

Your First Print On Demand Business

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Introduction

Welcome to "Your First Print On Demand Business." This guide is designed to walk you through the easiest way to start an online business selling custom-designed products without needing inventory, upfront investment, or tech skills.

Print on demand (POD) is a business model where you create and sell products like t-shirts, mugs, or phone cases with your designs. When a customer places an order, a third-party supplier prints and ships it for you. You don't have to touch the product or deal with storage and fulfillment.

What makes POD so appealing is the simplicity and low risk. You can test ideas and pivot quickly. There is no need to buy inventory, and you only pay for the product once you make a sale. That means you can focus on creativity and marketing, not logistics and overhead.

By the end of this guide, you'll have a clear understanding of how to get started, what to sell, and how to attract your first customers. Whether you want to build a side hustle, launch your first business, or create an additional income stream, POD gives you the tools to do it.

Part 1: How to Launch Your First Print On Demand Business

1. Pick a Profitable Niche

A niche is a focused market segment. Instead of trying to sell to everyone, you sell to a specific group of people with shared interests or identities. For example:

Dog moms

Christian entrepreneurs

Fitness lovers

Anime fans

Teachers

Choosing a niche helps you stand out. People are more likely to buy from a brand that speaks directly to their identity or values. Instead of being a general t-shirt store, you become the go-to shop for faith-based workout apparel or funny mugs for cat lovers.

Think about the communities you are already part of or have insight into. What problems, jokes, phrases, or values do they care about? Your designs will be more relatable and more likely to sell when you deeply understand your audience.

2. Choose a Print On Demand Platform

Here are some popular platforms to connect your store with print on demand services:

Printful

Printify

Gelato

Gooten

These platforms integrate with major ecommerce storefronts and handle the printing, packing, and shipping. You design and list the products, and they do the rest.

And here are storefront options:

Etsy: Great for beginners with built-in traffic. You can list your items in a marketplace where people are already searching for POD products.

Shopify: Best for building your own brand. You get full control over the design and customer experience.

WooCommerce: A flexible option if you are already using WordPress.

You'll link your POD supplier to your storefront so that when an order comes in, it's automatically fulfilled. This automation lets you scale without increasing your workload.

3. Design Without Being a Designer

You do not need design skills to launch. In fact, some of the best-selling designs are simple text-based ideas. Use tools like:

Canva: A free drag-and-drop tool that makes it easy to create professional-looking graphics.

Creative Fabrica: A resource for pre-made designs, fonts, and design elements you can customize.

Kittl: Especially good for vintage-style graphics and typographic layouts.

If you can type a phrase and center it on a shirt, you can make money with POD. Start with phrases that resonate with your niche. Think about slogans, sayings, memes, or motivational messages. Clarity and relatability beat complexity.

You can also outsource your design work inexpensively using platforms like Fiverr or Upwork if you want more polished graphics.

4. Set Up Your Store

This is your digital real estate. Your store is where people browse, buy, and interact with your brand. Start by picking a store name that aligns with your niche. It should be easy to remember and communicate what your brand is about.

Once you have your name, create a clean logo and choose simple branding colors. You do not need to overthink this. Stick to two or three colors and one or two fonts.

Use your POD platform to push your product designs to your store. Each listing should include:

A high-quality mockup image

A benefit-focused product title

A short, engaging description that highlights why the product is perfect for your target buyer

Include product tags and keywords so your items show up in search results, especially on Etsy.

5. Price and Publish

Pricing is important. You want to make a profit, but you also need to stay competitive. Here's a basic pricing model for common items:

T-Shirts: \$18 to \$28

Mugs: \$14 to \$22

Hoodies: \$30 to \$50

Check what similar products are selling for in your niche, and price accordingly. Remember to include your base cost from the POD supplier and factor in shipping and fees.

Start small. Publish 5 to 10 products. This gives your store variety without being overwhelming. You can always add more based on what sells.

6. Get Your First Sales Without Ads

You do not need to run Facebook or Instagram ads to get your first sales. Organic content is your best friend, especially when starting out. Focus on free traffic platforms like:

TikTok: Short videos showcasing your products, funny niche content, or behind-the-scenes clips

Instagram Reels: Similar to TikTok, but on a platform more focused on visuals

Pinterest: Pin your products and designs to reach users searching for ideas

Facebook Groups: Join communities in your niche and add value before sharing your store

Types of content that work:

Product mockups with trending audio

Skits or voiceovers related to your niche

Educational or entertaining posts about the community you serve

Post consistently. You never know which video will take off and bring in a wave of traffic.

Part 2: 30 Product Ideas to Kickstart Your POD Store

Apparel

T-Shirts: The most popular POD item, perfect for niche slogans or bold graphics

Hoodies: Great for higher-ticket sales, especially in colder months

Sweatshirts: A cozy alternative to t-shirts, with more space for bigger designs

Leggings: Perfect for fitness or athleisure niches

Tank Tops: Ideal for summer and fitness audiences

Long Sleeve Tees: Great for layering or for seasonal shifts

Accessories

Tote Bags: Functional and trendy, perfect for text-based designs

Hats and Beanies: Great for bold logos or simple statements

Socks: Fun to design and easy to bundle with other items

Scrunchies: A creative upsell item, especially for fashion niches

Fanny Packs: Useful and quirky, great for younger audiences

Bandanas: Ideal for pets or fashion-forward designs

Home and Living

Throw Pillows: Easy canvas for creative quotes or artistic prints

Blankets: Great for cozy messages or custom art

Wall Art: Posters and canvases with quotes, photos, or illustrations

Mugs: Classic product with evergreen appeal

Coasters: Small, giftable item for home decor lovers

Shower Curtains: Unique, standout product for bold designs

Candles: A newer addition on some platforms, great for lifestyle brands

Stationery and Paper Goods

Stickers: Low-cost, highly customizable, and great for bundling

Notebooks: Ideal for planners, journalers, and students

Greeting Cards: Perfect for seasonal promotions and gift buyers

Journals: Popular with spiritual, mindset, and business niches

Planners: Higher-value item for organization and productivity lovers

Tech and Lifestyle

Phone Cases: Visual real estate for vibrant or minimal designs

Laptop Sleeves: Great for creatives and professionals

Mouse Pads: Simple way to get on a customer's desk

Water Bottles: Useful and perfect for bold statements

Backpacks: High-ticket item for school, travel, or work niches

Magnets: Affordable add-on with creative potential

Part 3: Pro Tips for Standing Out

The POD space is growing, which means competition is increasing. But most stores fail to build a real brand. Here's how you stand out:

Start with a small catalog and expand based on what gets traction

Focus on one niche and dominate it with high-quality, relatable designs

Use premium mockups that show your product in real-life scenarios

Add value-driven captions and product descriptions that speak to your niche

Study successful stores, note what works, and model it with your own twist

Collect and display customer reviews, even if they start with friends and family

Every touchpoint is an opportunity to build trust and brand loyalty.

What To Do Next

Choose your niche: Start with what you know or feel connected to

Pick 3 to 5 products from the list: Focus on what matches your niche's interests

Create your designs using Canva or templates: Keep them simple and direct

Open your store and publish your products: Choose Etsy or Shopify based on your goals

Start promoting on social media: Use short videos, niche humor, and product showcases

Remember, the best way to learn is by doing. Take one step today.

Closing Words

Starting a print on demand business is one of the easiest and lowest-risk ways to dip your toes into online business. You do not need to be an expert. You just need a niche, a few designs, and the willingness to learn by doing.

Give yourself permission to be a beginner. You will improve along the way. You do not need everything to be perfect. You just need to start. This guide gives you the exact steps. Now it's on you to take action.

Launch your store. Make your first post. Celebrate your first sale. Then repeat. Your first online business is one step away.

Now is the perfect time to take it.

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