

Unexplored Mail Order Products (OR Getting Out of the "Inner Circle")

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It doesn't matter what you're selling by mail. Unless you've progressed beyond the point of being a one man operation, you've got many options open to you for increasing your sales right in your backyard. These secondary markets for your products are usually unexplored by smaller dealers, but think of it this way: If it sells by mail, why won't it sell retail? And of course you'll realize there is no reason at all why it won't.

Whether you sell printed matter, food, merchandise of any kind, you know you get an excellent price when you buy it, and you pay an enormous amount to get it to the public through the mails. That means you can probably undercut that price when you wholesale or retail it locally. Unless you sell specialty items of interest only to certain groups of people such as other mail order dealers, you'll find a ready market just about anywhere for your wares.

If you've chosen your product line wisely, you carry a number of items rarely seen in retail stores. Perhaps they should be. Show samples to the retailers in your area and offer to wholesale items to him. Even if they're dropshipped, you can afford to take a smaller commission on a bulk sale since your capital expenditure only is involved, not the cost of postage and literature as well.

The retail field is not limited to the shops in your area. Chances are good that more than a few flea market operators live nearby who might be interested in handling some of your products, especially if you can give them a substantial discount. Other excellent outlets for lower-priced items are variety stores. They frequently handle all manner of novelties and interesting consumer goods, especially if they sell for under \$5.

If you handle a variety of reports you might wangle yourself a column in your local newspaper. It's true, most of them are junk and not of much use to the general public, but more than likely, the ones you buy yourself are excellent reading for all types of people and consist of information few know about.

Since they're available for you to reprint when you purchase them and therefore not legally copyrighted, you can put them into a column under your name, provided you don't take credit for actually writing them. Show some of the better pieces to the editor of your local weekly paper and see what they have to say. You might be surprised how easy it is to get involved in a newspaper.

Here's another idea for selling your reports. Why not put them into envelopes printed with the contents, or on a display card that tells the buyer what he's getting?

Naturally, you won't be able to put a \$10 reports collection over on the general public for what you paid for it, but even at \$2 or \$3, you're making plenty over your printing costs. (In fact, these collections were packaged specifically with the secondary market in mind. With a suitable cover, or even without, they can be sold as-is, as minibooks.)

You can float them in flea markets and variety stores, even bookstores, but we advise you you'll probably have to leave them on consignment since this is not a common means of merchandising information and retailers will be reluctant to give you your money upfront.

If you're marketing one of the more successful lines of books, the catalogs of unusual books usually advertised as "not sold in stores", you might try taking catalogs around to local booksellers and taking orders.

If you approach the book store owner on his own level, you should probably discover you'll rarely come away without an order, especially if you can give him a worthwhile markup in addition to your commission, which you must make smaller than your regular 50% or so.

Don't balk at doing this, because you'll more than make up for it by pulling down multiple sales in almost every case. Many of the titles we've seen are genuine bargains even at regular mail order prices and will appeal to your local bookseller.

For unusual items with a very wide appeal, here's something that could turn out to be a massive profit-puller. Either take one publication or a group of reports, print 1,000 8-1/2x11 flyers with information on both sides and deliver them door to door in your neighborhood.

We'll admit this is a real gamble, but the right product with the right sales material could turn a profit big enough to make you an amazing profit in an incredibly short time by blanketing your city with these flyers. A line of household goods could be sold in the very same manner.

We're sure there are more unexplored mail order product markets, but our creativity runs only so deep. Perhaps you've thought of others worth test-marketing already. If so, by all means try them! Just because it hasn't been done before doesn't mean it can't be done, and just because it has failed in the past doesn't mean it will fail again.