



HOW TO SELL AT COMIC CONVENTIONS

An ebook by
Francesca Urbinati

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INTRODUCTION

What a better place to sell your comic book than a huge place crowded with entertainment fanatics? Comicons can be the greatest spotlight for a self-published author. This book will help you to avoid pitfalls and maximize your presence.



A view of New York Comic Convention, also known as NYCC.

THE PRICE OF SPACE

Basically, at comicons **exhibitors pay to work**. You rent a table, usually paid way upfront, in the hope to sell enough books to cover every expense you had so far: printing, marketing, trip, hotel, food, tabling...

If it sounds absurd, it's because it IS.

In order to turn a comicon into a profitable event for you, do every thing to lower your costs at a minimum:

- ◆ **Choose carefully** which events you will attend. Avoid those that are too big, too small, too distant or new. Prefer free-entry events. Before you choose an event, visit it and ask opinions and advices to exhibitors. You will eventually decide to be there with them in the next edition.
- ◆ Look for **cheap hotels** or bedrooms. You will only want a bed to fall asleep in, not a royal suite.
- ◆ **Ask friends** to come with you and split the travel price. You'll save on fuel or group tickets.
- ◆ **Don't buy food** at comicons, it's more expensive. Bring sandwiches and cookies from home or buy in a nearby shop.

ALWAYS HAVE AN HELPER

Don't ever underestimate this point.

You'll definitely need someone who **sells while you're busy** drawing or sketching, who **watches after the table** while you take a break, who **saves you from stalkers and weirdos**.

Ask a relative or friend who appreciates you and your work to help you during the event. People will sense his/her true enthusiasm.

QUALITY, QUALITY, QUALITY

Remember you're competing with Marvel, DC, top-selling mangas and tons of amazing artists from all over the world. **"Your best" is not enough, you must push further and further.**

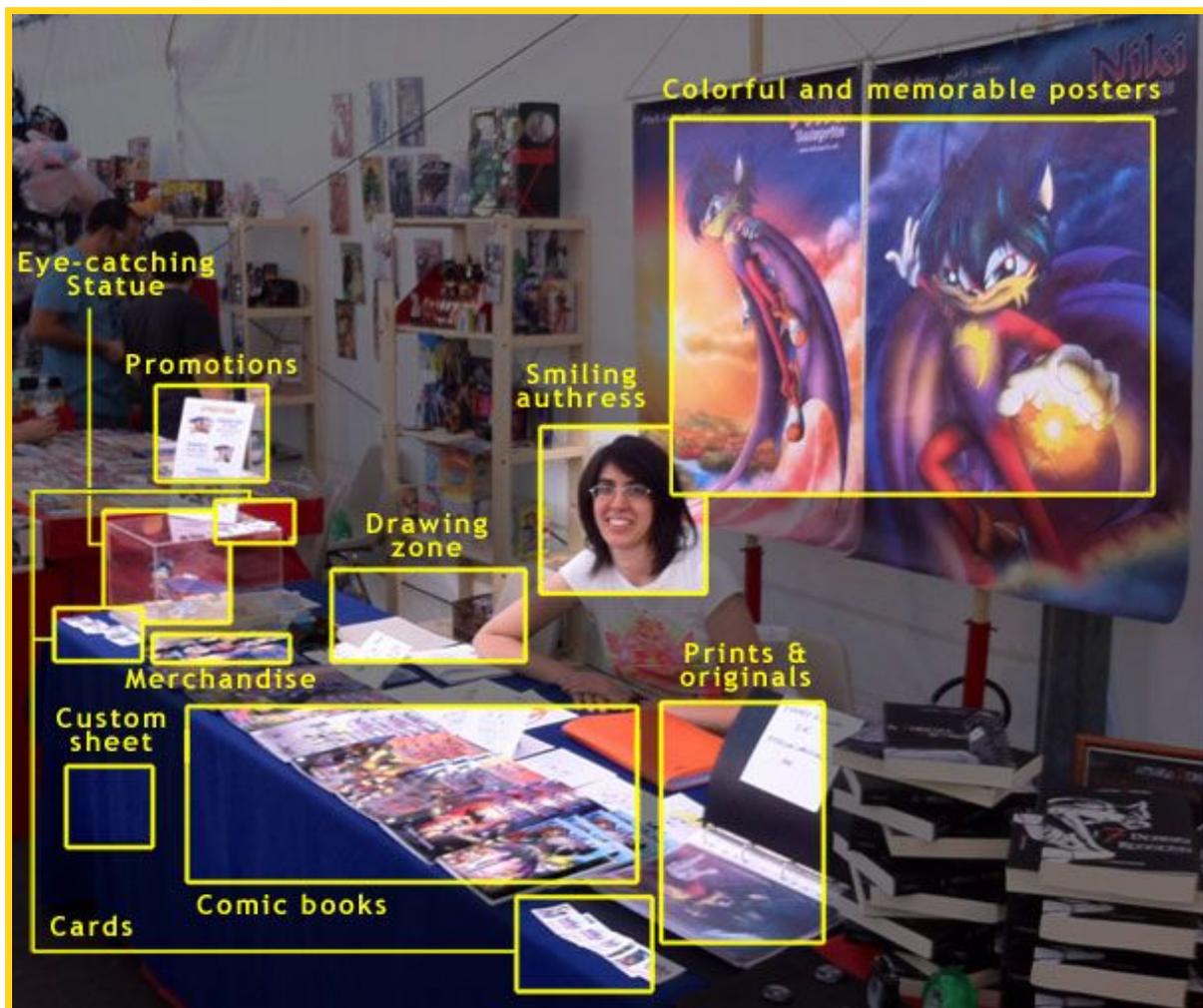
Quality is key and your best weapon, so struggle for it and **double-check each detail**. Don't be lazy about it, **readers deserve perfection**.

SMILE

No matter the situation, just spread the zen serenity of somebody who's fulfilling his/her dream. **Be friendly and enthusiast** about your work while pitching. Offer your card and FB page address to visitors who don't stop by.

MAKE YOUR TABLE MEMORABLE AND WELCOMING

Get one or two **roll-up posters**. Label your table/comic clearly with a **banner**. Arrange all you have in a **ordered fashion**. The image below is pretty self-explanatory.



Niki Batsprite's table at Riminicomix 2013: an example of full use of the smallest table at a comicon.

You don't need all the stuff you shown in the image, but you can get an idea about how to arrange your table effectively.

PRODUCTS & PRICES

Offer **different products and price solutions**. Bundle & discount comics, sell prints and original drawings. If you can, put your hands on custom merchandise to **widen you offer**.

Understand a lot of persons will like your art but won't dare to buy your book. Others just can't estimate the value of your work and will ask for your cheapest piece.

If you can make such visitors buy something from your table, that can make a big difference at the end of the day.

“FREE” GOODIES

I suggest you **don't offer anything for free**. Not a single sketch. **Free stuff will undervalue your work** and the work of other authors. **You may have just started with self-publishing, but how do you expect to pay your table rent and all other expenses if you work for free?**

People already think we make comics and drawings for fun, therefore we don't need to get paid for that. To fight this way of thinking, my solution to ask 1 Euro as a symbolic price to quick-sketch for those who don't buy my comics (if they do, the sketch is free). I also offer color prints for a very cheap price.

However, **you can offer a free goodie in exchange of** something other than money, like **a newsletter subscription or a quick survey** (sex, age, city) that will help your marketing strategy.

LOGISTIC

CASH

Bring cash money and NEVER ever let it alone.

You'll need a lot of coins to give changes. Sad truth, at comicons there are **thieves**. The best bet against them is to **wear a cash-bag all the time**, and **never leave money at your table**, nor even at night.

CARDS, TONS OF CARDS

You'll be surprised by the number of cards you'll actually need. Be sure to have tons of them. **You better bring the excess home** for the next comicon **than run out of them in the middle of an event!**

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

According to the kind of comicon you're exhibiting, think about carrying a **portable refrigerator for food and beverage**. Tabling a comicon can be very stressing: you must keep an high level of attention for a long time. Have **sugar and caffeine** from time to time in small doses. **Drink a lot and remember to eat**, but not too much altogether.

ELECTRONICS

You may need a light source, a multiple socket, adapters and rechargers. **Read the comicon rules carefully when applying as an exhibitor, know** what you're actually paying for and what you better bring from home.

PLAN A PITCH

Write down **an interesting one minute description of your comic book**. Learn it and make your helper learn it as well: that will be your booktrailer-speech to explain visitors about your comic book and -hopefully- convince them to buy it.

Slightly change your pitch from time to time and **test the effects**. A different emphasis or a local slang term may do miracles.

SPREAD THE WORD

Now that you're going to stand behind a table, your perception of the event duration will widen likely **one month before to one month later the actual comicon**. This will happen naturally as you'll have more marketing to do and more attention to pay in relation to the event.

Take every chance to **spread the word about your presence**. **Use social networks, press releases** and both real-time and scheduled **sharing** to **create hype and interact** with fans and visitors. **Post photos and updates within 7 days after the event ends**. Visitors will search for them online and will likely find your stuff too.

THE AUTHOR

[Francesca Urbinati](#) is an Italian illustrator and visual artist, author of the [Niki Batsprite's comic series](#). On her [blog](#) she posts articles and resources about self-publishing and self-promoting for creatives and authors.

