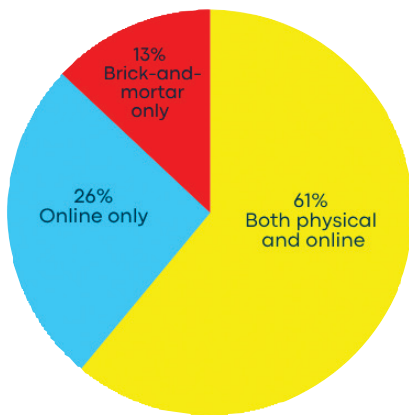


# Stitching Success:

## 2025 Needlework Retailer Survey Trends at a Glance

What's trending? Based on Needlework Retailer's recent survey with 113 responses, here's a snapshot of what's working—from best-selling categories to creative ways shops are connecting with customers. Use this quick guide to compare notes, spark ideas, and stay on pace with what's moving the industry forward.

### What type of retail business do you operate?



### Top-Performing Product Categories

#### • Key Takeaways:

**Threads/floss** is the clear top performer, mentioned in nearly every response.

**Patterns and charts** and **Hand-dyed fabrics** are close behind, indicating strong demand for materials that let stitchers express individuality and creativity.



### What's Motivating Shoppers?

#### Very Hot: Social Media & Video Content

Customers are shopping what they see—especially when it's fun, current, and trusted.

- Share weekly “What's New” videos or FlossTube updates.
- Post consistently—new arrivals, finishes, staff picks.
- Start conversations with polls, replies, and Q&As.
- Collaborate with designers or influencers.
- Use targeted ads to boost events, clubs, or trunk shows.

#### Hot: Stitch Groups & Events

SALs (Stitch-A-Longs), retreats, classes, and trunk shows create community and serious FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out).

- Host stitch-ins, demos, or themed events.
- Tie in exclusive products or sneak peeks.
- Promote early and showcase the fun with photos and videos.

#### Warm: Seasonal Buzz & New Releases

Stitchers are responding to seasonally fresh, limited-edition, and themed releases.

- Group seasonal items together for easy browsing.
- Highlight just-arrived products in-store and online.
- Feature a “Designer of the Month”.

#### Mild: Price Points, Finishing, & Service

Affordability, presentation, and consistent service still matter.

- Keep popular kits under \$75 easy to find.
- Display finished models with creative finishing examples.
- Use email or social to highlight what's available now.

### Sales Trend Compared to Previous Year

#### Retail Snapshot:

The survey results are encouraging—Half of all shops reported stronger sales than last year.

#### Hot Take:

The shops seeing the most growth are staying visible and connected—hosting events, refreshing inventory, and trying new ideas. They're listening to what their customers want and learning from each other's successes.

#### Next Steps:

That's where *Needlework Retailer* comes in. We're here to help you stay inspired by sharing real shop strategies and highlighting top-selling products. **For the full survey results, visit [www.needleworkretailer.com](http://www.needleworkretailer.com).**

**Much stronger than the previous year**  
17%

**Slightly Stronger**  
33%

**About the Same**  
28.7%

**Slightly Lower**  
13.8%

**Much lower** 7.4%

# Top Selling Hits of 2025

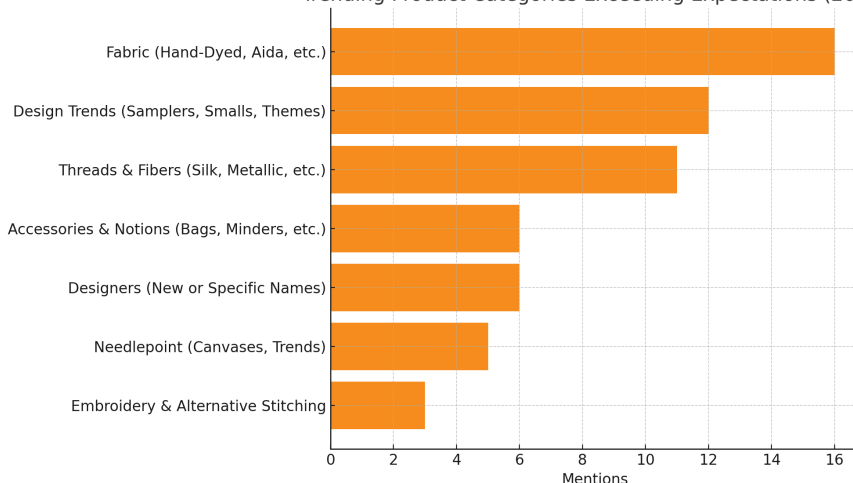
**Fabric:** Hand-dyed linen/fabric was frequently mentioned as exceeding expectations, with many noting strong or surprising demand.

**Threads:** Specialty and metallic threads also saw notable interest.

**Samplers:** Several respondents highlighted a resurgence in samplers and Quaker designs.

**New Designers & Series:** Specific series like Animal Crackers were mentioned as driving unexpected sales. Some categories, such as aida/evenweave fabrics and needlepoint, also stood out.

Trending Product Categories Exceeding Expectations (2025)



## THE MOST DESIRED DESIGN THEMES



SEASONAL & HOLIDAY 18%



PLAYFUL & LIGHTEARTED DESIGNS 17.4%



BOTANICAL & NATURE-INSPIRED 14.8%



HUMOROUS & CHEEKY 12.1%



INSPIRATIONAL & FAITH-BASED 10.1%



FOLK ART OR PRIMITIVE 9.4%



SAMPLERS - MODERN OR HISTORIC 9.4%



WEDDING AND BIRTH 8.7%

## Trends to Watch: Niche but Growing

Gaming & Fantasy Themes (particularly from younger stitchers.)  
Small, animal-themed patterns  
Monochromatic Designs  
Something **New** & Fresh  
Compact, Detailed Projects

## Still in Demand: What Store Owners Want to See More Of

### Seasonal & Playful

Over a third of requests focus on holiday themes and cheerful, lighthearted designs. Retailers are looking for fresh takes on celebrations and humor.

### Nature Themes

Botanical and nature-inspired designs remain a strong, steady favorite. Think flowers, birds, and artistic natural motifs.

### Humor & Heart

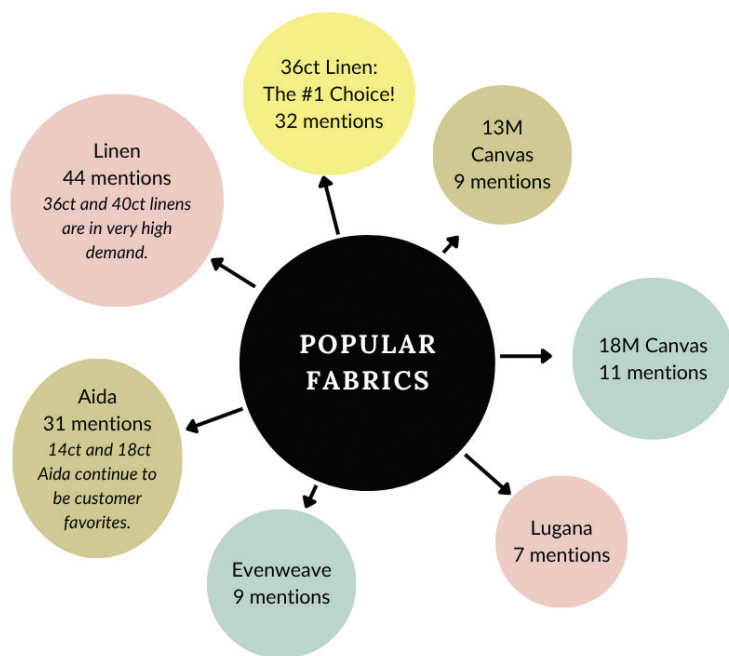
There's clear interest in both witty and faith-based designs—charts that spark a laugh or offer inspiration.

### Folk & Samplers

Folk art, primitives, and samplers (modern or historic) continue to resonate, blending tradition with current appeal.

### Life Events

Wedding, birth, and milestone designs are still in demand—especially when small, stylish, and giftable.



## Fabric/Canvas Trends

### High Counts Rule:

36ct and 40ct linens are leading the pack—especially in hand-dyed options. Ensure ample stock, especially in popular colors and hand-dyed varieties.

### Aida Isn't Going Anywhere:

14ct and 18ct Aida continue to be customer favorites, especially for beginners and stitchers who prefer a larger stitch.

### Canvas Growth:

13M and 18M hand-painted canvases are a significant and growing segment. Consider expanding your needlepoint selection.

### 32ct = Just Right:

32ct linen/evenweave is consistently popular, perhaps due to versatility or a good balance of count and price.

**Beyond the Basics:** While less frequent, specific requests for 28ct evenweave, 25ct Lugana, and higher count linens (46ct+) indicate niche markets worth exploring.

### Retailer Tip:

Focus on deep stock in best-selling counts (36ct, 14ct, 32ct, 40ct).

### Marketing Tip:

Highlight your fabric variety and educate customers on the benefits of different counts for various projects.

**Sourcing Tip:** Share these trends with suppliers and seek partners who offer depth across linen, aida, and canvas lines.

## What new techniques, materials, or finishing styles are your customers experimenting with this year?

### Emerging Finishing Trends

• **Self-Finishing Takes Off:** The most significant trend. Stitchers are embracing DIY finishing—motivated by both cost savings and creative control. Popular formats include:

- Flat folds
- Stand-ups (notably *Animal Crackers* by Stacy Nash)
- Boxes and ornaments
- Pin drums

• **Shaped & Dimensional Designs:** Increasing interest in finishes that go beyond the frame. Shaped stand-ups and 3D forms are gaining momentum.

### New Materials & Techniques

• **Thread Experiments:** Stitchers are branching out into:

- Variegated floss
- Hand-dyed threads
- Silk fibers

• **Fabric Shifts:** Previous Aida users are beginning to explore:

- 36ct and 40ct linens
- Lugana and evenweaves for a finer finish

### Technique Exploration

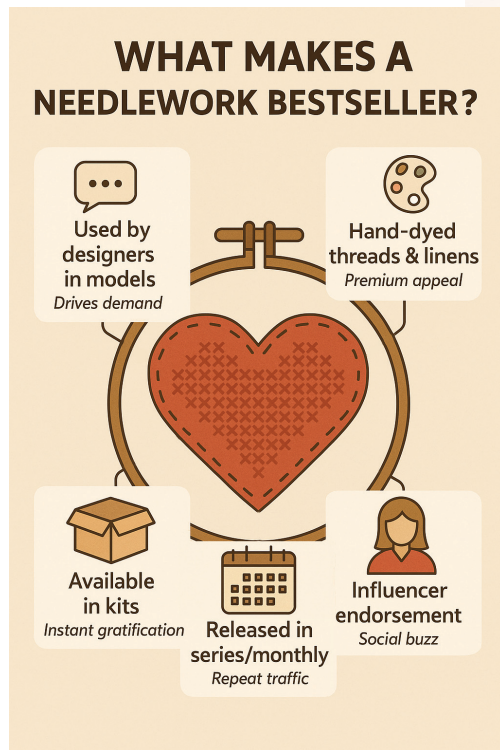
- **Beyond Cross Stitch:** A growing niche is exploring advanced and traditional needlework techniques, including:
- Hardanger • Pulled thread • Specialty stitches • Punch needle



*"My customers are shopping at big box stores and buying inexpensive wall hangings, baskets, etc., and re-configuring them to hold their cross stitch. Needlepointers are doing a lot of trays."*



## Which products are consistent Best Sellers or need frequent reordering?



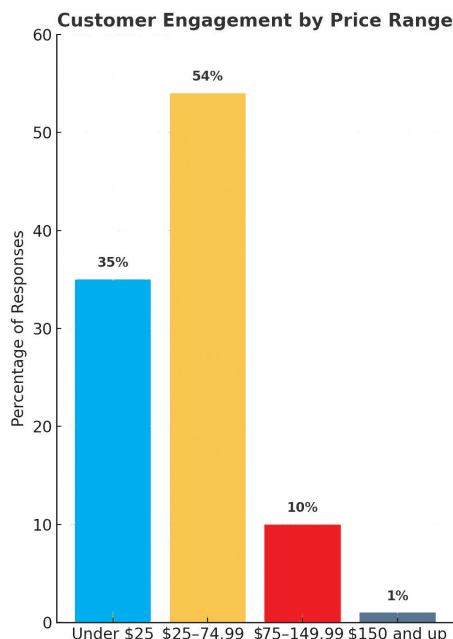
## How many years have you been selling needlework?

**Newer Entrants:** A substantial portion of respondents (approx. 20%) have been selling for 5 years or less, indicating new businesses joining the needlework retail landscape.

**Established Presence:** The largest group of respondents (over 50%) represents businesses with more than 15 years of experience, highlighting the longevity and stability of many needlework shops.

**Balanced Industry:** The data shows a healthy mix of new ventures and seasoned businesses, suggesting a dynamic and enduring industry.





## What Price Range Tends To Generate The Most Customer Engagement?

### Mid-Range Dominance (\$25-\$74.99)

This range leads in comments, attention, and purchases—*“most of our sales are in the \$25–\$74.99 range—charts, bundles, fabrics, and finishing items.”*

### Impulse Power (Under \$25)

Lower-priced items spark quick decisions and wide appeal—*“\$20 or less is a good impulse purchase price; anything over that they really think about.”*

### Considered Purchases (Over \$75)

Higher-end items see less frequent engagement—*“over \$75, they pause; it’s more of a treat or special request.”*

### Beyond Price:

Compelling products drive engagement regardless of cost—*“if it’s cool or done by somebody cool, they’ll pay virtually anything.”*

## Key Challenges Facing Retailers

Here are the top 10 retailer pain points and a suggestion on how to flip them into opportunities.

- Designers are selling PDFs directly to consumers** — *Offer printing, kitting, and stitching support* to make your shop the go-to resource customers count on.
- Fabric and thread shortages slow sales** — *Recommend smart substitutions* and use pre-order lists to keep customers engaged.
- Juggling inventory between online and in-store is overwhelming** — *Focus on one section at a time and set a weekly 15-minute review.*
- In-store events are hard to plan with low turnout** — *Try casual stitch-in days or small themed gatherings* that require little prep.

5. **It’s hard to reach younger or new stitchers** — *Feature beginner kits, trendy charts, and make your space welcoming to all skill levels.*

6. **Marketing feels expensive and exhausting** — *Choose one platform you enjoy and commit to a once-a-week post or email.*

7. **Customer expectations are high** — *Set kind, realistic expectations and gently reinforce the value of small-business service.*

8. **Running a store can feel isolating** — *Connect with another shop for idea swaps or support—you’re not in this alone.*

9. **Trends are hard to follow** — *Ask your customers what they’re stitching and let their preferences guide you.*

10. **Competing with online and discounted sales** — *Highlight what only you offer: trusted advice, finishing help, instant access, and community.*

## Top Trade Shows Attended

Nashville Needlework Market — attended by 85% of respondents  
 Needlework Marketplace — attended by 45%  
 Virtual / Online Trade Events — attended by 40%  
 Autumn Needlepoint Reunion — attended by 30%  
 Spring Needlepoint Show — attended by 25%  
 H+H Americas — attended by 10%  
 Other Gift Markets (Atlanta, Dallas, Quilt Market) — attended by 5%

## Virtual vs. In-Person Attendance

40% of respondents participated in Virtual/Online Trade Events  
 90% attended at least one In-Person Trade Show

## Just for Fun: Retailers’ Favorite Ice Cream Flavors:

Mint Chocolate  
 Chocolate Chocolate  
 Vanilla Salted Caramel  
 Butter Pecan Creamsicle  
 Dulce de Leche Strawberry  
 Matcha Oreo  
 Heath bars Cherry Chocolate S'mores  
 Oreo Caramel Gumsticks  
 Ice Cream Sandwich Lactose-Free  
 Drumsticks Dark Chocolate Sandwich  
 Fudgesicles Dark Chocolate  
 Nut-Free Celiac-Safe