

An Introduction to Retail

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If you've ever thought about selling your designs and products via a retailer, this guide is for you. Discover the perks of selling your products this way, the role a buyer plays and the different types of retailers out there.

Why sell through a retailer?

Getting buyers and retailers to sell your product is an exciting and crucial step to expanding your business in an effective way. The benefits are many, and can include:

- Wider reach – your product in a large number of shops puts it on the map, promoting it to a range of potential customers in different locations
- Credibility – your product in a trusted outlet creates prestige for your brand and sparks people's interest and trust in your product
- Broader sales – although your profit margin is lower, the amount you sell through a retailer is greater
- Marketing and PR – a retailer can promote the value of your brand to your ideal customers, interest and excite them, and entice them to your website

What does a buyer do exactly?

From planning and selecting products to predicting trends, a buyer has many responsibilities.

However, generally their key focus is driving and ultimately increasing profits. That's why when you meet them to discuss how your product could fit into their range, it's important to understand their main concerns. These priorities can include:

- Increasing sales – ensuring the stock they bought sells well and achieves the company's sales targets
- Assessing the market – understanding what's happening in their particular market by considering customer's habits and responding to change
- Analysing trends – predicting style and fashion trends for their market
- Planning merchandise and space – knowing what's been ordered, when it's arriving and how to present it in an appealing way in the store

- Controlling budgets – managing budgets, buying the right amount and type of stock to hit sales targets
- Developing product ranges – identifying exciting new products for their ranges and ensuring existing products continue to evolve and remain in demand

What kind of retailers are out there?

From niche to mainstream businesses and everything in between, retailers make it their priority to know exactly what people want. But they approach this in different ways.

Independent retailers

An independent retailer is often the owner. So they'll normally be able to make decisions quickly about what they buy – including whether to stock your product. This type of retailer also:

- Tends to buy according to their own and their customers' taste
- Often know their customers personally and have close relationships with them
- Are open and able to trying new product lines
- Order small quantities rather than set amounts or minimum order levels
- May want to be the only ones selling your product in a particular area

Chain store retailers

A chain store retailer is often owned by a single firm and can be located across the country or even world-wide. They typically have standardised business practices so can be slower to place orders because they need approval from management. This can also include things like getting approval to raise a purchase order.

This type of retailer also may:

- Want to present your product in a certain way – possibly with their labelling
- Buy a range of products (sometimes called stories) rather than single designs
- Request they exclusively have a design, colour, print or finish, so be prepared to negotiate on price

- Make larger orders – so negotiate a realistic delivery time when they place the order
- Need you to schedule deliveries to a centralised warehouse
- Follow company buying guidelines rather than buy intuitively
- Want to price your product at a higher retail mark up to align with the overall company strategy

What next?

Ready to get into retail? Before you do, take a look at our other useful resources to help you consider all your options, make informed decisions and get started.

[Costing and Pricing Work Guide](#)

[How to Approach a Retailer](#)

[Planning to Attend Trade Events](#)

[Planning to Sell at Trade Events](#)

[How do I protect my ideas?](#)

[Can you give any help with contracts?](#)

Disclaimer: We want to keep you in the know, so we offer a wide selection of useful resources. But Cultural Enterprise Office isn't responsible for the advice and information of external organisations in this document. So if you have any questions, please contact the specific organisation directly.