

Create Your Own Mailorder Products!

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Create Your Own Mailorder Products!

Pick up almost any book or folio on Mailorder Selling and invariably you will find the same advice. When you select a mailorder product, select one which:

- appeals to a large segment of the population
- is not readily available in stores
- is easy to ship by mail
- is worthwhile
- and a product that lends itself to repeat orders

Most mailorder writers will also tell you to try to acquire exclusive selling rights to your product. And most writers will agree that a dealer has a better chance of succeeding in the mailorder business if he has created the product himself.

All of this is certainly good advice. The trouble with it is that it does not go far enough. It does not tell you HOW to create a product that is exclusively you own. In what follows, I would like to show you, step by step, HOW to create your own mailorder product.

I would like to begin by making a very revolutionary statement. **THE FIRST STEP ON THE ROAD TO MAIL ORDER SUCCESS IS NOT THE SELECTION OF A PRODUCT!** That may sound like a very strange statement, but there are three things you must do (if you want to be successful) before you ever select a product to sell by mail!

FIRST, you must **ANALYZE YOURSELF**. You will only succeed in selling a product, or a line of mailorder products if you really enjoy selling them, if you can be honestly enthusiastic about them, and if they are products you yourself would honestly want to buy.

SECOND, you must **SELECT YOUR MARKET**. Once you have analyzed yourself, you will want to sell to people who have interests similar to your own. Only then will you be comfortable in your mailorder business.

THIRD, you must thoroughly **ANALYZE YOUR MARKET**. Before you ever select a product, you should **KNOW** what your market is buying, what it would like to buy, if available, and what it will buy from you, in the very near future.

Once you have analyzed yourself, selected your market, and then thoroughly analyzed your market, you will have no trouble selecting or creating a product to sell by mail. It will almost select you! Now, let's go back and study these three steps, one

by one.

ANALYZE YOURSELF

To help you understand yourself, sit down and, as honestly as possible, write out your answers to the following questions:

1. When I go to a newstand, what kind of magazines appeal to ME?
2. What kind of books do I really like to read?
3. When I daydream, what do I daydream about?
4. What do I do with my free time? (How do I spend my evenings? What do I do on weekends?)
5. What do I do on my vacation?
6. What one subject interests me more than any other subject in the world?
7. If I didn't have to work for a living, how would I spend my time?
8. If I could go back to college, what subjects would I take?
9. What kind of products do I like to purchase by mail?

Once you have HONESTLY answered all these questions, you will see an amazing pattern emerging. When you have finished, pay a visit to your local library. Go to the Reference Desk and ask to see the latest edition of the WRITER'S MARKET. Sit down and study the Table of Contents, which lists all the main categories of magazines currently being printed. Decide which CATEGORY interests you beyond all others. It is in that mailorder market that you will be most at home . . . and it is there that you will be most successful

Now go back to the Reference Desk and ask for two other publications. Either one will provide you with the information you need. They are:

- THE STANDARD PERIODICAL DIRECTORY and
- ULTICH'S INTERNATIONAL PERIODICAL DIRECTORY

I, of course, have no idea what your interests really are, but let us, for the sake of illustration, say that you have a compelling interest in Astrology. With a little search in the Standard Periodical Directory, you will find the name and address of at least a dozen or so Astrology magazines. In Ulrich's you will find even more, since it lists magazines published in foreign countries as well.

Jot down the names and address of each and every publication. Write to each of them, on your letterhead if possible. If you don't have a letterhead, you will still hear from most of them. Tell them you are starting a mailorder business, specializing in Astrological products, and ask them for a sample copy of their publications, along with their ADVERTISING RATES.

When you start receiving your sample copies, save them . . . and save the advertising rate cards. They will be invaluable to you in the future.

While you are waiting for these to arrive, go to the nearest second-hand magazine store and buy a few dozen old astrology magazines. (The cost? Probably a dime apiece!) Get as many different magazine titles as possible and be sure to get copies with MAIL ORDER ADS in them. Issues that are ten or fifteen years old will be valuable to you, but also try to obtain some of the more current issues. You are now ready to start . . .

ANALYZING YOUR MARKET

Start a notebook. Pick up one of the magazines which you have purchased at the second-hand magazine store. Read the first ad . . . every line of it. Read it slowly and carefully. When you have finished reading it, see if you can describe what is being sold in five words or less. If you can't, go back and read it again. If you can, record your description under one of three headings in your notebook:

- Merchandise
- Information
- Service

All mailorder offerings come under one of the three headings listed above. If the ad was for an Aquarian Necklace, it should be listed under Merchandise. If it was for a treatise on Flying Saucers, it should be listed under Information. If it was an offer to chart your horoscope, it should be listed under Service.

After you have analyzed the first ad, go on and study the next ad. Continue until you have thoroughly analyzed every single ad in the magazine, including the classifieds. When you are through, you will have three lists:

- A list of Astrological Merchandise for sale
- A list of Astrological Manuals (Information) for sale
- A list of Astrological services for sale.

As you read, watch for:

UNDEVELOPED IDEAS -- Especially in older issues, you will

find really good ideas that were, for one reason or another, never developed. Perhaps the originator lost interest or didn't have the capital to develop his idea. He may have died or he may have run off with a chorus girl from Las Vegas and forgotten all about the mail order business. If you can develop the idea, you have a mail order product.

WHOLESALE SOURCES -- Watch for ads that say "Dealers Wanted" (in more current issues, of course). Here may be the perfect source of mailorder products for you.

STUDY THE ARTICLES -- They will show you what the readers are interested in and they will give you clues as to what the readers want to buy. Remember the articles are doing two things -- they are printing articles about subjects which the readers are already interested. But they are also **CREATING NEW INTERESTS** in the minds of the readers. **CAN YOU CREATE A PRODUCT THAT READERS WILL WANT AS A RESULT OF READING THOSE ARTICLES?**

You will be amazed at what you will discover when you read magazines from the viewpoint of a mailorder man!

While researching this manuscript, I analyzed three totally different magazines from the viewpoint of a mailorder man. I would like to share some of my findings with you. Don't worry if the fields are different from those which interest you.

MAILORDER PRINCIPLES ARE THE SAME FOR EVERY MARKET!

The first magazine which I analyzed was **ASTROLOGY - YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE**, December 1975. I would like to begin with the Merchandise Offerings.

ASTROLOGY (MERCHANDISE)

The first ad is for personalized stationary. Any mailorder man knows you can sell personalized stationary to any market. But this dealer took a commonplace product and adapted it to the Astrological market. Next to the name and address which he prints on the stationary, he prints the Astrological sun sign and he calls it **ZODIAC STATIONARY**.

The next ad is for another very commonplace product -- soap! You can buy soap in any grocery store. But this soap is special. It has **YOUR ZODIAC SIGN** imprinted in it, and it lasts as long as the soap lasts. Here is another good example of adapting a commonplace product to the special interests and desires of your prospective customers.

If you are now selling a product by mail and you would like to increase you sales, make a list of the kinds of people you would like to sell it to. (For example, doctors, waitresses, farmers, gun collectors, etc.) Then go back and ask yourself what you

could do to your product to make it appeal to each individual group. You'll be amazed at how you can turn commonplace items into red hot mailorder sellers just by taking the time to put yourself in your customer's shoes for a while.

The next merchandise offering is for "SEASHELLS FOR VIRGOS AND SCORPIOS". Brother, this is a fantastic idea. Had this advertiser offered plain old seashells in an astrology magazine, his mailbox would probably have been empty. Had he advertised "Seashells for Astrologers", he MIGHT have gotten a few orders. But he made his seashells special, exclusive, and very, very desirable, because they are only for Virgos and Scorpios. He is catching the attention of one reader out of every six and I would bet that ad was a mailorder success! Here is an idea worth remembering. Try to apply it to YOUR product!

Another merchandise offering was a "Hand Bio-Rhythm Computer". For the past few years, Astrology magazines have been running article after article on the Bio-Rhythm Theory (i.e. every male and female person has emotional, intellectual and physical cycles, which can be predicted in advance). The Astrology magazines, in effect, have been creating a mailorder market for this kind of new product. The ad promises, "it reveals your emotional, intellectual and physical state . . . EVEN BEFORE THE DAY BEGINS!" This dealer was clever enough to do something about this new interest. If he had not studied his market, he could never have discovered the NEED for a Bio-Rhythm computer!

ASTROLOGY (INFORMATION)

People who read Astrology magazines are very interested in Love, Money, Success, Power, Miracles, Prayer, etc. One enterprising dealer has written six "personal guidance" manuals, and runs full page ads in Astrology magazines, selling them from \$2.00 to \$11.00 each! His ads have been running successfully for years. Back in 1960, when I first became interested in selling by mail, this dealer was running small ads in mail dealer magazines, selling mailorder manuals!

Here are some of the other information manuals which dealers have written and are selling by mail:

- How the Maya Indians Foretold the Future - \$15.00
- Powerful Words to Be Recited Daily to End Your Money Worries
- \$4.00
- How to Spiritually Heal Your Pets - \$5.00
- A Manual on Etheric Astal Projection, written "especially for the Neophyte" - \$3.00

Can you create a WORTHWHILE manual for this market? (I predict that the first dealer who writes a good manual on Bio-Rhythm will make a fortune!) If you need ideas for manuals, study the subjects being offered in the Astrology magazines. Remember -- the readers are interested in those subjects! In the issue of **ASTROLOGY - YOUR PERSONAL HOROSCOPE** which I read, the following information articles appeared. (This is only a partial list.)

"Yearly Forecast for Sagittarians"
"Basic Astronomy for the Astrologers"
"Sybil Leek Analyzes YOUR Dreams"
"How to Make Your Dreams Pay Off"
"How Mercury Inspires Your Creativity"

A study of OLD Astrology magazines will provide you with a wealth of subjects for New Mailorder Manuals (or folios).

ASTROLOGY (SERVICE)

If there is one thing people who read Astrology magazines love, it is this . . . They LOVE TO BE ANALYZED AND COUNSELLED BY PROFESSIONALS. Do you have specialized training in the art of Horoscope Reading? If so, you can sell your services by mail. Here are some of the headlines from ads offering such services:

- "Let an Expert Discuss YOUR Life!"
- "This Horoscope is about YOU"
- "Now . . . a serious study of YOU!"
- "Now there is a Horoscope written for the TWO OF YOU! . . . One for you, one for your loved one! It could mean the difference between a Happy Marriage and a Painful Divorce!"
- "1976 - 1977 - 1978! Is one of these YOUR Year of Destiny?"
(This had been running in Astrology magazines for at least ten years. Every year, the advertiser simply changes the dates!)

Other services being offered in this magazine include:

- Personal Questions Answered by Psychics and Mystics
- Spiritual Readings
- Tarot Readings
- Palm Readings
- Handwriting Analysis
- Questions answered through Astro-Extra Sensory Perception

Are you trained to offer such services through the mail? Or are you interested in receiving such training? (You will find many such offers to train you in a newstand magazine called FATE.) If your answer is Yes . . . this is where you should begin your

mailorder career.

The next magazine I analyzed was the November 1975 issue of FIELD AND STREAM. Since this magazine is aimed at two mailorder markets, hunters and fishermen, I analyzed only those ads pertaining to Hunters.

HUNTERS (MERCHANDISE)

Men who hunt for wild game spend a lot of money on their hobby. They buy top quality hunting clothes. (Who wants to go hunting in a CHEAP pair of jungle boots?) They spend a lot of money on their guns, their hunting knives, and on top quality binoculars. There are several dozen well-established mail order companies selling this kind of merchandise to hunters. If you are planning to establish a one man mail order operation, you would be well advised not to try to compete with these companies. Instead, look for something unique that a hunter can USE, and begin your mailorder business there.

Here are a few merchandise offerings being made by enterprising dealers:

"Deer Hunter's soap" (Bathe in soap scented with the aroma of a female deer and you will attract a Buck. Only \$1.50 per bar!) Notice how a smart dealer ADAPTED a commonplace item to a specialized market. Notice too, that he adapted it to ONLY ONE KIND OF HUNTER. HE DIDN'T OFFER IT TO BEAR HUNTERS, TO COON HUNTERS, TO QUAIL HUNTERS, OR TO GAME HUNTERS IN GENERAL. He offered it to deer-hunters! If you are a deer-hunter, you would notice that ad!"

"Curtain rods for HUNTING Vans - \$3.95 a pair." (Sure, you can buy curtain rods in any dime store, but not curtain rods for HUNTING VANS! Another excellent example of taking a commonplace item, adapting it to a specialized market, and creating a new mailorder product.

Also offered:

- Gun cleaning cloths (10 for a dollar)
- Brass Nameplates for HUNTING DOGS (not for just any old dog!)
- ID Tags for Your Hunting Dogs
- Handwarmers and Bodywarmers (Boy, could you use these when you get lost in the snow!)
- There was a small classified ad offering "Fish and Game Rubber Stamps." I hope this dealer got a lot of orders, but if he didn't, I suspect it was because his offer was too general.

First of all, it would have sold better with an illustrated display ad. But even better . . . let us go back to the Virgo and Scorpio concept above. How about rubber stamps for Coon Hunters? Or for Pheasant Hunters? Or rubber stamps for Taxidermists? You will always get more orders if you direct your ad to specific people.

HUNTING (INFORMATION)

Frankly, I was amazed at the amount of Information Folios being sold to Hunters. Here are some examples:

"How to Build Your Own Gun Cabinet"

"Duck Calling Instructions" (30 minutes on tape!) A lot of information, in every field, is now being put on cassette tape and sold by mail. If you would rather talk than write, this could be an aspect of mailorder selling for you to consider.

"Chart showing Life-size Tracks of 38 Animals in the Adirondack Mountains" (Incidentally not all information is written. A lot of people buy plans, diagrams, etc. To digress, recently a dealer advertised plans to build your own flying saucer detector!)

"How to Build Box Traps - \$1.00"

"My Secret on Coon Trapping, after 50 years. Guaranteed, \$1.00"

"Mount fish for Fun and Profit - Easy instructions - \$1.00"

"Tan Your Own Hides - Hair on or off - Complete, easy to follow instructions and Formulas - \$1.00"

"Build (meat, fish, sausage) smoker! Inexpensive, portable.. .. easy plans, \$1.00"

"Wild Game and Fish Recipes - Deer, Bear, Rabbit, Trout, Salmon and dozens more - \$1.00"

Can you write an information manual for hunters? Can you tell him how to shoot ducks? Or how to hunt buffalo? . . . Or what to do for snake bites? . . . Or how to sign up for a Big Game Safari in the wilds of Africa? If you can, write a good manual (or put it on tape!) and sell it by mail!

HUNTING (SERVICE)

Unlike the readers of Astrology magazines, Game Hunters don't give a damn about being analyzed or counselled! But if you can teach his hunting dog how to chase a bear up a tree, then he

will probably pay you for your services. Can you repair his gun? Or can you stuff and mount his catches? If so, you can build a mailorder business offering such services.

The final publication analyzed was the WRITER'S DIGEST of November, 1975.

WRITING (MERCHANDISE)

If you are interested in the craft of writing (or if you have done well in creative writing classes) you might decide to build a mail order business catering to the needs of hundreds of thousands of persons who dream of becoming professional writers. here are some of the merchandise offerings being made to writers:

- "Copyright and Related Laws for Writers"
- "Grants and Aids to Individuals in the Arts - 1500 Sources."
(What writer isn't looking for a grant?)
- "I receive checks every week for features, fillers, news.
Free details."
- "Gagwriters Guide"
- "Secret Way to Make Money Writing - \$2.00"
- "Make Money Writing Fillers! Up-to-Date Filler Directory."
- "International Directory of Little Magazines and Small
Presses."

If you can produce an information manual showing writers how to write better, or how to sell their manuscripts, then write it and sell it by mail. You will have CREATED a new mailorder product! (To get ideas for subjects of interest to writers, study the articles in such publications as the Writers Digest, The Writer, Saturday Review, etc.)

WRITERS -- (SERVICE)

Some of the largest mailorder business in the world sell correspondence courses teaching people how to write for a living. There are also a dozen or more large printing companies (called "Vanity Publishers" in the trade) whose sole business is printing books for authors, whose works have been rejected by the regular publishing houses.

If you are a serious literary person, with a gift for writing, you could very possibly establish a business offering your services to writers. Here are some of the services which were

being offered in the November 1975 issue of Writer's Digest:

- Literary Counseling
- Literary Criticism
- Literary Editing
- Short Story Evaluation
- Manuscript Analysis
- Article Evaluation (No Fiction)
- Ghost Writing
- Newspaper and Magazine Reference Service (Authors often need such a service.)
- Manuscript Typing

Are you qualified to offer any of these services by mail? If you are, you have found a service to sell by mail! If you are not now qualified, why not acquire professional training . . . and then offer your services by mail?

IN CONCLUSION

I realize that I have just touched the surface of three different mail order markets. There are hundreds of other mail order markets for you to explore! Analyze yourself and then select the market that is best for you.

Study your market thoroughly . . . AND NEVER STOP STUDYING IT. Most successful mailorder people read dozens of magazines every month. They KNOW what their customers are thinking about, what they need, and what they will buy.

Successful mailorder people are interested in the NEEDS and WANTS of their customers FIRST. They understand that if they concentrate on those, profits will flow naturally. Those who think only of profits soon pass by the wayside.

In the beginning of this manual, I asked you to write to every magazine in your chosen field. Subscribe to as many as possible. When you have created your first product, then start advertising in those magazines (which is why I said to keep their rate cards.) Never run an ad unless you can run it in three consecutive issues. Then CONTINUE running it for as long as it continues to produce new customers for you. Slowly add new (but related) items to your line. Whenever possible, expand your business by inserting your ads in new publications.

Remember these simple guidelines:

- DON'T COPY ANYONE ELSE! You are a unique individual. Express your own individuality in your Mail Order business.
- CREATE SOMETHING NEW AND EXCITING!

- CREATE SOMETHING USEFUL AND WORTHWHILE!

- CREATE SOMETHING YOU YOURSELF WOULD WANT TO BUY!