



Buying Comics and Collectables at Conventions

Tips from The Dr. Strange Archive

Comic book and collectable related conventions and shows can provide a fantastic opportunity to pick up some new items both mundane and rare. Some pre-show planning and focus during the show can yield great results.

1. Research the Show: Not all shows are created the same. They vary in size and opportunities. For conventions you have never been to, do a little internet research. As long as it's not the first year of the con, there should be plenty of reviews and opinions that will show up by doing an internet search on the show name as well as who is producing the show. Make sure you also check out pictures from the show. They can be a great help in determining the size and makeup of a show. Also, don't forget to check YouTube. People shoot videos during previous years of the show that may give you some insight. If you only go to one or a few shows a year, make sure you are getting the best bang for your buck and ensure the show will offer what you are looking for, especially since some of these conventions cost a fortune just for tickets.

2. Research celebrities/artist ally: As part of their advertising campaign, most shows will have a list of guests and artists that will be attending the show. Take a look at the list and see if you have any comics or collectables in your collection that you want signed by any of the artists. Keep in mind artists can charge up to \$50-\$100 to get something signed. Make sure to plan ahead and budget for the expense. Another important thing to keep in mind is artists and celebrity guests cancel all the time.

3. Setting Goals and a Budget: Most sizable conventions cost quite a bit of money to attend. Ticket prices can cost as much as \$200 or more depending on how many days you will go and if you buy a special package or not. Then you need to determine if you will be staying at hotel or commuting back and forth. Both have related expenses that could run hundreds of more dollars before you buy your first comic or collectable. Next, think about how much you want to spend on purchases and set your limit. I almost always bring cash. I have never been robbed at a convention (but that doesn't mean it couldn't happen). Put your wallet in your front pocket so its harder for someone to grab it without you noticing. There are several benefits for bringing your cash limit with you. First, you do not get screwed over with hefty ATM charges when you keep having to pull out more cash. Second, I always know how close I am getting to my limit because I can just look in my pocket and see how much cash is left. Third, vendors may give you a small discount on cash purchases, or at least don't charge you a surcharge for credit card purchases. This is because they lose money on card fees each time they accept a credit card.

Disclaimer: There is always a risk of getting robbed in our society or losing money anytime you carry cash.

4. Always Ask: Most vendors have so many items for sale at their booth, you may easily miss seeing items you would purchase. Each time you go to a new booth, ask the vendor if they

have anything related to what you are looking for. You would be surprised what they pull out of a discrete box on the floor you didn't see or go through. They only have a limited amount of table/shelf space to display items. Many vendors keep boxes/bins of stuff under and around their booths. Or, they may have what you are looking for back at their home shop that you can buy and have shipped to you. Space is at a premium. Finding a lead on a rare item is sometimes just as important as walking away from a booth with an item.

5. Take Time to Dig Dig Dig: Sometimes the vendors have so many things, they really don't know what they have. Take time to dig through those boxes and bins. This is specially true when it comes to random common comics. Vendors typically put out long box after long box in their booth that are not sorted or categorized. These are the \$0.50 and \$1 type boxes. The only way you know what's in them is by taking time to flip through them. It is an inexpensive way to fill in gaps in your collection.

6. What Day is the Best Day?: Sometimes you can only attend one day of a multi day convention. Which day is the best? This can be a difficult question to answer sometimes. You will get you best selection of items on day one. The more time goes by, the more things other people have bought and taken out of the inventory for you. On the other hand, typically the best deals can come on the last day. This is because the vendors want to make as much money at the convention as possible and don't want to haul a bunch of stuff back. Another thing to consider is what panels and events are scheduled for each day and if you're interested in any of them. There is also a price difference in tickets for different days for most large shows.

7. Don't Forget to Have Fun and Take Breaks: Conventions can be overwhelming experiences. Make sure to take breaks. Find a spot to sit down and relax. Enjoy the cosplay and other activities that make their way around the show floor. Have some fun! Take some pictures. Remember to always ask before taking someones picture. Be courteous. If the person is a cosplayer, ask for their tag so you can promote them when you post their picture. Have fun, but don't wear yourself out. You will have a much better experience if you're not tired.

8. Leaving the Show: While I walk the show floor, I make note of booths I would like to come back and spend more time in. I usually take a picture of the booth or grab one of their cards to remind myself to come back later. Sometimes I pass on a purchase until the end of the day. I will come back just before I leave the show and see if I want to buy the item before I leave. Either way, it's your last chance if this is the last day you are coming to the show. Also, check all your bags and personal belonging to ensure you didn't forget something. You want to know now when you have a chance of going back and looking for it as opposed to finding out you are missing something when you get home.

For more guides and resources, visit www.DrStrangeArchive.com.

Good luck and have fun!!!

Sincerely,

Dr. Strange Archive