

101 Ways To Increase Mail Order Profits

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101 Ways To Increase Mail Order Profits

1. This publication is not meant to be a manual on How To Operate a Mail Order Business. Its purpose directly and simply, is to provide you with numerous tips, sources, and ideas, that will save you money, time and effort in conducting your mail order business. If read carefully, we are sure you will find it of much value in this regard.
2. A mail order business will succeed, if the price at which the item (goods or service) is offered seems to be lower, all things considered, than the customer can obtain it for elsewhere.
3. A mail order business will succeed if, the offer is unique or exclusive or appealing for any number of reasons that create or satisfy desire upon the part of the purchaser.
4. A mail order business will succeed if, the customer does not know where to obtain the goods or services and is attracted by the offer in the advertisement which fills a need or creates a desire.
5. Regarding paper size: The most common size is 8-1/2x11. The offer may either be sent in a no. 10 business size envelope (if you are mailing less than 3 or 4 sheets of paper) or 9x12 envelopes for heavier mailings. Odd shape envelopes may be attention getters, but they have to be custom made, and the time and cost are very high.
6. The quickest and best way to get a specific answer to any question pertaining to postal rules and regulations is to inquire at your local post office.
7. Use the YOU approach in your copy. Regard the customer as a friend. In a study on successful direct mail copy, it was found the most frequently used word was "you" and the second most successful word was "your".
8. Used colored paper for additional appeal of your offer. Your sales letter should generally be white, grey or ivory. Circulars, brochures and order forms will look nicely in a variety of colors such as: Ivory, gold, light pink, blue, green and canary. The ink color should generally be black. You may wish a second color, such as red or blue for additional effect, for headlines, book titles, etc. This can be done for a small additional charge.
9. Have printing done in moderate quantities. While printing is substantially less expensive in larger quantities, it is best to print in smaller quantities until you are quite sure you will

be using the offer for some time. This may take a few months of trial and error.

10. Whenever you spend money for printing, get a least 2-3 quotes. Your best bet will most likely be a small or medium size printing company. If you live in a large metropolitan area, consider getting your printing done out of town. You will see many ads of mail order printers in the mail order publications.

11. Try a direct mail newsletter; most people read them. Newsletters keep customers up-to-date and interested. You can speak in a sales pitch, but be subtle.

12. Test mailings. 1,000 is a fair test.

13. Your business will grow quickly if you serve your customers at every opportunity. Keep good records on your customers. If you are starting out and do not have a computer, use small index cards.

14. Do not discard the envelopes of your inquirers but sell them. The going price is between 5 and 10 cents per envelope. Mailing list companies will acquire envelopes in most any quantity. They will generally stipulate that envelopes are less than 90 days old.

15. If you publish a newsletter or adsheet, contact other publishers. If your circulation is equal to theirs, many will be glad to exchange an equal amount of ad space with you.

16. For your various mailing needs call or write the Office of Consumer Affairs, Postal Service, 474 L'Enfant Plaza West S.W., Washington DC 20260. They offer several informative and free publications.

17. About colors: According to research, men will prefer these colors in the order as shown: Blue, red, violet, green, orange, white and yellow. And women are thought to prefer the following colors in order of preference: red, violet, blue, green, orange, white and yellow.

18. It is interesting to note that three of the largest general mail order companies began at a time of need, grew as a result of aggressive merchandising policy, and by a process of adaptation to new conditions remain as leaders of their field.

19. An up-to-date typewriter (a computer and a word processing program is even better) is absolutely indispensable in the operation of a mail order company. Business letters that are handwritten will brand the sender as an amateur, and create a poor impression on prospective customers.

20. If you mail to business firms, it'll pay you to take the trouble to get the names of individuals in each firm. One mail seller found that letters addressed to business individuals pulled four times as many orders as letters addressed to the company themselves.

21. How do you address your mail? Tests indicate that individually typed envelopes or hand written envelopes (for certain types of customers) will out-pull labels every time.

22. Write to: Dinner & Klein, 600 S. Spokane St., Seattle, Wash. 98134 and request their free catalog. It has handy instructions in how to prepare a catalog, as well as prices and information on their various services.

23. Tack circulars of your best circulars on public bulletin boards that are provided in your community, such as grocery stores, coin operated laundries, etc.

24. Ever try filling in the person's name on your form letters? A test pulled 18 orders with the person's name typed in, and only 14 orders without the fill-in.

25. The primary aim of all advertising is to create in the reader a desire to own what you are selling. To be successful your advertising must be compiled to contain these four essential elements. It must attract attention, stimulate interest, arouse desire, call for action.

26. Two-page letters pull best when printed on two sides of a single sheet.

27. Try dividing your mailing list into one-time buyers and repeat buyers. Mail follow-ups to the repeaters about every 4-6 weeks, but mail to the one-timers only about every 3 to 4 months. You'll get the most for the least out of your list that way.

28. Want to offer a premium? Many mail sellers do. A sample is your best bet, if you can do it. In a test, a sample pulled 153, while a booklet pulled 100, a related novelty pulled 86, and a special service offer pulled 24.

29. "Publications Relating To Small Businesses" list dozens of low cost publications of interest to small mail order business. Write for a free copy to - U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20202.

30. To get an idea of the scope of mail order selling, look carefully through the advertising section of any craft magazine, also general and trade publications, farm magazines, mail

editions of the large metropolitan journals and dailies, country weeklies, and notice the wide range of offers.

31. Articles widely sold over store counters are not generally suitable for the small mail order dealer to handle.

32. Need wholesale book suppliers for your offers? Here are two excellent sources: Wholesale Book Sources and Book Dealers Dropship Directory, #445 - \$12.

33. When mailing First Class postage, you will know the results of a test within two or three weeks. The same test by bulk mail will take about 8 weeks or longer.

34. Free information on becoming a distributor of thousands of items; novelties, gifts, etc. Mail Order Associates, Inc., 230 Chestnut St., Montvale, NJ 07645.

35. It is good business judgement to proceed slowly and test an offer on a small scale before striking out with any considerable amount of capital.

36. Using poorly printed and cheap looking sales literature is one of the serious and often fatal errors into which mail order beginners frequently fail. Prospects, often accustomed to buying through the mail, can spot the work of an amateur who is not careful to employ sales tools up to standard quality.

37. Free 40 page printing catalog and price list from: Lelli Printing, 2650 CR 175, Loudonville, OH 44842.

38. Always remember to incorporate that magic word "Money Back Guarantee" into your sales literature. It gives the purchaser confidence that he can get his money back if he is dissatisfied with his purchase, and consequently makes the order much easier to obtain. Statistically there are very few returns in mail order buying.

39. One way to make money is to keep yourself from unnecessary spending. This is because every dollar you keep is tax-free, that is, you have already earned it and paid the tax on it. So a dollar saved may be \$1.35 earned.

40. What is the most magic word in all adverting? FREE!

41. The HEADLINE is responsible for 50% of the returns obtained from any advertisement.

42. The advertiser's reply to an inquiry should always address itself specifically to the needs and wants of the prospective buyer. Forget about talking about you and your company. It's called selfish marketing and of no interest to the reader.

43. Novice mail order advertisers typically make the error of spending more to get people to express interest than they do to satisfy the interest.
44. "Starting and Managing a Small Business of Your Own". This informative publication is available FREE from - Small Business Administration, 1551 L St., N.W., Washington, DC 20516.
45. Books are the ideal mail order product. Here's a few of the reasons. Books carry a high mark-up. Books mail at a special postage rate. There's no spoilage with books.
46. Interested in becoming a distributor for a wide selection of over 400 books on business, careers, self-improvement, how-to and general interest? Discounts of up to 75% Write for free Distributorship information to: Mascor Publishing, P.O. Box 8308, Silver Spring, MD 20907.
47. Ordinarily it is not the product offered that makes a successful mail order operator, but the selling plan coupled with the energy and determination behind it.
48. Small business loans. Aid for independently owned small businesses which are unable to obtain financing in the private credit marketplace. Contact - Director, Office of Financing, Small Business Administration, 1441 L St., N.W., Washington, DC 20416.
49. Are you using professional art-work in your display advertising? If you aren't, maybe that's why you're not getting the returns you wished for. Art-work is important as this test shows. Advertising with art-work pulled 12%, the same advertising without art-work pulled only 4.5%.
50. If you have an offer that sells well to college students or military personnel call American Passage - 800-727-7243. Request free Directory of College Newspapers and Directory of Military Base Papers. You can advertise in very large University publications for very little money when compared to national publications.
51. A reply card with a shaded background out-pulls the same card without the background by at least 5%.
52. Letters run off on a printer and sent First Class can average one-third more returns than a printed or copied letter sent via bulk mail.
53. A mailorder project should be planned and established as a sound business, not a fad or passing fancy. Mail order work is not something to be undertaken by anyone just because he

imagines he wants a business of his own.

54. A catalog is not recommended for the beginner; after he gets established and adds to his line, he is in a position to contemplate a small catalog.

55. Even the simplest of mail order enterprises are susceptible to chance. A necessary talent in the mail order business is the ability to observe what is happening and what is likely to affect demand.

56. Long letters or short letters?: A four-pager sent out by one firm pulled almost 5% while their old one-page job pulled only 3%. If your present one page letter isn't producing, it may pay to try a longer letter.

57. New mail order products bring fortunes to small operators. Free interesting information from - Mail Order Associates, Inc., 120 Chestnut Ridge Rd., Montvale, NJ 07645.

58. Besides the outlay of stationary, circulars, and advertising, you must have enough money to put in a product in order to give prompt service on orders. It is, however, generally recommended to utilize the drop shipping services of a supplier in the beginning stages of a new business.

59. It is a very good practice in going through trade papers and other literature, such as circulars, to watch carefully for articles and series offered and to file away these tips for possible future reference. Call this your "idea" or "swipe" file.

60. A manual costing less than a dollar in quantity to publish often sells for ten dollars or more. The buyer is just not purchasing so much paper and printing, but presumably years of a writer's skill and experience, the recording of which required tedious hours, days or weeks to make ready for study for people who want to learn.

61. "Women's Handbook, How SBA Can Help You Go into Business". This informative publication is available FREE from: Small Business Administration, 1551 L St. N.W., Washington, DC 204165.

62. One of the ways a mail order operator succeeds is by moving faster and more surely than his competitors. To do this requires information - quicker and better information than is available to rivals.

63. When you put up your own product, on a small scale to start, the cost of materials is not of paramount issue. If your product is worthy of making or putting together, it can be priced high enough to be within competition and yet be a very

good value to the customer.

64. Offer a free premium or bonus if the customer orders by a specific date. Get the customer to act NOW!

65. The masses of the people have never demanded equality of fortune, and indeed understand it to be impossible; but they have always insisted, upon equality of opportunity.

66. The Federal Trade Commission has a rule requiring mail order purchases be shipped within the time stated in the company's printed or broadcast offer. If no time is stated, shipment must be within 30 days after the company received the order. This is often referred to as "The 30 Day Rule".

67. For an update in current Mail Order Laws & Regulations, order this publication from your distributor.

68. When the telephone is combined with direct mail, it can result in an increase in your response by 2 to 6 times, or more. Inquiries generated by advertising and direct mail can be handled for quick response while interest is still alive.

69. If you are in a position to take orders by phone, you can significantly increase your business by accepting credit cards as a payment option. Your best bet to get a bank to grant you credit card merchant privileges will be with a small bank. If you are unable to find a bank you may want to consider a clearing house.

70. "Let's Do Business". This informative publication is available FREE from - Publications Service, Veterans Administration, 810 Vermont Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20420.

71. In preparing sales literature, if one has no writing gift, outside aid must be secured. Without it, all is lost.

72. Learn something about selling with catalogs. Write for free details and samples to - Specialty Merchandise Corp., 6061 DeSoto, Woodland Hills, CA 91365.

73. "International Mail Imports". This informative publication is available free from - Public Information Division, Customer Service, 1301 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20229.

74. Save up to 70% and more on all your office supply needs. Multi-page catalog listing several thousand items, literally everything you need in mail order. Free on request from - Quill Corp., 100 Schedlter Rd., Lincolnshire, IL 60069-3621.

75. Keeping your mailings up-to-date will save money in postage and printing and make your mailing more effective.

76. A new mail order business can be operated without the assist of a computer, but as the business grows, a computer will save time and make your business more profitable. This is especially true when it comes to managing your mailing list.
77. Many spare time operators make money year after year with a "how-to" item, exclusively prepared. The classified columns and display advertising sections of the craft magazines are replete with such offerings.
78. Although inquiry advertising is expensive, it provides more reliable lists than most other methods. Since every prospect secured through enquiry advertising has already revealed an interest in the product, aggressive efforts for sales have an excellent chance of success.
79. Buyers lists, to be of any value, must be kept up to date. When any person appears to be of little or no value as a prospect, his name should be purged from the list. Most mail order companies will drop the name of a customer if no purchases have taken place in the preceding 12 months.
80. Before printing, prepare an accurate dummy of your mailing for weighing purposes. Include all pieces. Be sure the weight comes within the one-ounce postal limit. The smallest fraction of an ounce overweight increases your postage costs.
81. Don't be frightened by early mistakes and losses, expect them. What you learn from them might be the very essence of your later success.
82. "The more you tell, the more you sell" is an old advertising maxim which is worth remembering. Go easy on gimmicks, give the reader solid information.
83. Location of a mail order business is of little importance. Many have been started in spare time from a person's own home. Nor is age or gender of any significance. Also, elaborate facilities are unnecessary as would be in the operation of a store.
84. Location as pertaining to the part of the country, large or small city, street address, etc. is also of no importance. There are many highly successful mailorder companies operating from small towns that have no name recognition from most of the population.
85. Even a commonplace product can be sold to advantage when promoted with a sound merchandising plan, especially when given a new twist.

86. Use a teaser on the envelope to get the prospect interested right away. Try something like "Save 50% on...", or "Special Free Offer Inside", etc.

87. Make it easy for a prospect to order, include an order blank in all your mailings. Remind the prospect to "order now". It's the call to action.

88. Have you tried advertising in card deck mailings to test response over conventional promotional methods. Many dealers are finding these quite profitable.

89. Study, study, study. There is a lot to be learned in up-to-date books on mail order, and in trade periodicals and trade association bulletins. Modern business is complicated. There's always a lot to know, and surprisingly enough you can find it out if you just try.

90. Be enthusiastic. Your enthusiasm is a big part of getting a customer excited about a purchase - the positive energy you generate will rub off on customers.

91. Review your list maintenance procedures to be sure that address changes and other corrections are made expeditiously and duplicates are removed. Excess and undeliverable mail at the new rates could be a major expense.

92. Newsletters have proven themselves to be effective promotional vehicles. Because they tend to stand out from ordinary direct mail pieces ("junk mail" to the layman).

93. Most of the experts agree, a two-time buyer is at least twice as likely to buy again as a one time buyer. So mail to these more often.

94. By using lightweight paper you might squeeze four instead of three pages into an envelope for the same postage. When circumstances permit, print on both sides of a sheet.

95. Don't over control your operations. Keep control systems straight forward, allowing room for experimentation, risk taking and managerial discretion.

96. The only things in which the prospect is interested in is what your product is going to do for him and what are you going to do for him. What's the price, and why should he order now.

97. Desktop publishing, converting typewritten copy to a highly professional look may be worth considering.

98. The more your sales-letter looks like an actual letter, the better it will work. Don't be "done in" by advertisement

writers who do not understand this principle.

99. Your sincerity about this product establishes a prospect's trust in both the product and the purchasing experience itself - if you believe in the product, the prospect is much more likely to buy it.

100. Take advantage of special postal discount rates such as "Special Fourth Class" rate for books, film, recordings, etc. Make a careful comparisons of parcel post and UPS rates for heavy packages. UPS will be most cost effective in distances of 1,000 or less miles, and they will generally be more reliable.

101. When people feel they have been treated well and helped to make a good buying decision, it's a cinch that they'll recommend your service or product to their friends.