

# How To Break Into The Directory Publishing Business

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## How To Break Into The Directory Publishing Business

Publish your own Advertiser (Ad Sheet), TV schedule or business directory. It is no longer absolutely necessary to have a printing press to be a publisher, although you may decide to get one once you get started good.

Printing can be contracted with commercial printers in your area, or even out of town. Another alternative that is growing leaps and bounds these days is to use a desktop publishing system to produce "copy ready masters," which printers or copy services then duplicate inexpensively (off set printing from copy ready masters is the cheapest, providing your need 2,000 copies or more).

You can either produce your own or hire a desktop service to finalize your copy. You can also use the services of one or several different printers for different types of jobs.

A local AD SHEET is usually given out free at supermarkets, local stores, mailed out (bulk) and/or delivered door-to-door.

Your income is from paid advertisements in your publication. Prices charged for advertising is low for classified ads (a dollar or so each),, with higher rates for contract and display ads.

Advertising rates are proportionate to the circulation - the total number you print distribute to people (not the extras you throw away). Therefore, the more you print and either sell or give away, the more you can charge for your ads!

A BUSINESS DIRECTORY is a booklet or pamphlet that is sold,, subsidized (bought and given away) or given away free to local citizens, visitors or tourists.

The Directory contains a wealth of information of interest to visitors and is also enticing to the advertisers. It too, is financed by primarily by the ads it contains.

A small directory publisher works out a plan to list all restaurants, sights to see, banks, motels and/or groceries (so the list will be of value to the reader) then sells ads to the merchants who are listed.

For a small amount, they can have their ad in bold letters; a little more will get them a slogan or log; or they can purchase space for a separate advertisement, coupon or what-have-you.

Some publishers will include an article about an advertiser if

the ad is a certain size. The number of copies each merchant gets to give out or sell also may be governed by his financial participation, especially if the publication has a printed price.

For example, an advertiser gets one (or some multiple) free copies to sell or give away for each dollar he spends for ads. If he wants more copies, they are available at a wholesale cost to him, which he can either sell or give away. Naturally, front and back page and larger ads command the best prices.

By getting an idea of what THEY think is needed, you will be forming a concept of what type of publication THEY would advertise in. Don't be shy about asking them for suggestions. They know the area as business people and may be able to provide you with some very worthwhile ideas.

This auction of physically contacting potential advertisers for advice has more than one objective.. Every one that you personally contact establishes a relationship between you and a potential advertiser.

From this point, whether by letter, phone or personal contact, you are communicating with someone you know. Future contacts are not only based on this first meeting, they can refer to the gist of the conversation.. Of course, as a professional business person, you keep a notebook and write down the gist of that conversation so you can remember it and the name of the persons you talked to at each stop.

When you are settled upon the publication, start serious negotiations with your printer and/or desktop publisher. Plan how you will distribute the material and sell ads.

Register your company name (and publication name, if different), and see about any requirements for local licenses. If you plan to mail out your publication, apply for a bulk rate permit at the post office.

One relatively inexpensive way to start publishing an advertiser or directory with limited funds and skills is to begin with a standard word-processing system and IBM compatible computer, like a 512K XT with two floppy drives or one and a hard disk. These systems are not expensive because they are no longer considered "state of the art" - but they are good to get you started.

In most cities you can buy an adequate setup, including a good word processing program for \$500 or less.

If you can type, learning to operate the word processor it for normal copy will take at least a half a day. If you have a 24 pin or better printer, you can probably produce adequate quality print, and use your scissors to "cut and paste" art work.

Or, you can compose your copy on your system and send the output on disk to a good desktop publisher who will load your material a more sophisticated system and produce professional looking, copy ready masters for about a dollar a page.. If you print several thousand copies, you can send those masters to a photo offset printer.

Hint: When you print out is a little too light, invest in a can of spray protector from your nearest art store. This is what artists use to spray on their charcoal and pencil drawings to protect them from smears, but it also brings out the contrast. These cans of spray sell for about \$5 each and are also available from Dick Blick or Kelsey (see BUSINESS SOURCES).

Starting a TV Schedule would also begin with surveying the need for such a publication in your area as above.

But you also need to check with several potential schedule suppliers to make sure you get the best possible deal - for you (financially) as well as your customers (timely, thorough coverage).

When you are satisfied that your area can use a TV Schedule, that the local businesses will support (advertise in) it, and that you have found a reputable supplier, you are ready to get down to business.

The problems to watch for in publishing center round over-extension. It is very tempting to buy better equipment, to order more copies, so you can increase your circulation and get more income. Just be sure you are preparing for business that is there!

It is a good idea to be pretty sure of exactly how much more income you are going to realize from increased investments before you invest with the HOP of increasing income. And, make sure to check with legal council when you feel like a little editorializing.

Lastly, probably the most important pitfall of all: advertising publishers have to keep a close eye on their credit advertisers. One of the things business people want to do when business is off is to increase their advertising 0 which can be paid IF BUSINESS INCREASES.

You will need to use your judgement in these cases to avoid being the recipient of a large bill someone builds up just before they fold.

BUSINESS SOURCES

GUIDES PUBLISHING, Box 133, Fairfield, NJ 07022. Offers Business directory kits for TV schedules, Bingo, Home Sales type publications.

TV FOCUS, INC., One Anderson Ave., Fairfield, NJ 07022. Offers lit and license to publish local TV guide. \$500 down; \$3,000 operating capital required.

NORTHERN VANGUARD, Box 518, Cohasset, MN 55721. Kits and instructions for directions - \$495.

BIG CITY LITHOGRAPH, 550 N. Claremont Blvd., Claremont, CA 91711. Offset printer.

COPEN PRESS, 100 Berriman St., Brooklyn, NY 11208. Commercial printer.

LELLIPRINTING & ADVERTISING, 2650 Cr. 175, Loundonville, OH 44842. 419/994-5302. Commercial printer specializes in booklets.

DOVER PUBLICATIONS, INC., 31 East 2nd St., Mineola, NY 11051. Discount books, clip art, stencils, etc.

DICK BLICK CO., P.O. Box 1267, Galesburg, IL 61047, 1267. 800/477-8192. Large variety of art related supplies. Old, reliable company.

THE KELSEY CO., P.O. Box 941, Meriden, CT 06450. 203/235-1695. Printing supplies (paper, presses, ancillary products). Old, reliable company.

QUILL CORPORATION, 100 Schelter Rd., Lincolnshire, IL 60917-4700, 312/634-4800. Office supplies.

SWEDCO, Box 29, Mooresville, NC 28115. 3 line rubber stamps, business cards.

ZPS, Box 581, Libertyville, IL 60048-2556. Raised print business cards and letterhead. Will print your copy ready logo or design. Good prices.

WALTER DRAKE & SONS, INC., 4119 Drake Bldg., Colorado Springs, CO 80940. Short run business cards, stationery, etc. Good quality but little choice of style or color. Can be difficult to deal with (they are a "short order" mail order house).

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