

ADVERTISING AD SHEETS = BIG PROFITS

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Publishing and distributing a mail order ad sheet can be very profitable. They are simple and easy to produce, with most quick print shops able to handle the printing at fairly low cost. The important consideration is that you can use them to pull in advertising dollars for yourself, as a free advertising media for your own products, and as an exchange medium with which to get greater exposure for your own ads.

Before starting an ad sheet, you should plan it all out - decide on an interesting, informative title, choose a masthead, lay out your columns for size, determine if it is to be a simple 8 1/2 x 11 single sheet of paper or an 11 x 17 sheet folded in half. You'll also need to know your production cost for the number you intend to have printed, and the postage cost to mail them out.

Most ad sheets start out as single sheets of paper, 8 1/2 x 11, printed on both sides. Usually, the front side is divided into three equal columns about 2 1/4 inches wide, with a 1/2 inch margin from the edge of the paper on both sides and top and bottom.

Assuming that the space occupied by your title, masthead and listing of rates for advertisers interested in placing an ad with you is two inches deep, this leaves you about 24 inches of advertising space to sell on the front side. Figuring a cost of \$50 for 1,000 copies of such an ad sheet, printed both sides, and a third-class bulk-rate postage of \$110, this means that your 24 inches of ad space will have to be sold at a rate of \$6.25 each in order to break even. This means: You have to sell all of the ad space on the front of your ad sheet at \$6.25 per ad - and then expect to make your profits from the sale of the back side of your ad sheet. Actually, it would be feasible to charge \$7.00 per inch for the space on the front side, and carry your own full page ad on the back side. At any rate, don't box yourself into a loss situation where you can't afford to place your own ads in your ad sheet.

You get ads by making up an advertising solicitation sales letter and sending it out to as many mail order dealers as you can find. You can also run ads in other people's publications, inviting the readers to check with you regarding placement of an ad in your publication. And of course, you'll be wanting to work out some exchange advertising deals (whereby another publisher runs your ad in his publication, and you run his in exchange). From the experience of many, many publishers, this can be one of the most effective ways of getting your ads run, at low/no cost, and it is recognized to be successful in the field of Mail Order.

You probably won't be able to fill up all of your available ad space with paid ads until you are well established - but no problem - first you fill your ad space with paid ads, and then you fill in the empty space with ads of your own. Some beginning advertisers fill a part of their empty space with complimentary ads for other mail order operators, send them a copy of the issue in which the complimentary ad appears, and invite them to continue the ad on a "paid" basis from there. Many of them will appreciate the favor and send you a check or money order to continue running the ad.

If you undertake the publication of an ad sheet, be sure to consider the possibilities of sending out 100 to 1,000 copies of your ad sheet to other mail order operators to rubber stamp their names/addresses as co-publishers and mail out for you. Thus, if you had 50 other mail order operators sending out 100 copies each of your ad sheet, you'd be talking about a circulation of 5,000

copies plus the number of copies you mail out. If you can get this kind of program going, you'll quickly build your reputation as well as your circulation, and at the bottom line, your profits.

Some ad sheet publishers, once they've established themselves and are putting out an impressive publication, set up distributor networks. Generally, they run ads calling for distributor/dealers and asking for a \$5 to \$10 registration fee. In reply to the registration application, they send out a letter explaining that each distributor can buy at half price, so many copies of each issue of the ad sheet, rubber stamp their name on each copy, and send them out as their own. In return, the distributors usually get 50% of the incoming advertising orders, a half-price ad for themselves, and an opportunity to sell subscriptions.

The bottom line relative to becoming a successful ad sheet publisher has to do with keeping your production costs - printing and mailing - as low as possible, while putting out a quality product that other people in the mail order business will want to advertise in - while at the same time using it as an advertising/selling vehicle for your own products.

My advice is that almost everyone involved in mail order selling should have some sort of ad sheet - if for no other reason than as a means to an end - an advertising vehicle for your own products, an extra income form advertising revenues, and as an exchange media with which to gain greater exposure for your own products in other people's publications. Once you've got an ad sheet, or any kind of publication set up and being seen by other mail order operators, you'll quickly gain stature and a certain amount of prestige.

As with any business, your ultimate success depends on your own feasibility studies, and your "sharp-pencil" planning completed before you order your first issue printed. Think about it, weigh the pro's & con's, then go with your decision.