special geographic markets</td>
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<td>14. Providing specialty products/services</td>
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<td>15. Advertising</td>
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<td>17. Serving special customer groups</td>
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Q-22 If you have traveled internationally in 1992 and 1993, list the countries you traveled to during that time.

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 

Q-23 How many wholesale (trade) craft shows have you attended in the last two years?

_____ NUMBER ATTENDED

Q-24 Please list below the names and locations of wholesale (trade) shows you attended in 1993.

Q-25 How many retail craft shows have you attended in the last two years?

_____ NUMBER ATTENDED

Q-26 People exhibit many different qualities and characteristics. Please read each of the following characteristics and then indicate how you would rate yourself on each quality. The rating ranges from 1, very weak, to 7, very strong.

1. Creative or artistic  
2. Ambitious  
3. Hard working  
4. Able to buy the right product at the right time  
5. Self-disciplined  
6. Skilled as a craftsperson  
7. Skilled as a businessperson  
8. Skilled as a salesperson  
9. Organized  
10. An effective communicator  
11. Able to forecast trends  
12. An effective negotiator  
13. Good at math

I consider myself to be...  

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IV. INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR GENERAL EXPERIENCES AT WHOLESALE MARKETS

This section concerns experiences buyers have at markets where they buy craft products that will be sold in their stores. Please read each question and consider your answer in regard to your experiences at wholesale markets in general. Then indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement with the following statements by circling a number in the column to the right. The scale is:

1  VERY STRONGLY DISAGREE (VSD)
2  DISAGREE (D)
3  SOMEWHAT DISAGREE (SD)
4  NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE (N)
5  SOMEWHAT AGREE (SA)
6  AGREE (A)
7  VERY STRONGLY AGREE (VSA)

Q-27 As you read the following statements, consider how important each factor is to you in selecting which wholesale market(s) to attend.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I select a wholesale market based on...</th>
<th>VSD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>VSA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Information provided by the sponsor.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>2. Where my business colleagues go.</td>
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<td>3. Location of the market.</td>
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<td>4. The time of year.</td>
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<td>5. A previous experience at a market.</td>
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<td>6. Cost to my business.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Opportunity to network with the greatest number of vendors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Opportunity to make the most contacts with artisans themselves.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Services from the sponsor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Fewest crowds.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Lack of pressure to actually place orders.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Market's reputation for introducing new crafts.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Where my product needs can be met.</td>
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<td>14. Available parking.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Information provided by trade publications.</td>
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</table>
Q-28 As you read the following statements, think about what influences you to buy crafts when you attend most wholesale markets.

My buying is influenced by....

1. The needs of my business for its continued success. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. The majority of my customers' needs. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. My personal preferences for ethnic craft products. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4. My need to carry a broad variety of merchandise. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. A few specific customers' requests for certain crafts. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. My need to maintain a business image. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. My preference for international crafts. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. The need to meet my sales goals. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. Customers' demands for unique products. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. The catalogues I read. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. The need to continually introduce new merchandise. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12. Customers' requests for American crafts. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. The business magazines I read. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14. The need to stay ahead of my competitors. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15. The need to maintain a balance of crafts in different media. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7
16. My preference for American craft products. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17. Customers' requests for international crafts. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18. The crafts that I like and hope that my customers will like too. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19. The hang tags on merchandise describing the production process or the history of the object. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20. The personal philosophy of the craftsperson. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7
21. Availability of customized packaging. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7
22. The display of products. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7
23. Videos shown of the product being made by the artist. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7
24. My international traveling experiences. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Q-29 As you read the following statements, please reflect on your personal style of operation or how you go about "shopping" most wholesale markets.

At most wholesale (trade) markets I....

1. Visit the booths of my favorite vendors. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. Check the layout of the market before I actually enter the exhibit area. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. Buy new product lines. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4. Order craft products only from artisans I am familiar with. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. Consider all categories of products. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. Shop the whole market before I place an order. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. Visit with actual artisans. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. Attend only long enough to make contacts and place my orders when I return home. VSD D SD N SA A VSA
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. Order products regardless if they are crafts or not.  
10. Visit vendors that are easy to locate.  
11. Place all my open-to-buy while at market.  
12. Order many of the same crafts I have ordered before.  
13. Add some new product lines.  
14. Place orders with vendors as I go through the market.  
15. Visit trade show sections not likely to feature crafts.  
16. Look at but do not buy international crafts.  
17. Make on-the-spot decisions.  
18. Visit trade show sections featuring products that reflect the lifestyles of my customers.  
19. Plan ahead which vendors I will visit at market.

Q-30 As you read the following statements consider the situations that create the greatest amount of uncertainty for you as a craft buyer.

I experience uncertainty....

1. When I buy international handcrafts.  
2. When I buy from a new craft artist (vendor).  
3. When I buy a craft in a new medium, e.g. the first time I order a textile.  
4. When I find myself short of time to shop the market.  
5. When I buy in cash terms, rather than credit terms.  
6. When delivery by a specific date cannot be guaranteed.  
7. When I buy without considering my business’ long term plans.  
8. When there is a mixture of craft media from which to select.  
9. When I buy a craft product (line) I have never bought before.  
10. When I rely on an associate to make a buying decision.  
11. When I buy a craft that has a definite ethnic appearance.  
12. When I am the only one responsible for making buying decisions.  
13. When I see too many new products at a market.  
14. When I buy American made crafts.  
15. When I see a specific craft that is really appealing.  
16. When there is a wide variety of craft products.  
17. When I buy a craft that will be unfamiliar to my customers.  
18. When I buy crafts at high price points.  
19. When I buy fiber and textile crafts.  
20. When I buy crafts that are at low price points.
Q-31 As you read the following statements consider how you decide to **select a specific vendor**.

I decide to select a **specific vendor** based on....

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<th>A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Previous experiences with the vendor.</td>
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<td>2. The variety of products offered by a vendor.</td>
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<td>3. How much my business's buying requirements can be met.</td>
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<td>4. The length of time it takes to negotiate an agreement with the vendor.</td>
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<td>5. The quality of products offered.</td>
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<td>6. My specific buying requirements.</td>
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<td>7. The vendor's product delivery record.</td>
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<td>8. Vendor's sales history in my store.</td>
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<td>9. My ability to negotiate changes with a vendor.</td>
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<td>10. Vendor's promotional efforts.</td>
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<td>11. How the sales representative approaches me.</td>
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<td>12. Whether the vendor lets me browse and decide on my own.</td>
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<td>13. The variety of American crafts the vendor sells.</td>
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<td>14. The credit terms required by the vendor.</td>
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<td>15. How my decision will affect the producer.</td>
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<td>16. The artisan's story in making the product.</td>
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<td>17. Being able to buy directly from the craft maker, not a sales rep.</td>
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<td>18. The vendor's ability to suggest alternatives.</td>
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<td>19. Vendor booths that have a professional image.</td>
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<td>20. Vendors that have booths arranged by color, product type, or that tell a story.</td>
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<td>21. My ability to work cooperatively with the vendor.</td>
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<td>22. Someone else's recommendation.</td>
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</table>

Q-32 I order crafts for my business... (Check ALL that apply):

- AT WHOLESALE SHOWS
- AT RETAIL SHOWS
- FROM CATALOGS
- THROUGH TELEVISION PROGRAMS
- FROM SLIDES/PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS THAT ARRIVE AT THE BUSINESS
- THROUGH ON-LINE COMPUTER SERVICES
- THROUGH A BUYING SERVICE
- THROUGH REPS WHO COME TO THE STORE
- FROM INDIVIDUAL CRAFTS PEOPLE/ARTISANS
- FROM TELEPHONE CONTACTS
- OTHER: SPECIFY ____________________________
V. INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS

You are almost finished with the questionnaire! We would like to learn about the kind of business for which you buy craft products. Please read each question and provide the best answer.

Q-33 Do you classify your retail business as a: (Circle all that apply)
1 CRAFT STORE
2 GALLERY
3 DEPARTMENT STORE
4 MUSEUM STORE
5 MAIL ORDER CATALOG
6 HOME FURNISHING STORE
7 CHAIN STORE
8 GIFT STORE
9 CONSIGNMENT STORE
10 SPECIALTY STORE: SPECIFY TYPE OF SPECIALTY
11 OTHER: DESCRIBE _____________________________

Q-34 How would you classify the type of business ownership: (Circle one)
1 SOLE PROPRIETORSHIP
2 CORPORATION
3 SUBCHAPTER S CORPORATION
4 JOINT VENTURE
5 PARTNERSHIP
6 COOPERATIVE
7 OTHER: EXPLAIN _____________________________

Q-35 What year was the business started? ___________ YEAR

Q-36 What is the square footage of the store? (If you have more than one store, give the square footage of the primary store.) ___________ SQ. FT.

Q-37 Is your business located in a (Check all that apply)
1 SINGLE BUILDING LOCATION
2 STRIP OR MINI-MALL
3 LARGER MALL
4 DOWNTOWN AREA
5 HOME
6 OTHER: BRIEFLY DESCRIBE _____________________________

Q-38 Number of paid and non-paid employees?
NUMBER OF PART-TIME EMPLOYEES __________________
NUMBER OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES __________________

Q-39 Of this total how many are paid employees and how many are non-paid employees?
NUMBER OF PAID __________________
NUMBER OF NON-PAID __________________

Q-40 Did your business make a profit, break even, or lose money in 1993? (Circle a number)
1 MADE A PROFIT IN 1993
2 BROKE EVEN IN 1993
3 LOST MONEY IN 1993
Q-41 During the last fiscal year, how did your net sales compare to the previous year? (Circle a number)

1 DECREASED A GREAT AMOUNT (OVER 20%)
2 DECREASED A SMALL AMOUNT (UP TO 20%)
3 STAYED THE SAME
4 INCREASED A SMALL AMOUNT (UP TO 20%)
5 INCREASED A GREAT AMOUNT (OVER 20%)

The following questions focus on the financial characteristics of your business. Please take time and use whatever resources are necessary to complete these questions. Most of the information can be found on either your balance sheet or your IRS Schedule C "Profit or Loss From Business of Profession," or from your business records.

Q-42 Gross receipts or sales less returns or allowances (Schedule C, Part I, Line 3)

GROSS RECEIPTS LESS RETURNS/ALLOWANCES

Q-43 Cost of goods sold (Schedule C, Part I, Line 4)

COST OF GOODS SOLD

Q-44 What was the value of your inventory at the beginning of your most recent fiscal year (1993)? (Schedule C, Part III, Line 33)

VALUE AT COST

Q-45 What were your total purchases for your most recent fiscal year (1993)? (Schedule C, Part III, Line 34)

TOTAL PURCHASES

Q-46 What was the value of your inventory at the end of your most recent fiscal year (1993)? (Schedule C, Part III, Line 39)

VALUE AT COST

Q-47 What was the approximate cost of your inventory for crafts alone in 1993?

COST OF CRAFTS

VI. GENERAL INFORMATION

This is the last section. We would like to learn more about you as an individual. Please provide the information requested.

Q-49 What year were you born? 19___

Q-49 What is your race? _________________

Q-50 Do you speak a foreign language at a conversational level.

________YES

________NO

Q-51 What is your gender?

_____FEMALE

_____MALE

Q-52 In what state is/are your business(es) located? __________
Q-53 What is the approximate population of the community where your business is located?

Q-54 Check the highest level of education you have completed.

- COMPLETED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (GRADES 1 THROUGH 8)
- COMPLETED HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9 THROUGH 12)
- COMPLETED 1-3 YEARS OF TECHNICAL, VOCATIONAL, OR COLLEGE
- COMPLETED BACHELORS DEGREE
- SOME GRADUATE SCHOOL
- COMPLETED GRADUATE DEGREE

PLEASE TURN TO THE LAST PAGE—->
In conclusion, is there anything else we need to know about buying for a craft business? If so, please write that in the space provided below.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Once you have returned the completed questionnaire, your name will be entered in the drawing for the free airline ticket. The winner of the drawing will be notified in writing.

Please indicate if you would like a summary of the survey results.

___YES, please send me the summary.

___NO

PART II of the RESEARCH

We at Iowa State University would like to learn more concerning how buyers make product decisions. Would you be willing to participate in a telephone interview to be arranged at your convenience with the researcher? The interviews will be scheduled during August and September, 1994. If selected as a participant in the interview phase of this research you will receive two free issues of The Crafts Report.

CHECK ONE:

___YES, I am willing to participate in a telephone interview

___NO, I am unwilling to participate in a telephone interview.

If you indicated YES, you are willing to take part in the interview and are selected, you will be contacted to set up a time for the interview.

The best time to reach me is: A.M. P.M.

Telephone number at which I prefer to be reached: Area Code (____)____-_______.

Checklist for Attachments and Time Schedule

The following are attached (please check):

12. [ ] Letter or written statement to subjects indicating clearly:
   a) purpose of the research
   b) the use of any identifier codes (names, #'s), how they will be used, and when they will be
      removed (see Item 17)
   c) an estimate of time needed for participation in the research and the place
   d) if applicable, location of the research activity
   e) how you will ensure confidentiality
   f) in a longitudinal study, note when and how you will contact subjects later
   g) participation is voluntary; nonparticipation will not affect evaluations of the subject

13. [ ] Consent form (if applicable)

14. [ ] Letter of approval for research from cooperating organizations or institutions (if applicable)

15. [ ] Data-gathering instruments

16. Anticipated dates for contact with subjects:
   First Contact                              Last Contact
   ___________ ____________________________  ___________ ____________________________
   Month / Day / Year                         Month / Day / Year

17. If applicable: anticipated date that identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments and/or audio or visual
   tapes will be erased:

   _________________ ____________________________
   Month / Day / Year

18. Signature of Departmental Executive Officer        Date        Department or Administrative Unit

   ______________________________  _________________
   MARY LITTLEREL        4/27/94            Dept. of Textiles and Clothing

19. Decision of the University Human Subjects Review Committee:
   [ ] Project Approved                        [ ] Project Not Approved                        [ ] No Action Required

   ______________________________  _________________
   Patricia M. Keith      4/27/94            P M Keith
APPENDIX B: STAGE II - INTERVIEWS
Hello, (name), this is Pam Brown from Iowa State University. I am calling to conduct the interview that we arranged earlier. Is this a convenient time? Good. As a reminder, (name) I will be tape recording the interview. However, neither your name nor your business' name will be recorded in the transcription of the interview. Is this agreeable with you? I also want you to know that if at any time you do not want to continue the interview or would prefer not to answer a question, you may do so without any resulting negative effects toward you or your business.

The interview will concern your experiences as a buyer of craft products. I am particularly interested in how you make decisions to buy particular crafts. More specifically, we will discuss the products you sell in your business, you as the decision maker for the business, and your experiences in buying crafts at market. Are you ready to begin?

Section I
In this first section of questions, we'll be talking about your experiences as a buyer for your business.

Response from Q34 Q9 Q10

1. In the survey, you described your business as (list the choices from Q34). You also indicated that crafts comprise about % (Q10) of your business. Since crafts are the focus of the interview, it would be good to know more about how you define or categorize crafts as products that you buy and sell.

Probe:
   a. What do crafts mean to YOU as a person?
   b. Why do you carry crafts in your business?
   c. If they have indicated on Q9 that there are other categories of product sold in their business, how do crafts "fit in" with those categories? Or are they completely different?

Response from Q19 Q20

2. You indicated on the survey that you had years of experience (Q19) in this current business. Would you please describe how you became involved in buying crafts?

Ask a or b
   a. You indicated in the survey that you had years of buying (Q20) experience other than in crafts. What kind was it and how has that experience influenced your crafts buying?
   b. You indicated in the survey (Q20) that you had no previous buying experience, how then did you prepare yourself to become a buyer? Describe how this has affected your buying of crafts?
   c. Were you a crafts producer? How has this influenced your buying experience?
Response Q17________
Q18________

3. Can you describe what you consider to be the most important factors you have to consider in making decisions as a buyer for craft business?

Probe:
   a. Why are these important?
b. **If they indicated on survey that they work with others in buying (Q17 & 18), how does working with other influence your buying?**
c. Are there any other features about the business that may influence your buying experiences?
d. What role does customer demand or preference have in your business decisions?

Response Q27 high qualities __________________________
Q27 low qualities __________________________

4. One of the questions in the survey asked you to rate yourself on certain qualities and characteristics. You rated yourself highest on (list these qualities from Q27). Would you describe how these affect your buying? You rated yourself lowest on these characteristics (list from Q27). How do these characteristics affect your buying?

Section II
In this next section, I would like to focus on a specific market you have recently attended.

Response Q24________

1. You indicated in the survey that you attended ______{Q24} whole sale markets last year. Thinking about the most recent market that you may have attended, I am interested in knowing how you would describe what sense or feeling you had about that market and what might have influenced you to have those feelings about the market. First, please tell me the name of the market, approximate date, and where it was held.

Probe:
   a. What characteristics about the market were most important to you as a buyer of crafts?
b. What characteristics about the market were least important to you as a buyer of crafts?
c. Would you return to this market next year? Why or why not?

2. Would you please describe for me how you planned for this market. I'm thinking about things that helped you prepare to order at market. First, think about what you did before the trip, then describe what you did when you arrived at market, what you did do the first day, second, etc. Try to remember as much as possible.
Probe:
  a. What kind of information did you take with you?
  b. Who went with you to market and what was their role?
  c. Where did you go to first in the market?
  d. How many different sections of the market did you visit?
  e. How did you go about finding vendors etc., in the market? Were there more or fewer than you expected?
  f. How did your first day (or hour) at market differ from your last day (hour) at market?
  g. Is this experience typical of most of the markets you attend? What makes it different or similar?
  h. What kind of product variety did you see? Was this what you expected to find?
  i. Did you accomplish what you wanted to accomplish at this market? Why or why not?

3. Buying has been described as a high pressure situation. Can you describe for me the kind of pressures you experience during market?

Probe:
  a. What makes you feel more confident as a buyer?
  b. What makes you feel most uncertain as a buyer?

Section III
In the next questions, I would like to concentrate on a specific craft product you may have recently ordered.

1. Thinking of the market you've just described, try to remember one craft product you ordered and then describe for me how you found it, and what you went through in deciding to place an order for the product. Try to describe the situation you were in, such as where you were, how long you had been there, other people that might have been with you (no names, just the relationship to you in the business), what you might have noticed about the product at first, and any other information that might help me to understand how you made the decision to buy.

Probe:
  a. What was the product?
  b. Had you ever seen it before? For example, was it something you saw in print, heard about in a conversation, something you saw for the first time at this market, etc?
  c. Would you describe your reaction to that product the first time you saw it. What attracted you to the craft?
  d. Did you talk with the crafts person directly or a sales rep? What kind of conversation did you have with that person?
  e. What information did you ask about the product?
  f. What was positive about the situation and what was negative?
  g. Was this a typical situation? What made it typical or different?
  h. If the item was not a textile items - Did you buy textiles differently than you do other crafts? How?
2. Thinking of the craft product buying situation you just described, would you describe for me the kinds of choices you had to make to arrive at a decision to buy that craft?

**Probe:**
- a. How did you go about gathering information to make a choice?
- b. Can you describe how you negotiated the decision in your mind or with someone else?

3. You have indicated that you have both American and international crafts in your store. Would you describe for me please what international crafts are and why you carry them in your store?

**Probe:**
- a. How do you locate international crafts in order to buy them?
- b. How long have you been buying international crafts?

**Response - Q13**

4. Can you help me understand how you determine if a craft you have purchased for the business is a “good buy” for the business? Think of a product you have recently purchased and is now in the store. What will influence your opinion of being satisfied or dissatisfied with the decision to purchase the craft?

**Probe:**
- a. What is the product?
- b. Would you reorder on the product? Why or why not?
- c. If the product is not an international product:
  - You indicated in the survey (Q13) that you would be likely/unlikely to buy an international craft in the future. What influences you to think that way?

This concludes the questions I have for the interview. Are there any other points that you feel I have missed that are important to you as a buyer of craft products?

**Conclusion:**
Thank you very much for your interest and time in answering these questions. The results will be available at a later date and you will receive a summary of the study, including both the survey and the interviews. Also you will be receiving in the near future two complimentary issues of *The Crafts Report* as an appreciation gift for participating in this phase. Do you have any questions? Thank you and best wishes in your business. Good-bye.
STAGE II: HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL

Last Name of Principal Investigator Brown, P.

Checklist for Attachments and Time Schedule

The following are attached (please check):

12. ☑ Letter or written statement to subjects indicating clearly:
   a) purpose of the research
   b) the use of any identifier codes (names, #’s), how they will be used, and when they will be removed (see Item 17)
   c) an estimate of time needed for participation in the research and the place
   d) if applicable, location of the research activity
   e) how you will ensure confidentiality
   f) in a longitudinal study, note when and how you will contact subjects later
   g) participation is voluntary; nonparticipation will not affect evaluations of the subject

13. ☐ Consent form (if applicable)

14. ☐ Letter of approval for research from cooperating organizations or institutions (if applicable)

15. ☑ Data-gathering instruments

16. Anticipated dates for contact with subjects:
   First Contact: October 1, 1994
   Last Contact: February 28, 1995

17. If applicable: anticipated date that identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments and/or audio or visual tapes will be erased:
   June 1, 1995

18. Signature of Departmental Executive Officer
    Date: ____________________
    Department or Administrative Unit: Textiles and Clothing

19. Decision of the University Human Subjects Review Committee:
    ☑ Project Approved
    ☐ Project Not Approved
    ☐ No Action Required

    Patricia M. Keith ____________________
    Name of Committee Chairperson
    Date: 7/20/94
    Signature of Committee Chairperson
APPENDIX C: THEME DEVELOPMENT
SUPERTHEME: INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVE

Subtheme: Buyer ideology

Category: Life experiences

...I was exposed as a child to many forms of crafts. I think the biggest thing that ever happened to me was when I went to Scotland,...a cousin...used to take me to...a tearoom...I absolutely fell in love with this place. And it's these things throughout my life, is seeing things, I think that made me appreciate it. (17)

Let's see if I go back into my childhood, I used to haunt a street in Boston called Newberry St., where there was a store called Audus Inn and I spent every penny I ever had in that store whether it was on an Indian silk scarf, camel nose plugs. I mean it was a store of the most bizarre and wonderful things. I mean the owners traveled all over the world and I remember just being, when I went in there I was in another country and another place and always felt transported. And, ah, I have always had a love of ethnic things... (39)

...I was living overseas and I started working in a refugee camp in Thailand and I was running a handi-craft project. It was funded through the U.N. through Oxfam. I did that for a year and a half where...we lived in the camp and we supplied the raw materials to the women. They had tons of time, they were hanging on refugee camps and they were concerned too, [with] added income and also keeping the traditional arts alive; and they were displaced and depressed and by supplying the raw materials...they would work them into their traditional crafts and then we marketed them around the world on a non-profit basis. And then it was successful, but from that experience I grew to appreciate handicrafts and folk art of other cultures. From that it grew into my business. (10)

I was a crafts person so I was selling my own crafts and we decided to open a retail outlet to sell our craft and we needed more to sell...so we took on friends.[work]...As a crafts person, I had gone to the big craft fairs, so I had already made those contacts...A lot of shop owners that I know are in fact crafts people. (2)

It was like jumping into the middle of the pool and learning to swim. We didn’t know anything when we started out. It was something we fell into. We were living in California and we wanted to be here and we would do what we wanted to be here. I am a journalist by training. My husband or I had never worked in a store, we couldn’t run a register. We learned to together and felt our way along. We really were not prepared and had to wing it. (7)

Then we started selling better art...we were out at an Indian market in Santa Fe and we brought back some jewelry to see if we could sell it. I guess from that, that was a seed of a concept that I had of a store that was a crafts gallery, which we opened in 1987 in downtown Miami... (18)
SUPERTHEME: INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVE

Subtheme: Buyer ideology

Category: Perspectives

Subcategory: Identity with craft

...then I start asking what does folk art mean in our lives and why are we attracted to it and why do we possess it and it is the greater scope of things. Just the integrity of a small business and I truly think that the people who stay the longest who have businesses are people whose integrity I respect. (10)

...my philosophy right now is I buy what I love and what I like. I have to admit I wouldn’t take home a hundred percent of what’s in the store, but overall that’s how I look at things when I buy. And so I think that if you’re in a position where you can buy that way, it’s really good...But I think that’s one reason why we’re a specialty store. You can come in here and tell that everything is special and hand selected and that sort of thing. (23)

Having had success with the things that I have chosen. Feeling the store finally has come into its own and a little more decorating and stuff. I have been able to choose items that have been popular and remain popular. I think O.K. I must be doing something right and people like the store... (7)

Subcategory: Perceptions of confidence

I am extremely conservative, not willing to take a chance. I have to be sure of something....If I have a product that sells great, I stick with that. (14)

I think I have a definite goal which is to concentrate on a few categories, not to have a few things of lots of things, but to within the category expand and make it thorough. (11)

We started selling pieces for people and also with our work had bad experiences with other galleries representing us. We thought we could do it better. What works and didn’t work. After researching we thought we could take the positive and negative and format what would be fair to the artist, gallery and public and let each of those people win and let the gallery profit. (15)

Well, you have to disciplined to not only buy what you like. I can’t go too far, I can’t get too far away from what I like...why would I change the business? I wouldn’t change it at this point. (3)

Subcategory: Cultural attitudes

I sell handmade boxes, things that are handmade in China, you can’t get away from that. I don’t think the public looks at those as crafts. I think they think of crafts as flower arrangements, quilts, door decorations. I don’t think it has a real quality meaning here. I think because people associate it as women’s work. (13)

...I think we are a global economy, whether we want to think of that or not. And most people who are educated understand that. We got jealous over cars, but we don’t have to apply that with everything that we make or is sold. And I think, now I’m sitting in the living room looking at a Kilim rug and I’m thinking what character this has versus the Sears and Roebuck carpet. You know it’s because I like this stuff. And I keep bringing it in. I mean we give aid to foreign countries, why can’t we buy their products. (40)
SUPERTHEME: INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVE

Subtheme: Aesthetic beliefs

Category: Personal aesthetics

...an awful lot of it is just done on what stands out, because each item is unique, and not going through it buying bathing suits and knowing blue bathing suits are in this year or short bathing suits, or long bathing suits, or two piece bathing suits....You don’t have that kind of a situation, you go through and see some work that appeals to you just as an individual and that is what you buy. If you need pottery desperately and you don’t find pottery that reaches out and says, ‘buy me’, then you don’t buy pottery. (2)

Ah, I always look at the design, just the creativity of the piece. I mean, I always want pieces that are a little more unusual. I always want pieces that are fun. (23)

I prefer to buy things that I feel that even if I hang onto them do have merit and will raise in value. (17)

I just go at it in a more creative fun approach, as the product moving me toward the direction of merchandise that I purchase....It’s all visual...Sometimes its kind of like radar. (6)

...pottery, tapestry, and other things are a function of my own taste....I like having it around. (7)

...the most important thing is that it has to be, it has to be unusual, and beautiful and tasteful. My major thing is to not, I mean I own a high end art gallery, and I don’t want anything tacky in my gallery and there’s plenty of tacky stuff out there. But that doesn’t mean that, I mean it can be inexpensive, but it just has to have a certain (ha, ha) totally indefinable thing. Ah, and that’s the most important thing. (41)

There is a man...doing some outrageous lamps, very clean, using metal, like a mess. And these bizarre lamps, well, I bought them to go with the Chinese furniture and I sold them all. And people like, it was contemporary and modern. And here it’s sitting on something that’s 300 years old. And it went. It went! (39)

...people have to want to use [textiles]. It is not what Aunt Mary would like. You might do that with Peruvian pottery, it is only $12 and Aunt Mary would think it is cute. And you give it to her. Textiles are something you are going to put on the wall or bed and it is something you buy for yourself and it generally is expensive. You have to be much more careful about it. (10)

...in far as going on the uniqueness of the product and then the fact that I haven’t seen it anywhere else. Price is a consideration in many cases...some things are just too expensive. But then some things are so unique that they’ll sell at whatever price that they are. So I do have to take that into consideration. I would say that somethings I’ll just for sure purchase and I’d probably won’t even look at the base price or the wholesale price. (16)
SUPERTHEME: INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVE

Subtheme: Aesthetic beliefs

Category: Value

To me crafts there are a functional use, which also have aesthetic value. I would say crafts are something that transcend that value or functional use, even if they are pots, musical instruments, or toys. I think it has an individual artistic value to it. I think what I am saying is to opposed to mass produced items. (11)

...in comparing [non-craft and craft], there's always an appreciation for the products that have a story. Nor for every customer, but that's what we're hoping to fight against, we're hoping to educate and have people understand why when it's called a craft, there's an innate sense that it's a decorative art, like the fine line between galleries and a store like mine, because crafts are all signed and a gallery will mark up a craft up to $10,000, whereas we're trying to make it available for everybody, not even everybody, but more people and the fine line between fine art versus decorative art, I mean these [craft] pieces will take as much time and effort and love as a painting that hangs from the wall. It's just this perception is just very different. (19)

I almost never buy anything that I don't like or is just a cheesy knock off. I feel the piece has to have some integrity in of itself. Price, although I do buy things, I don't care even with the prices just because the piece is so fabulous that people need to see it and need to see what the good stuff is and (10)

In the last few years it has changed because the market place has changed. The most important factor is value. We have to have whatever it is we are showing have a good value attached to it so the customer recognizes the value in it, of the artist and the materials or some justification of the pricing component. People in today's economy and the choices that are out there for them and the technology that is out there, if they are going to spend $300 for their home...When people see them being made they know it is not made in a factory. The cost factors are different and it provides consumers with a lot more wide focused options. (15)

I look at perceived value and I say, "What would people buy, what would people pay for this, what's the maximum I could do?" (21)

...we got some backpacks that are Guatemalan or Indonesian, they are woven and they are beautiful and the next time we ordered them,...somebody was in Indonesia brought them back and they did very well. We got them and they were not woven they were printed,...so they sort of took a short cut, which really means that those people are really not understanding why something is selling, it is not copy, it is the original, the way it is woven. It is the process that is important. (11)
SUPERTHEME: INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVE

Subtheme: Aesthetic beliefs

Category: Design components

...it was some hand blown glass from an artist in California. It was something I’d never seen before. So that interested me. It was, well, the pieces were like wall pockets to put like flowers in and things like that. They were really unusual shapes and bright colors and she also did a vase that looked like a daisy flower with a curved stem and the stem is open. So you could like put a flower like down in the head of the flower. It was something that was real unusual. One other thing that attracted me was...how unusual the pieces were and how interesting her colors and the combinations of colors that she put together that attracted me to it. (23)

...what struck me [about the Peruvian pottery] was the aesthetics, it was absolutely beautiful, the color, design, the shape and all that. (11)

I would guess in a vague way I would say it is shape, color, texture, material; it is going to be something organic like that. (6)

they looked...hand-woven in these black coffee cream patterns and these pillow covers just blew me away as well as the throws. And they were made out of silk and linen. And to me the quality was beautiful, piping all around. But the thing that caught me was the pattern. I mean I passed the booth and I went (aaaah sound), this is gorgeous. (39)

If there’s something about an artisan’s booth that attracts me, and often it is the display, how they have set their booth up or how they have displayed it that catches my eye. If it’s creative, graphically interesting, if they’ve done a really good job with that. That will attract me. If it’s pretty standard and not a particularly innovative or interesting display, it might not attract my attention as much. So often it is how the booth itself is set up and how it’s lit, and how the product is displayed. That also says something about the artist. And then of course, it’s the item itself. (30)

...some people have such sort of bizazzy designs that it almost, it can almost overshadow the objects that they’re showing. But this one wasn’t like that at all...a lot of what is making the particular thing look so wonderful is the lighting and the way it’s displayed...I have a temptation to just sort of take it out into the aisle and look at it without all that glitz. To see if still looks good. I certainly have had that feeling a number of times. But this was a very simple, not a particularly large booth. Very simply laid out, I mean they were like tables with white cloth on them or something and these bowls sitting on them. But it was the things themselves that I liked. (41)
SUPERTHEME: INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVE

Subtheme: Aesthetic beliefs

Category: Production

To be a craft item human hands have to have something to do with it besides pushing a button on a machine. (7)

...something that we either know is personally made by someone we know or ...we’ve seen at a show, that's hard to mass produce it. That is what would consider handmade craft. (43)

The artists we represent purposely made the pieces instead of happy accidents. They are not all the same.” (15)

...In many cases they are produced by one individual as opposed to many, even though on some occasions the things that we make there is a contribution made by different people. Like say for instance if we have stone carvings from Kenya, an adult in the family may do the actual carving, but the children may do some of the sanding and things like that. So it’s a cooperative effort in some of those cases, but it’s still all made by hand and generally in small groups. Ah, also in the American crafts that we carry in our gallery, generally those are single artists that are doing art work or art craft. But it’s generally a single person doing it as opposed to an assembly line. (16)

I like things that have a real hand feel to them, not necessarily a lot of craft work that is slick, almost too well done. I like stuff that you can see the imperfections to some degree. I don’t want it to be junky or sloppy, but there is sort of a line there between handmade and homemade. (9)

...We really like to have our crafts done by the craft person themselves, and that is how we like to define a craft. Where folk art and some of our primitives can be more of an assembly line type thing even if they are all hand-crafted by various people. We think of a craft done by a single craft person. (12)

We have things like Twin Oaks hammocks, which are made in quantity and their design is very good, but not terribly original. Some of the sweaters we carry are knit but not handknitted. They are made by knitting machines and recently the knitters have added machine...motors to the machines because it increases the efficiency for a variety of reasons. In any event they are moving a step closer to being manufacturing. (2)

One of the things I do with my jewelry, is I consider crafts in jewelry that somebody has done work on a material itself. I don’t carry people who have assembled pieces that they have purchased from somebody else. They may complement what they’re doing with pieces or findings that they have found in somebody else. I don’t carry anybody who has assembled a nice, but good looking grouping of bead work because there isn’t enough handwork involved in personal identification with the artist. (42)

They may not be professional craftsmen opposed to American craftsman where you think the technique is superb. The quality of the technique may not be the way it is, there is kind of a primitive technique to it. At the same time it is where they are making something that is a form of personal expression. (11)
SUPERTHEME: INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVE
Subtheme: Aesthetic Beliefs
Category: Meaning in culture

I am about as far from a black African person as you can get, but yet I have black African folk art in my home... I appreciate it more for the aesthetics of it. Sometimes it is a combination, but I think because it is hand-made, it has meaning in other cultures, more people feel that they can bring that kind of meaning into their lives. (10)

It gives me far more greater respect and understanding for the origin of the craft, and I try to explain to people when they come up and they say, 'This has a scratch on it and this isn't perfect,' these are made by real people who live. They have dirt floors and they don't have any education; they are not using fine woodworking tools. They are using a knife. And when you consider, a lot of times these things are made by women who are not only doing folk art, and I have photographs of women, it is just remarkable, they are sitting by the fire stirring the pot, breastfeeding a baby, kicking the dog, swatting a chicken, and doing needlework all at the same time; it is incredible. Barefoot women with dirt floors and they are responsible for hauling the water doing all of the cooking, all the child rearing, tending a garden; they are responsible for everything, and somewhere in there they have time to do folk art and so I have to remind people constantly of where this is coming from. When you put this in perspective, a scratch is nothing. It is an absolute miracle it got here in the first place. (10)

So when people see these things in my store it only reflects to them how empty our own culture is of meaning and how empty our art is and by seeing this they think by buying it and putting it in their home it will bring that kind of meaning into their life. (10)
SUPERTHEME: INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES

Subtheme: Relationships

Category: Vendor/artisan

...We know how we finish items and know what work goes into it so if we go to market we like people that are excited about what they are doing. If people just say sign on the dotted line and I will send you 50 of them and it has no soul to it, we just pass it by. You have to have excitement, inspiration to create and if you don’t have it then it is not what a crafts person is all about. We want to see the spirit of the person in what we buy like our own things. (12)

Sometimes when you are dealing with the representative of an artist, it can be a little bit difficult...I have just switched my whole communication over to a way where I need to be firm, but courteous. That can be very frustrating with somebody who doesn’t understand no. (22)

He is the company and I am the company. And that was very important. We have an incredibly good close [relationship]; we’ve got each other’s home phone numbers, rather extraordinary in commercial business...but the flexibility...to modify my order and my specifications,...that’s important. He’s a small enough operator, he’s right at that optimum size where I can adjust [my order]...without dealing with bureaucracy...When he comes back to me and says there’s going to be a two week delay...that cooperative relationship...that was the biggest attraction besides being just a great product. (21)

...but you know, I understand that somebody is new that they are going to have some problems, but it depends on the attitude if they’re willing to learn and change. (42)

I found out, if it is just one person sometimes I have to be careful because from going the first time and finding out that there are 2 or 3 places that it took almost half a year to get the merchandise I wanted, which I wanted for Christmas and I could not get it. And I think what happened was that those people were taking orders before they had things in stock and I think went back to the country and then fulfilled the order. (11)

It is not businesslike. So many think if they make one thing a week that they are doing good. I talked with people that are successful and they are the ones that go to the job at 9 and don’t quit till 5. Some think they are doing good getting 1 to 5 items a week. They don’t look at it as a job. (13)

When you do something that is handcrafted you can see the heart and soul of the individual that made it, almost their whole viewpoint on their life or on their view of life in how they create something. It’s almost like so personal because a little bit of the craft person or the artist is in everything they make. And I think that make the gift more valuable than something that was stamped out of a machine because the carefulness and the feeling of being proud of the product is there... (12)

Most cases I don’t care if I meet the artist. I like the fact that they are there in these shows. It’s more hand on and real than going to a gift mart where you know nothing. Some like it but I don’t get off on it. I like the work better than I like the people and I would rather not meet them and find out that they are jerks or something, and then, I really wanted to carry their work, but they are such a pain in the butt. I don’t want to know, the artist doesn’t really matter to me, unless they turn out to be really fun and nice (6)
SUPERTHEME: INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES
Subtheme: Relationships
Category: Market partners

It is difficult with any partnership when you have aesthetics involved they are subjective. The things we agree on are the best but we each have the ability to take a wild chance on things we believe in without the other person’s full agreement if it doesn’t cost too much. We don’t do all the buying any longer. We have 26 people on staff and we have an executive team of 9 people, we represent over 600 artists,...we divided our gallery up in to the different media we have a manager in charge of each media, 5 artists to do the tracking, they pass us information to review. (15)

...all your friends always want to go. And they think, ‘Oh, that is Hollywood or something.’ But I, when I let people come with me I tell them flat out, ‘Do not bother me. Don’t take anything I say personally.’ But this when I go to these shows, the buying, it’s like all of the money the rest of the year right there in what I see. So I really have to concentrate; I’m really concentrating. And I’m walking fast and I’m not there to fool around. And a lot of people don’t understand that. Cause they think you’re spending all this money and buying all this stuff, so it’s like going to a mall, a spending spree. But it isn’t......I mean I have a lot of people that are really depending on me to buy the right things, to see them so they earn a living too. (37)

...I’d say we generally, we both normally like or dislike something. That’s the normal case. I’d say 25% of the time when I will like something she won’t, and she won’t like something, or she will like something and I won’t or I don’t think it’s right, whatever. If the other person has an extremely strong negative feeling, 90 or 95% of the time we won’t buy it....I’m more impulsive about it,...she’ll say, ‘Look, we won’t buy today; we’ll come back tomorrow,’ and now that we don’t feel quite as much pressure, we find that we’re able to do that and I think it is a better buying practice. (18)

...we balance each other out. He tends to be a little more conservative than I do. And he tends to go with a lot less expensive items than I do. So we really do balance each other out. He actually wasn’t able to go with me on my last trip to New York. And it was a real challenge to control myself... (23)

This time I had somebody who is now working with me. I hired for the reason that she seems to be a good business manager, which I thought complimented me. I basically knew and we had discussed the kinds of things that were selling before the things we should reorder, the things we should be looking for, so that is what we did. (11)

Well, our owner was with me...I am generally more conservative and she’ll go ahead. It’s her money, I mean, I mean she’s paying the bills. She can go ahead at that point and make a decision, ‘No, I think we ought to get more than that. Or I think rather than just getting 6 of these, I think we ought to have a whole dozen. That way it will look better on display. People will feel like they have more choices there’, whatever. So that’s where the sort of system of checks and balances comes in, you know. (16)

She usually tags around. We hit these shows and she’s right behind me, and then what I miss she usually picks up...Because to me that’s the way I’ve always kind of stayed on the straight and narrow. It avoids a lot of mistakes by having someone else kind of echo what you’re thinking anyway. And we’re so close in thinking anyway. So it’s usually pretty good. (38)
SUPERTHEME: INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES
  Subtheme: Relationships
  Category: Customers

...I have a lamp in the store right now that’s a $6,200 lamp. And I know, well I don’t want to say it’s never going to sell. I would like not to sell it because it gets so much attention that it has paid for itself a thousand time. So even though we goat a large investment in that piece, it’s paid for itself...because if I put it in the window it brings in 20 people a day to ask about it. So it’s things like that even if something doesn’t sell if it gets people’s attention in the long run they do pay for themselves. (23)

I just wanted to have more information on the technique and how she did it because...selling crafts is an educational process often with the customer. They want to know something about the artist, they want to know something about the process and how it’s done... (30)

Of course, there is the old thing of having everything in blue, pink, or green and someone wants it in reds and it is a minimal for wholesalers usually 150, 200, 250, and you go around that route. Do you please the customer and order a whole new supply or do you turn the customer down and disappoint them. I tend to order a new supply. (3)

I ask questions when they complain, try to find out what’s going on already, because sitting in the gallery I don’t know what women are going through, in styles or colors or whatever. So the only way is by asking questions. I guess that’s where communication is really important, knowledge...trying to gather that knowledge to be able to make a decision....I’m one of those people in my own gallery that’s not too busy yet, that I can still spend time with the customer. It works and people come back and say they feel good about their previous decision. They weren’t pressured. (42)
SUPERTHEME: BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT
Subtheme: Internal conditions
Category: Tracking inventory

Prior to going [to market] I look at my current inventory level and my current sales to date, and I break down my sales as a percentage by department; and then I break down my inventory by percentage by department and then I relate the two. Is my current inventory level in jewelry roughly 20%? Or if my sales are roughly 20%, then I know I have enough. I am buying the correct amount of jewelry and where I am over I try to adjust. And then I look at what my sales for the year have been in relation to past years, what the general percentage of increase or decrease is and then I project for the remaining months of the year based on that-percents, growth, or whatever, what my sales will be...Then I know about what I am going to sell in each department in each month. And I divide that by my standard mark-up rate and I find how much inventory I need to have in each department in each month in order to meet my projected sales. (10)

We look at who are [our] best sellers, look at what product and price points, what our needs are, customer demands are during the holiday season that we could not provide them with, [the] overall budget. Try to make guesses [by] reviewing sales for the first part of the year...We spend a lot of hours trying everything...This is our livelihood and we are looking hard at the numbers. We are trying to gather more data through computerized bookkeeping, cost analysis, team meetings, and being aware of the market place, and willing to make appropriate changes that are necessary to assure we survive in our business just like the artist. (15)

I have to look at what is in stock in the store. I have an inventory that I keep on computer, but I go around and do a visual look...because I remember better visually than by numbers. I write down numbers of say, chop sticks...cause I've sold out or...things like that I need to order. I think through the sales of the year and what is immediately, what is coming up. (40)

The other things are just like invoices and stuff, we just file. And [we] keep handwritten records. (43)

Category: Finances

...I saw these beautiful design eggs [at market], they were goose and ostrich. I thought I might could get one. There is a minimum. The problem is I can't get just things I like. The finances is very important part of decisions. (11)

I buy very selectively because of the space factor, well, also the money factor. Even if I had more money, I wouldn't have more space unless I moved. I must say in the last couple of years that it's occurred to me that I probably ought to have more craft inventory because that seems to be what people are more willing to buy. I mean, they're very reluctant to spend the kind of money you have to spend to buy art. (41)

I do a lot of preparation and then I blow it all. I do a budget so I know when I should have stuff coming in. I know how much I should order overall dollar wise. I go through the stock pretty carefully, so I have a feeling for what I need dollar wise of what I need and which categories and then I get down there and see 25 people in one category that I don't need that are really exciting and wonderful; I buy them all! (2)
SUPERTHEME: BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Subtheme: Retail Competition

We try to have a lot of products here that you wouldn't find in like the airport. And we call it 'airport art'. And there's a lot of import stores that carry a lot of airport art and that's what's generally the touristy stuff. We try to get away from that as much as possible. (16)

...most of the things I have or have had and still try to get are because they are unique and they don't generally carry in gift shops and catalogs. (17)

So that is one of the stresses, is competition between galleries, exclusivity is a big thing, crafts people in galleries have spent hours and promoters have spent hours talking about exclusivity, how large it should be, how important it should be, how long it should be, how much you should have to order to get it, things like that. So that is a big stress, usually. (2)

The first day [of market] is ultimate competition because not only am I competing with some of the stores that are in our area, but I'm also competing with all the stores that carry this kind of stuff here in the United States and probably in some other countries, too. And there's only so many one-of-a-kind of things to buy. (16)

We travel a lot around the country. We jury art fairs and festivals, and we lecture on art marketing, professionalism; act as consultants to art organizations, profit and non-profit, which exposes us to a lot of crafts that are being done around the country. We also network heavily with a few other galleries that are quality and have similar integrity. We trade names back and forth to keep our artists active, and we find people through that, as well, but...if we find 3 dozen new people a year that is a lot. (15)

Just by talking to the vendors and being like, 'So, what did so and so order? What lines are still open and what aren't?' And even just finding out from them, sometimes,...I seem to go into a booth and sort of have an idea immediately what I like and what I want, whether it's a trend or not. And they have told me that other buyers go by what they say. So now I listen to [vendors] very closely...because I know other people are as well. I've always tried not to do that, but it's pretty important. (19)

I go with basically what's out there, you know, what are other people selling, and I want to be a little bit different. I want to make sure that my quality is kept to the same level. (45)
SUPERTHEME: BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Subtheme: Perceptions of responsibilities

...you have to take the risk, so it’s that level of risk I think that puts pressure on me. And because I think a buyer who was not an owner and not responsible for the financing would feel it only in the sense of protecting their job, but for me I feel it for the while sense of keeping my business alive and functioning. (20)

I usually do a quick inventory of the shop. I don’t even have to write it down. I just want to see what’s still sitting there, what hasn’t turned over, just do a bottom line of what we’ve got. And then sort of project from last year’s sales how much we need...that I have to order. Then I usually go through the payables and see what we’ve actually bought from vendors. Get an idea of volume of business with different vendors. And then I keep a file of new ideas...something I saw that caught my eye I thought somebody might be producing...but I do keep a budget of what I’m buying. But if something hits my fancy, I’ll go over the budget. (44)

I also prepare for how much I spent at the previous show, as far as dollar amount and if I was able to turn that over, once or twice or three times. And I try to get a handle of what I feel comfortable with a budget, if I’m going to be spending, you know, $5,000, $10,000, $15,000, right away on the spot at the show. So I have a limit of a budget that I need to stick in there. (42)

Ah, as far as organization, if we were truly as organized as we could be, I would have a lap top computer with all of our inventory recorded, and I would be able to make buying decisions perfectly based on past information in a computer. We would be able to buy more intelligently if we had the information that was needed about what we sold in the past. And we don’t carry that information with us very much. (16)

I find myself caught up in a circle of taking the money that I take in one day taking it to the bank the next morning, but that very same day writing out CODs in excess for what I took in. So maybe I am not so experienced in that area. (3)

One of the biggest pressures is when I finish at the end of the day is the way I buy. Panic kind of starts of how much did I spend? How much did I order, when did they schedule it to come in and what have I done, now if I were that other person [organized] I would know all those answers. (6)

The most important decision is how much you need to buy for a period of time. We break it up by month and in the month we break it up by what we want to have on the 5th of the month, 10th of the month, 15th, 20th, and I guess that’s about it. That I think is the most important thing. I think that is the hardest part of this business is that you have to make buying decisions many months in advance of receiving the merchandise. (18)

I sometimes don’t think I’m the best sales person in the shop. But I’m probably better than I think. I mean some people get attached to the owner, you know. And I’m not there right now, so I think that has something, it does something. But most of the time I’d rather somebody else go out and sell it. That I’d rather sell it by displaying it. And by buying it and by doing that sort of stuff. Because I almost sometimes feel guilty selling something to someone cause it’s my store. Isn’t that awful? I mean I don’t like to do a heavy sale. I can’t do a heavy sell. (40)
SUPERTHEME: BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Subtheme: Salability

Category: Affordability

Price. It is very important. We are a conservative community. Things are slow. (13)
...is it reasonably priced, not only for what it is but also for my customer. (7)
But my decisions have entirely to do with two things: my aesthetic response to the
work. You know, do I think that this is beautiful? Ah, and can I sell it? (41)

Category: Assortment

Then secondarily I check price and then maybe array of the item, like if they only have
one or two items of a whole set that I can sell, chances are I may not carry the work
because I would never get up to their [minimum] order. Also if their price is just out of
my market. (6)
I have to find out what sells, number one. After all I am in the business of making
money. But that doesn’t always follow because you can order things and they will sell;
you go, ‘Wow, what a seller.’ But you get the next lot in and they don’t move. So
there you have it, it’s difficult, but you tend to go with a trend. (17)

Category: Perceptions of risk

I looked closer and it was a high end of what I sell price wise and then I kind of took
my time and looked at everything in the booth. I just kept thinking I want to carry this
but it is too expensive and then I decided to buy it anyway. If you don’t try some of
these things you never know. (6)
I have a philosophy. I look at something and can instantly tell you what someone will
pay for it. I look at something and say that it is a hundred dollar item. Or that it is $75,
or $50, that’s a $10 item. Then when I ask the price, if I feel that I’m going to get the
markup based on my first assumption at what I think it should sell for, I would never
say, ‘What a great price. I can make a little bit more money on this.’ (39)
Well, after a couple of years and you know that the things that you buy are selling well,
then you’re willing to take a couple more risks and try something really different or
unique, but you also start to know your customer. You don’t want to get too
outrageous or you’re just not going to sell it. (43)
Well, the first time we ordered, I just wanted to try it. Cause I thought it was a good
item. And it did turn out to be one. So the second time was, ‘let’s get some different
patterns and go from there.’ (43)
I have pretty high confidence. What makes me more confident? When the items that I
purchased sell. That’s it. (45)
My buying is definitely affected by what I think I can sell my customers...I’m a
merchandiser; I love to put things together, and so I tend to see things as they relate to
other things that I’ve purchased and I can usually see them in the store. Sometimes I
just love something, and I figure if I like it that much, I’ll just make it work...(20)
SUPERTHEME: BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Subtheme: Store environment

I want 10 pillows and 3 throws in various sizes and so when it comes in and you walk in the store, it's not just one piece lost somewhere, it's a statement. Like African mud cloth, I might decide I want to do mudcloth pillows, and then I'll do a vest made out of mudcloth, maybe a jacket, and even a necklace tied with mudcloth...and maybe some brass on it. I'll make a whole story in a little corner of the shop. Maybe with all my African masks and other things and maybe add some of these contemporary things with some old things. (39)

Most retail locations deal with mass produced objects that you could buy the same object in J. C. Penny's in Dallas, as you would be able to buy it in Kansas City or anywhere else. And some people, I mean the consumer generally, in my opinion gets used to having a certain sameness. So when they walk in a store, like where everything is different than what they've seen, then it strikes them as a very unique and different kind of experience. (16)

I try to stick to all country theme things. I stay away from Victorian, modern, and try to keep it strictly country, because that is the specialty I want to have in my store. (3)

Because when people come into our shop we want them to feel like they are coming home. It is friendly it is a nice place to stay, to visit not just to run in and buy a card and run out. We want it to be intimate experience that we can tell you about us and our business and we can tell you about the craft person that created that particular product and the is so important. You can't get that from Midwest Packaging all up and down your counter. You just get that feeling of warmth and spirit of the American experience. We are very big on we call it folk art tradition, and family traditions that you just can't get without a type of product like crafts hand made and hand done items they exude themselves before we have to say anything about them. (12)
...I really listen to our customers. I will jot down notes. If people say things to me that are making a lot of sense. Or I’m hearing it more than once...I have a lot of people just commenting on it, I listen...Then I’ll follow through with it. (38)

But as far as getting into certain aspects of it [understanding consumer preference], no I tend not to go. People seem fickle to me, one week they’ll say they want it. You get it for them, the next week they don’t want it. I usually just do my own thing, I don’t listen to anyone else. (8)

...you see a relation between that [your job security] and how you do your business...You’re going to be more customer driven and you’re going to be less likely to risk some things...I know when I had my store downtown, one of the things I realized when I had to close it, and I lost a lot of money, I mean a lot, is that I called the whole thing...a crafts gallery. Maybe I was a little bit ahead of my time, but had I called it a gift gallery, I think I would have been much more likely to succeed. And consequently here...we are doing pretty well with gifts,...people know when they come in here to buy gifts, it’s craft, but we call it a gift. (18)

I listen to my customers and whatever they want they get. (14)

...we had a customer that saw us in our store and she mentioned she used to love to purchase dolls but she could not find them anymore. So we thought, ‘Hey, she is a collector.’ So we started carrying that line as well as others because of a direct demand for that product. We had other people come in and say they wanted a pottery line, but we are tired of the blueberry pattern from Maine, so that is when we got involved with pottery. We try to listen to our customers. (12)
Somehow I don’t consider it [jewelry from Thailand] a craft. I guess it is because I could order 40 of the same earrings and everyone of them would look practically identical... (7)

They are helping other people in Romania. They are making money and able to live because of this business and I thought that was worthwhile cause to be involved in. (12)

...but our demand and our greed and our need for low-priced merchandise pushes us deeper and deeper into the third world. And...if you don’t have a social conscious, and I do believe that crafts people are part of that microeconomic structure, that more of us hold up the trade between countries... (39)

Poor packing I find a sad thing. And I know one of the things, a lot of craft importers are also very environmentally conscious and they’ll shred or they’ll use any alternative packing material to avoid bubbles or Styrofoam and sometimes they can’t...It’s a tough one, especially when you’re talking about developing countries and their limited supplies to pack like that. (39)

...What our experiences are with buying stuff from Taiwan, China, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand is that we probably send back 15% of what we get for poor quality. And that doesn’t count what the customer probably gets after he gets home. (27)

And some craft when, they get very intricate, and they obviously have a different design to them, more of a European sense to them, than [an] American sense. (22)

They [international craft] are more of the type of thing that my clients are looking for here. My client base tends to be predominantly upper income. I’m located in an area of predominantly large estates...the median price of the home sold here last year was $580,000...so weighing those facts, [those are] the kinds of things that my clients I deal with are going to look for. And they may not have seen here before. (24)

I am looking at those factors and with the aspect of value and consumer interest and pricing right now, pricing is a major factor with all the discount houses and everything, when you are dealing with a craft person you don’t get them to lower their volume and price by doing more volume because they still turn them out one at a time. Your competitors in gift ware, the factories that want to stay alive are cutting their prices and looking to the shave cost. We have to look at pricing and also talk to a bunch of other galleries who recognize world crafts and starting to look at very carefully. We have two-three items we are test marketing now they are designed by American artist but are produced overseas. Would things be cost effective. We took a trip to Mexico in January and looking for native crafts and found people not much different from American crafts people. The weaving villages, raising their own sheep, dying their own wool, you are equating craft people and that is more of a global economy while our philosophy is preferred to be American crafts people. We are measuring customer response to how much their loyalty is going to be, is it just made in America and how much they are going to support our gallery. We have to look at all the different factors. (15)
SUPERTHEME: GLOBAL ISSUES

Subtheme: Pricing

But I find American craft very pricey. I can't stand dealing with the egos attached to all that stuff. They all sit there in their high director's chairs, you know, they are the person that's made it, but they're all a little too full of themselves. I'm sorry to say. You know I deal with such humble people in the Third World that sometimes I just feel that it's nice that we've elevated American craft to the place where it is, but I think we could elevate some imported crafts up also. (39)

I think that I feel a little sad, the fact that there are a lot of good American craftsman and they are beautifully made, but I know it takes time, material is expensive, therefore they tend to be expensive. Most people can't afford them opposed to the International crafts...(11)

The markup is unbelievable and they are much cheaper and I know it is so hard for shops to deal with handcrafted America products because they are expensive and if your customers are there for the cheapest item they can buy, you won't do well...(12)

...I have noticed in many of the craft items that some of the shows, and I've had this feedback from other owners of craft shops in my area that some of the prices are getting so high that they are becoming unrealistic. (30)
SUPERTHEME: GLOBAL ISSUES

Subtheme: Craft market system

...the whole craft world is a little bit of a flea market, going to the fruit market, going to a third world craft bazaar, and it is an art fair. It is a unique mixture and it has never happened anywhere else. Whether it will continue is questionable. (15)

...there seem to be a lot more sellers than there are buyers. There seems to be an imbalance between the number of people that are retailing and the amount of product that is available. It takes away from some of the excitement for me when there are not a lot of buyers because it sets a tone for the show...So when we go to a show and the artists are all standing around talking to each other, it makes it seem unprofessional and it makes us worry about what our future is financially...I think there are so many places for people to buy things now, it's really hard for us to survive...unless you really have something really different to offer. (20)
SUPERTHEME: MARKET ENVIRONMENT

Subtheme: Market setting

I like Boston it is a nice city to go to. I probably wouldn’t go back if I didn’t like or was not comfortable with it. It has enough artists at it to make a decent show, knowing I will find something, That’s all. (6)

It is the timing and the location. It is easy for us to get to San Francisco, my husband’s mother lives just north of there and we can combine a visit with our trip and probably go to the one in Seattle or Portland; [that] would be great. Maybe we will get a chance to go to one of those. We are always looking for something new because of those repeat customers. (7)

Ah, the truth of the matter is I go to the Boston show every year because I used to live there and I have friends there. It’s a good excuse to combine business and ...And I have found some very interesting things there. But I think that the ACC shows have probably been a better source of the kind of thing that I’m looking for. Cause I’m looking for, not necessarily, if you say high end, that suggests very big price tag. But it isn’t necessarily that, it’s a level of craftsmanship that I’m looking for. (41)

Everything is thrown together, so the New England is the only one that has any type of focus, so you have to wander through rows to find what you want. We are only there for a few things...You have to walk so much just to get one or two items that are worth stopping to chat about. (12)

To me it is because it is all in one place, it is easy to see everything. (13)
SUPERTHEME: MARKET ENVIRONMENT

Subtheme: Market climate

The last one was June and the feeling is there is a lot of people out there doing the same thing and nobody is making money out of it. There is a lot of duplication. The problem with wholesale markets is does it provide the artist with some economic base. At some level the art form becomes too market driven; people end up looking at what their neighbors are doing, looking at who is selling what. Artists have to come to a wholesale market with an idea they are willing to make 3,000 of these or whatever and they bring to those markets items that they feel comfortable making production on.

I usually like to walk through Accent on Design. Most of it I don't buy...but a lot of it it's too high tech, hard cold looking to me and there's an attitude problem I find in that section...They think they're hot shit. Some of them. It could be either [sales reps or artists]. You know, like the people in [name of vendor] will not put their booth in Accent on Design and they were the ones that defined it as 'there's an attitude problem there.'

I would say that my previous experience with Boston was that it was very depressing and the market out there was very depressed, the economy in the city; and the previous market I had this ominous 'what am I doing here purchasing with everyone of doom and gloom?' I didn't have that feeling this time, you had the feeling of the economy is great, let's sell, sell, sell.

I'm talking about the Baltimore ACC show. It's the best one...Quality. Expansiveness. Those are the two things that hit me about that show. Big! You just get a different feeling at that show from every other show. It's like the best of the best for the year, for the most part...And you feel like every booth is like going to be a surprise, something really wonderful there.

I have been to the one in Boston in the spring, which is smaller than the New York one. It was different in the sense that I don't think I will go back to Boston even though it is just a day trip. The reason is that the Boston gift show is catered more to the traditional New England taste, and that there were not that many international booths.

When I buy from that market because it's in Minneapolis, a lot of my customers are from Minnesota, St. Paul, and they come down and say, 'Oh, I saw this at such and such a gallery'...that's the worst thing I can hear. So I've stayed away from that....There's too much competition there.

Rosen is Philadelphia and then ACE is Baltimore and they are back to back, so that people can go do both of them in one trip. And one of the problems right now is the other shows that used to be back to back are no longer back to back.
SUPERTHEME: MARKET ENVIRONMENT

Subtheme: Buyer priorities

For the first day, I go to a private showing where I take my own stickers from my store with my store name, and I am moving so fast; you run around and you get there as early as possible. You are there when the doors open. You run around like a mad woman...you know who else is going to be there...I know exactly who they are. We are all frantically running around and licking stickers trying to keep the best pieces as fast as we can. and then we go back with the owner of the business and invoice the pieces. The second day is still prior to the actual opening of the show. There is another private show; this is the person who imports from Africa who has good quality and one-of-a-kind. I rent a car and tackle the freeway, but you have to get there early because it is the same thing, and there are people who are doing the same thing. I have to keep within my budget and keep an on going total going in my head. (10)

We do the biggest emphasis for the show in those 8 aisles or 10 aisles or whatever it is [Accent on Design]. And you know I might spend two days there and a day doing the rest of the whole show...every show I go to, unless there is something that is exclusively southwestern or country, and we really don’t carry anything like that, I don’t walk those aisles. But just generally when it says, like General Gifts, I walk every single aisle in a show because you never know what you’re going to find anywhere. But I always do have a focus of what area I want to go to first in a show and usually I try to finish up in that area as well. I know that show also had a craft section as well. So those are usually my first two priorities...Then, of course, if I do like the ACC show and the Rosen Show, where it’s all crafts, I guess my emphasis changes to more...glass. Glass is what I start looking at first. And then sort of prioritize down. (23)

I go see my friends first. I go to see them and at this time fortunately they’re also the people that I usually need the most. So it kind of works out well. But so I go to them first and then I will , then from there after I see my friends, then go to the three or four specific booths, I really want to see and then I methodically go up and down all aisles. And then I go over to, at the end, to the cash and carry to get some items that I have to pick up by hand and take with me. Cause I don’t want to carry them with me all day. (37)

No, I walk the isles, because there may be somebody, you know, what I do I really don’t stop at each booth, I walk fast and I look and look left and right and if something catches my eye then I stop. (11)

And then I’ll...go on down the line with the goal at the end of the time period I’ll have all these people I’ll want to revisit. This is just a preview. I’ll have a list of people that I’ll go bake and pay close attention to. This is kind of a first screening. And then I’ll go place to place. I’ll only stop and talk to people who are really, if it really hits me because I want to get a real good impression on that to be able to remember to go back. (42)
SUPERTHEME: MARKET ENVIRONMENT

Subtheme: Ordering

If I am going to buy craft, I try to do that ordering on-the-spot. [If] they don’t have a catalog or they only have a price list, it is difficult to remember when you get back. Also, if you don’t make your order after the show, sometimes you don’t place an order at all because the initial impact of what you saw can wear off by the time you get home. A craft item is easier to order on-the-spot because you can say I want that and that. You know what you are ordering. (7)

Now if I come upon something that absolutely knocks me out, I will order it right away, cause I have learned that sometimes if you wait when you come back they’ll say, "We’re not taking anymore orders." So if I think something is really drop-dead terrific, I make the decision immediately. (41)

Most of the time, that decision [to carry the item] is made instantly for me. In other words, I’ll decide, "Yes, I want to carry this." Now there may be negatives that start accruing that will cause me not to carry it. That will come out in conversations...but I don’t have to negotiate. (18)

Normally, we’ll walk along and come across a booth and see what we consider exquisite glassware. We inquire about the price. It’s fairly pricey. Got a retail around $700, many items $600, $500; that’s pretty pricey. But we definitely see that it looks like it’s worth the money in our opinion. Once we get comfortable about that, we’ll start to look at each piece. Try to figure out which one is the best to display, which ones would most like to be purchased by our customer base. We’d inquire whether anybody in the area is handling this, and if so, who. If they might, that way we’ll find out right up front if they have any objection to us handling it, so that we don’t have to waste anymore time. We’re going to inquire as to their minimum order, first time order and reorders...when their delivery is. I guess all that takes place before we start selecting the individual pieces. Then we’ll start looking at the individual pieces. Start learning from the artist how it’s made, what’s special about it, and then we’ll probably order in several orders. (18)

The first thing I do...I write them down, and I go to those booths and I order whatever I’m going to order. And if I didn’t manage to see everything the first day, sometimes that happens, I have to finish up where I left off. Then I make my purchases... (41)

By the third day then I am kind of on auto pilot, you have already purchased from the people that were my initial "Yeah, I’m going to sell that stuff," then I kind of in my mind go over and think about in terms of like if I was looking for pottery...I save the last day to go back and look at the things that hit me as so-so. I go back and order if I think I need that particular category. By the third day it is like tying up loose ends and I am probably more on sensory overload. It takes a lot to attract me that third day. (6)

...If there were things I was not sure about and I would ask for a catalog, and once I got home I could look through the catalog and try to remember what they were and order that way. (11)