

HOW TO START A SUCCESSFUL MAIL-ORDER BOOK BUSINESS WITH NO INVENTORY

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HOW TO START A SUCCESSFUL MAIL-ORDER BOOK BUSINESS WITH NO INVENTORY

If you run a mail order business, a great way to expand your sales is to offer informational publications in addition to your regular line of products and services. The usual problem with doing this is that you usually have to commit a large amount of your resources for buying initial inventory and storage, not to mention the expense of putting together marketing materials for the publications you're going to carry. There are some companies, though, who provide services for business people who want to sell publications, but don't want the hassle and expense of inventory.

These companies will DROP SHIP items to your customers. For example, when you sell a book, you would usually send the wholesale price for the book, along with a shipping label listing you as the return address and your customer's address as the "ship to" address. You keep the difference between the retail price you charged the customer and the wholesale price you sent the supplier (in most cases 50%) as your profit. The supplying company then ships the book directly to your customer. In this way, you avoid having to stock all the different publications you'd like to sell, while still having the ability to offer your customers a large selection to choose from.

There are many companies, large and small, that will provide a drop ship service. Services vary, with some providing sales materials for the publications you'd like to carry, others not. Some charge a dealership fee, some don't. A few offer higher discount plans, which are good to consider if you plan on getting other people to act as dealers for you, increasing your profits with a lower marketing outlay. What follows is a short list of companies you may want to look into if you'd like to provide informational books to your customers. Any prices quoted were current at the time this report was written (July, 1994).

PREMIER PUBLISHERS, INC.

Premier Publishers, Inc. is one of the largest wholesale dealers of self-improvement and money-making business publications, with over 500 to choose from. They even can supply books by well-known business authors like Jeffrey Lant. I received their 80-page dealer catalog and was quite impressed by the sheer number of publications to choose from and the selection of familiar books, manuals and reports that Premier can supply. Started by Owen Bates in 1971, Premier Publishers, Inc. also can supply retail catalogs that can be imprinted with your name and address on the front cover, as well as individual circulars for the publications you wish to sell.

There are a few ways to get set up as a dealer with Premier Publishers, Inc.

To qualify for 50% off retail, place a first order that totals at least \$50 at retail prices. The 50% discount can be used on this first order, so you can be a dealer for only \$25, plus whatever shipping costs are incurred (in most cases, only \$2.50).

From that point on, no minimum orders are necessary for the 50% discount. To qualify for deeper discounts, you can either purchase in quantities of 10 or 100, or you can pay an extra fee to become either a "registered" wholesaler (\$36/year, eligible for 10-lot pricing on any size order) or a "special" wholesaler (\$100/year, eligible for 100-lot pricing on any size order). These extra discounts are quite substantial, so if you are planning to sell a lot of publications, either of these programs could be for you.

Contact Premier Publishers, Inc. at P.O. Box 330309, Fort Worth, TX 76163-0309.

SELECTIVE BOOKS, INC.

Lee Howard, who runs Selective Books, Inc., is probably familiar to you if you're a regular reader of mail order publications.

He started Selective Books, Inc. in 1969 and has been very successful since then. Lee's books are, for the most part, directories and business-related publications. Some examples of the titles he has available are "Closeout Sources Directory," "U.S.A. Wholesale Sources Directory," "New Free Book Advertising Sources," "How To Publish Your Own Book Successfully," and a series of importing trade directories for Hong Kong, Taiwan, the Philippines, and the Orient.

Most of Lee's publications retail for \$10 to \$20, with profit percentages from 50% all the way up to 75% and more on drop shipping. If you want to stock his publications, you can get an even lower cost, and required quantities are as low as 12 to receive a substantial discount.

There is a lot of profit margin built in to Lee's publications.

There are two ways to become a dealer for Selective Books, Inc. First, you can pick and choose the books you want to sell and pay the dealership fee for each one (usually \$5 or \$10 over and above the price of the book). Or, you can purchase a dealership to a preset group of books that Lee has put together for \$99.95.

This deal consists 12 dealerships that would cost \$230 separately, and also includes sample ads, sales letters and a copy of each of the books you would be offering. With the high profit margins possible for his books, this may be an idea worth looking into. Lee puts out a newsletter for mail order dealers that lists all of his publications in detail, as well as information on his dealership programs and his business articles, which are well worth reading. Write to:

Selective Books, Inc., P.O. Box 1140, Clearwater, FL 34617.

MASCOR PUBLISHING

Mascor Publishing was started in 1983 by Peter Schruender, and continues to be a major supplier of publications for resale. Their catalog contains mail order and business related books, reports and tapes.

One unique set of publications that Mascor Publishing carries is the Career Report Series, which are concise briefings of 4 to 12 pages on over 100 occupations that are expected to experience growth in the next ten years. They contain job descriptions, working conditions, advancement potentials, salary and training information, all based on government and industry research. Mascor Publishing offers two distribution plans.

The Special Distributor plan has a one-time fee of \$39, which qualifies you for an average discount of 60% on any quantity. The Super Distributor plan has a one-time fee of \$95, with an added discount of 15-25%, no minimum quantity.

Mascor Publishing can also provide imprinted catalog and brochures for their publications. Contact them at P.O. Box 8308, Silver Spring, MD 20907.