

How To Build A \$1,000 A Week Mail Order Book Business

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How To Build A \$1,000 A Week Mail Order Book Business

Among the most popular of all products sold by mail are books. In fact, more books are sold by mail than through retail book stores. Not all books are suitable for mail selling, but those which fill an important need can become the foundation of a highly successful and profitable business.

SUBJECTS TO CHOOSE AND AVOID

Regardless of your personal reading taste, most books are taboo for selling by mail, so let's examine these first. To be avoided are technical or scholarly books, primarily because they are readily found in local book stores and public libraries.

The same can be said about novels, history and biographies. Poetry books, although very popular, do not make mail order products. All of these subjects, in addition to their availability locally, are sold by major book clubs, so you would be competing directly with them.

The best subjects are books that provide help, ideas, inspiration and information, or those that contain solutions to problems relating to economic conditions and social lifestyles. Specially, this include how-to subjects, either in the titles or as suggested by the contents.

SUBJECTS MUST APPEAL TO HUMAN DESIRES

Virtually all successful mail order books offer help or ideas in one or more of the following classifications:

HEALTH--MONEY--TIME--JOBS/CAREERS--SELF-ASSURANCE--POPULARITY--
FAME--SECURITY--PLEASURE--BUSINESS

That's what people want. If you have a book (or set of books) that will show people how to make more MONEY, get a better JOB, become SELF-ASSURED, gain better HEALTH, put more PLEASURE into their lives, increase their POPULARITY, manage their TIME more wisely, become FAMOUS, increase their SECURITY, or put more profits into BUSINESS---then, you will have something that can be classified as a "winner."

PLAN TO SPECIALIZE

Right from the beginning, keep this thought in mind: You can't be all things to all people. Attempting to do so will dilute your efforts and increase your costs of doing business. The person who is seeking a better job is NOT necessarily interested in gaining better health or pleasure. The buyer of a book on time management

may not be interested in becoming more popular. So, your first priority should be to determine the TYPE of subjects or books you want to handle, then target your advertising to that classification. Or, do it in reverse. Decide the type of person you would like to have as your customer, then select the category of books he/she would be interested in buying.

WHERE TO FIND BOOKS TO SELL

This will seem strange, but the worst suppliers of books for mail order selling are the major publishers. true, they might have some good titles, but the discounts they offer are much to low, usually 33% to 40% off retail.

You need a bare minimum of 50% discount on all books that you sell, and if you can get 60 to 70% that's even better. If you have sufficient capital to invest in your book business, contact a few book remainder companies.

Publishers Central Bureau, One Champion Ave.,Avenel, NJ 07131
Book Sales, Inc.,110 Enterprise Ave.,Secaucus, NJ 07094
Overstock Book Co.,120 Secatogue Ave.,Farmingdale, NY 11735
S & L sales Company, PO Box 2067, Industrial Boulevard, Waycross, GA 31502

The above are prominent companies at the time of this writing, but circumstances are constantly changing. Check your local library for current addresses.

If you are not familiar with the book remainder business, this is how they generally operate:

Major publishers will carry a book for six months to a year, then if it is not moving profitably, they will sell all remaining copies to one of these companies (often at 5 cents on the dollar) who, in turn, sells it to retail book sellers. It's important to point out that, just because a particular book title didn't sell well in book stores does not necessarily mean it's a lemon. It usually means that no effort was made to promote it other than place it on the shelves in stores. With the right kind of advertising and thoughtful promotional methods, such books could become very profitable to an alert mail order bookseller.

Remainder books can often be purchased at up to 90% off retail. Giving you a very high markup. But there are two main drawbacks in dealing with book remainder or overstock companies:

First, you have to pay cash up front for the books you purchase, and these companies normally do not offer return privileges. Thus if a company has a total of 20,000 copies of a single title and you buy 1,000 at 50 cents each, it's a great buy especially if you can

retail the book for \$10 or \$12...but it's still a \$500 investment. If the book doesn't sell, you're out the original cost of books, plus all advertising and printing of sales literature that you have created for it.

Second, if you hit on a good title that proves to be hot and you sell out your first thousand copies, you'll want to go back for the remaining 19,000...but in the meantime the company might have already sold them to someone else.

The bottom line on this subject is that dealing with remainder houses is best left until you have experience in choosing and selling books before making a major investment in remainders.

SELF-PUBLISHERS OFFER GREAT OPPORTUNITIES

There are thousands of small, independent publishers in the USA and Canada, usually referred to as self-publishers, meaning these people have written a book on a subject they know well, then published it themselves.

Some of these self-publishers sell their books retail only, directly to their selected market, but many of them also want dealers to help market their books, and they offer excellent wholesale prices.

The small publishing field is wide and diversified, ranging from the individual who writes from a home or office to a small company employing only two or three key persons. The material they publish is equally diverse, from small booklets of 12 pages to giant volumes of several hundred pages. Subjects range from coin collecting to business management; from computer operation to various business opportunities and various money making ideas

Some of this material is excellent, but much of it is also poorly written and printed, resulting in amateurish attempts at publishing. To work with these publishers, you'll simply have to search out and evaluate each publisher and their titles.

HOW AND WHERE TO FIND THEM

Check the many tabloid mail order papers and magazines for their ads. Some of these trade journals also publish New Products departments in which they feature new books and booklets on the market.

You'll also find a column "Stew's Reviews," in many of these trade papers, which highlights many of the latest books, manuals, booklets, and other material being written and published.

When you first encounter some of these publishers, don't be dissuaded by the physical size of some of these publication. A

great many are not really books at all, but are merely booklets, but your interest should be centered on content, for this is what you will be selling and your customers will be buying. People don't buy book, they buy information, ideas, help, guidance, instruction and solutions to a wide range of problems. Naturally, you should be concerned with neatness in presentation, cover design, printing quality, layout and graphics, and each book or booklet should be well written and offer useable information.

Consider this: If someone has spent 20 to 40 years perfecting a craft or project that has proven to be profitable business idea, and has now put this information in a book or booklet that others can use to accomplish the same as the author, would this information not be worth \$15 or more?

Of course it would. That's why such books and booklets are so popular with mail order booksellers, and why they're so profitable. The smaller publisher does not have a high overhead as the large publishing houses, so they can well afford to give a deeper discounts to dealers. A \$15 retail booklet, for example, can often be purchased in wholesale lots of a dozen for about \$5 or \$6 each, and most of these publishers will also sell on a drop ship arrangement, so the dealer has no investment in the books to be sold.

If you are not familiar with the drop ship term, it simply means that you advertise to get orders for the books you sell, then deduct your commission and send the balance with your customer's name and address to the publisher and he fills the order for you. The normal commission on a drop ship arrangement is 50% of retail.

To learn more about mail order and selling books by mail, you should read the following publications. Each is loaded with valuable ideas, information, suppliers and contacts:

** MAIL PROFITS MAGAZINE--Available for \$4 from Carson Services, PO Box 4785, Lincoln, NE 68504

** MAIL ORDER MESSENGER--Available for \$3 from Stew Caverly, 216 Mclean Street, Wilkes Barre, PA 18703

** WISDOM FOR WEALTH--Available for \$1.00 from Infopreneur Services, 3755 Avocado Blvd #110, La Mesa, CA 91941

ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

Your best advertising method will be in the classified sections of appropriate magazines. Use the heading that most clearly describes your book subject. Don't try to get direct orders, but ask only for names and addressees, then send inquiries information via a sales letter, descriptive circular, order form and return address envelope. In most cases the publisher of the books you sell will

furnish you with a copy of the circular which he has printed. Sales letters, however, are rarely available from publishers so you will have to write your own or hire a professional copywriter, but you really do need a letter to accompany a circular.

Your offer should be printed on less than \$20. If your proposed book is only \$5 or \$10, it will not pay to advertise for inquiries. In such case, try to locate a companion book or booklet that you can combine with the primary title so it will boost your retail price to at least \$20 or more.

HOW MUCH CAN YOU MAKE AS A BOOK SELLER?

If you have a good offer, priced at least \$20, and if you have good printed sales materials to send to inquiries, you should be able to **AT LEAST TRIPLE** the cost of each ad you run. A \$100 ad should, therefore produce \$300 in sales.

If you can **NET \$50** profit from each ad and you run the same ad in 20 magazines, each producing the same \$50 net, this will give you \$1000 a month, assuming each magazine is published monthly. But using this example as a base, it means \$12,000 annually...from your **FIRST OFFER**.

From every 1000 inquiries you receive you will probably convert only about 15% into customers, leaving 850 inquiries who do not order. You can then follow up these inquiries by sending additional book offers three or four times a year to convert more of them into customers. Also, continue mailing to those who purchase your books from you. These customers will stick with you and continue to buy as long as you keep mailing to them. Just be sure your offer is something they are interested in.

Continue to search out and add more books to your growing line, eventually producing them into your own catalog. The major profits will continue to come as long as you continue to mail to your growing customer and inquiry lists.