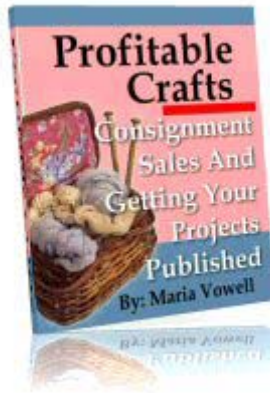


Profitable Crafts

By Maria Vowell
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Introduction

Thank you for your purchase. I sincerely hope that you enjoy this volume of Profitable Crafts. Volume three of Profitable Crafts will be available May 15, 2004 and can be obtained at the following URL:

<http://www.aismarketing.com/ProfitableCrafts/vol3/>

Volume one of Profitable Crafts has already been released and be obtained at the following URL:

<http://www.aismarketing.com/ProfitableCrafts/vol1/>

I'm sure that you'll find helpful tips, techniques and information throughout this manual, to help you maximize your profits from the sales of your own items that you create.

This volume of Profitable Crafts covers selling your products on consignment, and getting your projects published.

I'm sure you'll find a lot of helpful information that will prove to increase your profits and keep you from making costly mistakes.

If you've ever wanted to submit your designs to national publications, then you'll find that the submission process isn't as complicated as some may make it out to be. I show you how to submit to publications the proper way to greatly increase your chances of having your design accepted.

You'll find at the end of this manual, a quick step-by-step system that I use, that has been extremely profitable for me many times over, regarding self-publishing your own designs as well.

Once more, I hope that you enjoy this manual, and I would like to wish you many happy days of creating wonderful items for your home, craft shows and/or business.

Take Care And Keep A Smile,
Maria Vowell

Exactly What Are Consignment Sales?

When selling your products on consignment, you basically retain ownership of your goods while offering a percentage of the sales from your products to the person selling your products for you.

There are many ways to sell on consignment, with the main one being where storeowners provide space in their stores for your products.

You don't have to deal with consignment shops strictly. If you have a good product, that doesn't take up too much space, you will find that a lot of regular type stores will also be more than happy to provide a little space for your wares in return for a percentage of the profits.

There are also a number of websites popping up online, where the site owners offer consignment sales. To place your wares on the sites, it's usually as simple as submitting a photo of your product to the site owner, as well as your price, while coming to some sort of agreement that's mutually beneficial for both you and the site owner.

We will not be covering online consignment sales in this volume of profitable crafts, but will instead cover offline consignment sales and how to approach storeowners properly, as well as provide tips and suggestions for the types of products you'd like to provide for sale.

It doesn't matter what types of products you make, there is always several stores somewhere that will be more than happy to provide your products to their customers.

Although it can sometimes be difficult to get your wares into the stores, if you follow the guidelines in this manual carefully, you'll find it much easier to develop great working relationships with a wide variety of storeowners where eventually you will find that you're selling more products than you probably ever dreamed possible.

Approaching Storeowners With Your Products

When approaching storeowners with your products, using a direct approach is always best. You never want to contact owners by phone, when trying to offer them your products. This is very unprofessional and won't get you anywhere other than to a lot of blunt no's, and hang ups.

The best method of contact for meeting storeowners, would be to mail them a letter explaining your products in depth, what you can offer them, maybe a photo of your best products and a brochure if you have any available.

Once you have mailed your information packet, wait a few days then call to set up an appointment that's most convenient for the owner.

Remember when making appointments, that the owners are doing you a favor if they agree to see you, and that you should always arrange your own schedule to meet their needs best.

Never show up for appointments late, and never show up too early. Usually 5 minutes ahead of your scheduled appointment is the best time to arrive. This gives you plenty of time to inform the owner that you are there, without making them feel "obligated" to rush with whatever task they are handling because you showed up too early.

When you're late, it shows a blatant disregard for their time, and they will not be as respectful of the time they grant you to speak with them.

If you prefer, you can always visit the storeowners in person without mailing an information packet. Although this can be a bit more time consuming, it's still beneficial because you have a better chance of receiving a "yes" than with any other method of contact.

The best day to meet storeowners, when meeting them directly without an appointment, would be on Tuesdays or Wednesdays, early in the mornings. Mondays are usually hectic, while other days and

during the afternoons are usually the busiest times for owners or when they are most tired.

Once you are in contact with the storeowner, you will first want to explain what you do, and how it would benefit them if they offered your products to their customers. Explain your pricing and make sure they understand that you don't expect payment up front and that they take their percentage of the sales out before paying your profits to you.

This way they will understand that the only obligation they have to make will be to provide space for your products and collecting payments for the sales.

Even if you approach them properly, you will find that few will still say no. You must always be polite, and never act as if they "owe" you a favor just because your products are so great.

For instance, when I operated my soap store, I had a lot of people approach me to see if I would let them sell their products on consignment. Most of them were told a hasty no, and were turned away pretty darn fast. Not because their products were junk, but because of their nasty, selfish attitude.

For instance I had a lady visit one day with cute little sun catchers made from lamp work beads. These sun catchers were very cute, delicate, and something that I just knew most of my customers would love.

This lady wanted \$12.00 to \$16.00 per catcher, based on which beads were used in each catcher. I could then mark-up the price to whatever was suitable for me, and I knew I could get \$20.00 each easily for them.

I mean these were some really nice catchers, and I really wanted to offer them to my customers because they were something new, unique and attractive that the people I sold my soaps to would love.

As the lady was lining the catchers up on my table so I could look them over better, she didn't pay attention very well, and didn't really know when to shut up.

I was already hooked when I saw the first one, and was ready to choose which ones I wanted to display for her before she had even shown me half of them.

This lady kept on and on about how beautiful they looked in the light, and every time I would try to get in a word of my own, she would interrupt me with another "sales" pitch.

She went on for about 10 minutes, explaining to me how wonderful her catchers were, and the whole time I was ready to close the deal and set them out.

But a person can have only so much patience, and I had customers that I needed to attend to and I didn't really have all day to sit there as she explained how wonderful her products were to me.

I know quality when I see it, and those catchers pretty much sold themselves, so she didn't really need to proceed with a single sales pitch.

The fact that she kept interrupting me was getting me a bit agitated. The fact that I had several customers waiting for me to help them agitated me even more, because she wouldn't even shut up long enough for me to attend to their needs.

The final straw was when she picked up a catcher, took it to my window and explained how much lovelier my window display would look with her catchers in them, instead of those "blocks of soaps".

Yes, she actually called MY SOAPS, "blocks of soaps" instead of the wondrous beautiful bars of glistening oils that they are.

That's when I finally told her politely that I wasn't interested, and that if she could excuse me I had customers that I needed to attend to.

I then thanked her for her time, shook her hand and walked away to help my customers.

There are several morals to this story here.

One, know when to be silent. Yes you're trying to convince owners to provide space for you for your products, but you should let the products sell themselves and be there to answer any questions they may have.

If the owner tries to talk, just listen until he or she is done speaking. Politely answer any questions, and then wait for a pause before you continue.

If they are not interested at all, believe me they will tell you once they take the first look at your products. If they are interested, they will ask questions or wait silently for you to continue.

Two, if you see that there are customers waiting for them to help them, step aside and let them know that you're in no hurry if they want to attend to their customers. Remember, they are doing you a favor by speaking with you and granting you some of their precious time.

You can either step aside and wait, or leave, but never cause them ignore their own customers. By politely stepping aside first and letting them know you understand that the customer comes first, you'll make a much better impression than if you try to hog their time all to yourself.

Third, NEVER insult the storeowner by offering any type of suggestion about WHERE they should display your products.

I don't care if you're trying to be helpful or not. The space you may be granted is up to the owner, it's their space and they will know where your products will do best in their stores.

Also never insult any of the storeowners own merchandise as this lady did for my soaps. My window display was one of the things I

was most proud of in my store, because I had it setup to where it pulled in window shoppers roughly 75% of the time.

I was already imagining how those catchers would help improve the appearance of my display, but I most certainly was not about to allot all of that space for them alone, and the lady was very out of place for even suggesting such a thing.

Yes I knew the catchers were nice, but not nice enough for a full window. Not when my soaps were already doing so well at pulling customers in from off the streets.

This lady lost my business, because she had an attitude as if I owed her something just to be able to provide her catchers.

She is the one that lost out on the deal, but not me. When she left, I really wanted those catchers. I just KNEW they would sell well, and I was going to find a way to provide them to my own customers.

After closing shop that day, I went home, did a search on eBay™, found a seller offering the same type of work and I was in business. I had 20 catchers in my store within a few weeks, and sure enough, they sold as fast as I could bid.

They also complimented my display quite nicely by shining wonderful rainbow lights on my soaps when the sun hit them just right.

If this lady had conducted herself in a polite, professional manner, she would have made a large number of sales.

But because she had an attitude as if I owed her a favor just to be able to offer her wonderful products to my customers, she lost out on a lot of business.

I had people come into my store all the time with their “sales” pitches like that. I understand that when trying to sell, you want to explain about your products completely. But you should always show wisdom also, and know when to listen instead of talk.

When selling your crafts, you'll find that if you are providing quality products, then the products will sell themselves where all you'll need to do is answer questions and sign on the dotted line and fill orders.

Now I would like to share with you one more story of a very polite lady that approached me one day with personalized "Day You Were Born" signs that hung attractively in frames on the wall.

I'm not sure if you have ever heard of the "Day You Were Born" signs, but they are nice little signs that give nice tidbits of information about things that have happened in history on people's birthdays.

Things like celebrities that share the same birthday, headline news for that day as well as how the weather was on the day you were born. They also have some that tell you the prices of certain products on that day like bread, gas and sugar.

Well one day this lady came into my store with a simple sheet of framed paper that she had printed from her home computer, on fancy stationery, and asked if she could have a moment of my time to show me her "Day You Were Born Wall Hanging".

Now at the time I didn't know what in the world a "Day You Were Born Wall Hanging" was, and so that alone peaked my interest enough to where I said sure.

She simply handed me her framed sheet of paper, and let me read the contents without saying a single word.

I thought the product was "cute" but I wasn't quite sure if it were something my customers would be interested in. Once I read the facts on the sheet, I asked her how I could help her.

She then proceeded to explain how I could make a percentage of the profits, from all sales generated from my store. She also explained how the display would take up virtually no space because all I had to do was just hang one sample on the wall with one sign underneath it with ordering instructions on it.

It would be as simple as me collecting payment, then providing a form for the customers to fill out with the needed information to have their sheets printed. She explained that she would call me daily to see if she needed to fill any orders, and would have the orders delivered the next day.

I asked her if she could give me a moment, and if she would like a cup of coffee while she waited. While she waited, I sat at my desk looking at the frame, trying to figure out if my customers would like this product or not.

It was very easy for me to hang what she asked of me on the wall, it was a cute product, and it was something that I thought maybe a few of my customers would like, but probably not many.

I finally informed her that I would be willing to give her product a try, but that because I wasn't sure how well it would be received by my customers I couldn't guarantee her many sales.

I also explained to her it was only because it took up none of my counter space that I was even willing to try her product for a while. I then asked her where she usually had her signs hang, and she answered with "It doesn't matter with me, you place it wherever you think best and I will be delighted with that".

So she had a new store to offer her product, and I had something for my wall that was cute but that I really thought was not going to sell too well. I was just saying yes because she had been very polite, and because it did not take up my counter space, which was reserved for products more suitable to what my store offered.

Now I will admit with much shame, that at first I hung her signs by the bathroom door. The main walls already had my pretty vintage soap signs, old pictures from the Victorian era, flowers and candles and I thought her signs looked very out of place, so I hung them basically in the only "empty" location left in my store.

Then I forgot about them. There were no orders for two weeks, because basically customers couldn't even see the signs because few ever asked to use my bathroom. Sometimes they used the

bathroom to try my soaps, but other than that, there was no traffic going by her signs.

Then one day a gentleman came in and wanted to try some of my plain unscented soap. When I directed him to the sink, he saw her sign and asked me if he could get 6 of them printed for his grand children. He thought they would make wonderful gifts that were within his budget.

I took his order, and told him that he could pick up his signs the next day, informed the lady when she called that she had six orders, delivered the signs the next day to the gentleman when he came to pick his signs up and once again I forgot about the signs.

A few days later another lady came in asking about the “Day You Were Born” signs, and asked me how she could order some. I was a bit shocked, because this was a sale that came by word of mouth advertising where the gentleman had told her about the signs, and we all know that word of mouth advertising is always the best form of advertising.

This lady ordered 3 signs, one for herself, one for her son and one for her husband. When she left, I quickly took the signs from beside the bathroom door, took one of my Victorian pictures off the space by my counter and placed the day you were born signs in it's place around my flowers and candles.

Needless to say, I started getting sales for these signs, and I had to apologize to the lady that was making them because I didn't give her adequate space on my walls where many of my customers could see them.

Over time, she finally got counter space where she could display 5 different types of signs, and we did very well with the sales of her products.

The moral of this story is, that if you're polite, and if you don't take up much space with your products, then you can still generate sales even if the storeowner isn't too enthused about your product and is

just giving your product a try to see if it held much interest for his or her customers.

Although I can't speak for all storeowners, I do know for a fact that politeness and consideration pays off and that it's always best to be polite and considerate when dealing with each individual storeowner.

There are also a few other issues that are very important when contacting business owners.

Try to locate a nice case, box or bag to carry your products in when you visit the owners. If you must use a cardboard box, then at least cover it nicely with pretty paper, or you can do much better by having your husband or a male friend build you a box of lightweight wood.

If your products are small, then a nice fabric bag would work wonderfully for carrying your wares. Never use plastic grocery store bags, or plain brown paper bags to carry your products in because this looks very cheap and unprofessional.

Always have an agreement in writing, signed by you and the storeowner, before you ever leave your products. This is covered in the next chapter along with other helpful tips for dealing with consignment sales once you've started working closely with each individual business owner.

When selling on consignment, you will determine a set price that you'll take for your products, then generally allow the storeowners to mark-up the prices to what they like, where they keep the additional profits.

Pricing your products is an entirely different topic that you should become knowledgeable about. This topic is already covered in the first issue of profitable crafts provided at:

<http://www.daintywork.com/crafts/>

Above all, just remember to be polite, and have fun because you're not only about to generate more profits, but you're about to make many new friends as well once you start selling on consignment.

Closing The Deal

Once a storeowner has agreed to provide space in their store for your products then you must do several things to protect yourself, your products as well as the business owner from certain liabilities.

First and foremost, you must make sure that your products are safe.

If you make jewelry, and provide a necklace with a broken clasp, then you could cause one of the customers to scratch themselves badly if they tried on your necklace before purchasing.

If you make small wooden wagons, and leave a tire a bit loose, then a child could get hurt if they decided to go rolling around the store while their parents are shopping.

Now I know most crafters know better than to provide inferior goods to their own customers, but when dealing with consignment sales I have seen a few become very neglectful.

Never neglect your products, because not only could you be held liable for medical bills, the store owner could as well and you can bet that you would lose your space in that particular owner's store if one of their customers were to get hurt from one of your products due to inferior workmanship.

Always check over your merchandise before leaving it for the storeowner to sell.

Next, always make sure that you have an agreement signed by both you and the storeowner. Keep the original for yourself and provide a copy to the owner.

Your agreement should cover several things. You will find a sample agreement that you can use at the following URL:

<http://muextension.missouri.edu/explore/miscpubs/mp0597.htm>

As with any sort of contract or agreement, make sure that you consult an attorney first before using any agreement that you may draft, or if you use the above mentioned agreement as your own.

The university of Michigan does allow you to use this agreement for your own personal use as stated on their copyright page, but it's still best to consult an attorney first to ensure that you are covered properly in your own state.

You will also want to draft a basic inventory sheet that can be used each time your restock each individual store. The inventory sheet should include the amount of inventory that you're leaving at the store, your expected price for each piece, and a clause stating that your pieces are in fact covered by the stores insurance policy.

Also make sure that you provide enough room for you and the owner to sign your inventory sheets, as well as the date that you delivered more merchandise and how much you collected for the previously sold merchandise.

Once you have your agreement and inventory sheets ready, you must consider how many stores you can properly supply without getting in over your head to where you can't provide enough merchandise to keep the store properly stocked.

If you don't have much time to make your products, then it's probably best to stick with one or two stores. If you have plenty of time to stock more than 2 stores, by all means do so, just be careful that you don't overwork yourself by trying to stock more than you can handle.

Considering the fact that you never know how well your products will sell in each particular location, then I would suggest trying 2 new stores a week until you get a better idea of how well your items sell, and how much workload you can handle.

Once you have your agreement signed, and have left your stock with the storeowner, you will want to inquire as when the best time is to call the owner to see if restocking is needed of any of your merchandise. Keep a notebook handy to write in this information, and you're now done with your part.

You can leave knowing that you have some of your stock ready to sell, and wait as the profits come in.

Now as with the example of the “Day You Were Born” wall hangings in the previous chapter, you don’t necessarily have to leave a complete line of inventory to get started with consignment sales.

Sometimes a sample of your work is all that’s needed and a sample also increases your chances for great exposure of your products.

Sometimes it’s not cost efficient to make up a lot of stock beforehand for several reasons.

If your product is new and something that you’ve never sold before, or if you don’t know for sure if it’ll sell well, then you certainly don’t want to make hundreds of one item until you’re confident that it will sell.

By providing sample displays of your products, you can create the items and fill orders as they come in greatly reducing your costs in materials needed upfront, and also giving you a better chance of getting a bit of space in stores that don’t have much space to spare.

We’ll cover what types of products do best when offering them on consignment in the next chapter.

Providing Pleasing Products

It doesn't matter what types of products you currently make right now, the wonderful thing about crafting is that your profits are only limited by your own creativity.

When making products to resell for profit, you determine what you want to make, and if a certain product bombs, then you will always have literally thousands of other projects to choose from for quick recovery.

This is one aspect of business that few can enjoy as well as we crafters can.

When someone develops a new widget to clean windows, they usually invest a lot of time in developing the product, patenting the product and manufacturing the product. If sales do not go as well as hoped or planned, then their new window cleaning widget could very well cause them to go bankrupt.

Luckily, smart crafters do not have this worry. Materials cost for our products are usually very low, so that we can afford to make a few mistakes without it killing our savings or breaking the bank.

With our talents and skill, we can offer consumers a dozen different items, or more, based on just how well we use a needle or paintbrush.

Let's take a look at the average sewer. Not only can a good sewer make clothing and quilts, but they can also make bookmarks, book covers, dainty purses, dish mats, toys, etc.

A painter can paint pictures, rocks, dolls facial features and many other items for profit.

Because there are so many venues that crafters can use to make money from their skills and talents, then one should never see a crafter go hungry or broke.

There are just way too many ways to create wonderful products for sale that can generate wonderful profits.

When dealing with consignment sales, you must always consider this because sometimes your products that sell well in one location will not do so well in another location.

For the locations that provide slow sales, you'll want to make sure you can use your space wisely by trying a different type of product until you find one that does sell as well.

For example if quilts are your main product, and store A on one side of town usually sells 2 of your quilts each week, whereas store B may sell one or 2 quilts every few months, then you need to find another product to place in store B because you're not generating enough profits for yourself or the storeowner.

First, you would want to take a drive around the neighborhood so that you can get an idea of the types of people in that neighborhood. Make sure it's a safe neighborhood first of course.

You can tell a lot about the people that shop store B based on just the types of things you see in the yards surrounding the store.

For instance if the yards around store A show lovely lawns and flower beds, neat yards and lovely chairs and swings for relaxing. Then you can bet it's a neighborhood of seniors or single couples, because the lack of toys and the neat lawns shows that not many children play there.

These types of people will appreciate your quilts much more than a hurried mom with 3 children running all over the house spilling chocolate milk all over the bedspreads. They are also more likely to purchase more than one quilt for their households.

Mothers with children may buy ONE quilt, but usually the quilt is then put in storage and never used because we all know that children have a knack for spilling things no matter how hard we try to prevent it.

Spills come with children and mothers with children are not going to use and display a 300-dollar quilt for everyday use. It just doesn't happen, and any mother that does this is either filthy rich or learns her lesson pretty darn fast once children's loving hands stain a quilt or two.

Now if you see that yard B has lawns with stomped grass, bare patches where a lot of children have played, swing sets, bikes and toys all over the place then you can guess pretty quickly why your quilts aren't selling as well in store B as they are in store A.

The shoppers in that neighborhood have children, and we all know the children are the ones that determine the cash flow for those households.

So do you remove your quilts, say good-bye to the business owner and call it quits with that store? Why heck no way you don't want to do that. You want to generate sales for you and the storeowner. You cannot generate sales if you neglect the space the owner has so generously granted you.

You would instead want to provide a product that's more suitable for children and families with children.

For instance you could sew up quilted toys (making sure of course that you follow all safety measures required by law), or make mini blankets for children with colorful characters on them.

Tic Tac Toe blankies do well also, where you sew clothes of fabric on a 3 ft by 3 ft quilt to match a tic tac toe game, then make bean bags with X's and O's on them so that the children can play tic tac toe easily on the blankie whenever they like.

These types of quilts are made for children, affordable to purchase, and made to be played with so that it won't harm anything if they get a bit dirty.

So whenever a product is selling well in one store, yet selling badly in another, you want to always try and find out why. It could be simply that each store caters to a different sort of neighborhood, and a

simple plan should be in order where you can quickly provide another type of product more suitable for the shoppers in that area.

You'll find that as you work with more business owners, you'll be able to determine better what types of products are suitable for each separate store just by seeing the types of merchandise already offered for sale by the owner.

You can then offer a selection for the owner to choose from, because no one knows the customers better than the one that deals with them on a daily basis as the owner does.

Now store owner B may have already known that your quilts weren't going to do very well with his/her customers. If you didn't offer a selection of different types of products, then the owner may assume that quilts are all you can provide.

Sometimes owners will allot some space just so they can generate the occasional sale, and they are usually quite content with one or two sales every few months. They have nothing to lose but a little space, and they get attractive décor to add to their business.

Although the owner may be content, we know you need as many sales as you can generate because you don't have a store full of many other things to generate sales from like the owner does, and this hurts your profits much worse than it does the business owner.

So if you see that sales are not as good as you would like them to be, make arrangements to provide something different so that you can both generate more profits. Usually storeowners are very easy to work with, and most are extremely pleased when you can provide a wide selection of products where one or two of them are more suitable for their customers.

Before I conclude this chapter, I would like to share with you techniques for selling products before you create them.

These techniques will prove to be very helpful if you have a low budget and can't make a lot of inventory to stock stores with.

If you are just starting out, and can't really afford to purchase several hundred dollars worth of yarn to make several hundred bookmarks that you want to sell in area Christian bookstores, then a simple solution would be to make one bookmark per store, and display each bookmark attractively in some fashion.

A nice display for your bookmarks would be to crochet one single bookmark, and then a small piece of cloth with a few rows of different colors so that consumers can see the range of colors they can choose from when ordering your bookmarks.

Attach the cloth to the bookmark with an attractive crocheted ribbon, and attach a small sign to the cloth with the price and a short note for consumers to ask the business owner for ordering information.

Make sure you have an attractive hook attached to the top of the bookmark for easy hanging (hooks with the suction cups work well) and you have a simple and attractive display that can easily be hung from a cash register (or wherever the storeowner would like to display your product) to help generate sales.

Provide a few order forms that the owner can use to take orders with, and crochet each bookmark as each order is delivered to you.

This is a very easy way to generate sales, with low start up cost, where storeowners are more likely to grant you a bit of space in their stores because bookmarks take up virtually no space, and none of the owners precious counter space.

You can do this with more than just bookmarks. I just used bookmarks as an example because mainly, this has proven to be very successful for me in the past and it's best to use a product that's proven to be successful in my examples so that you can try this method of selling bookmarks for yourself.

Other lightweight, smaller items that can be done this way are quilted Bible and book covers. Just provide a sign explaining what measurements you do your covers in, along with sample pieces of clothe. Or you can inform customers of how much clothe to provide and let them choose their own pattern.

Another item that has done very well for me in the past are PooPockets (patterns can be ordered at <http://www.poopockets.com>). In this day and age, people are more concerned with the environment more than they have been in the past, so poopockets have proven to be a wonderful selling item that takes up very little space when on display.

PooPockets are not only great for the environment, but they are also so well made that they are much better to use than store bought diapers. When displaying my poopockets, I always like to embroider my signs right onto the backs of the diapers.

This can be time consuming, so if you don't want to use the extra time to embroider your pockets then just make regular signs out of paper and attach them to the pockets attractively.

Doilies and other items that are flat and easily framed, make wonderful displays for walls.

Basically any smaller product can be displayed in an attractive manner, to help generate sales easily for yourself, as well as for the storeowners providing you space for your displays.

When displaying your products, you NEVER want to use your own ad to advertise your business. Always have your signs provide information for ordering your products through the storeowner, and no other way.

The storeowner is granting you space for a percentage of your sales, and not so that you can obtain free advertising at their expense. To try and use your space as free advertising is not only rude, but it will also cause you to lose contacts that you don't want to (or that you probably can't afford to) lose.

A Few Helpful Tips

1. Before approaching storeowners about your products, first visit the store and shop around a bit so that you can get a general idea of the types of products the store provides. This will help you determine better which of your products to present when you do contact the owner.

This will also give you a good idea about how your merchandise will be handled if displayed in the store. You certainly don't want your products in a filthy store.

If the store is neat and clean, then you will know that your products will be treated with care. If the store is dusty and looks as if it hasn't been swept in weeks, then it's best to just bypass that store altogether because your products will just not be taken care of properly.

2. Always make sure that you visit established businesses. Sometimes new business owners setup shop, don't do very well and close their doors within months. When this happens, your products may walk off when they close for business.

I'm not saying that the owners intend to steal from you, but you stand a greater chance of them not "understanding" that your items should be returned to you if they do go out of business. New owners sometimes don't understand this.

To protect yourself, you can make sure that this is covered in your consignment agreement, or you can provide a simple display as discussed in the previous chapter, so that if they do walk off with your product then they would get your display only and not dozens or even hundreds of your items.

3. When delivering your items, make sure that you do not deliver any flawed goods. Also make sure that you point out to the owner that your items are in great condition, and that the owner is responsible for damage to your products. This can also be included with your consignment agreement if you like.

4. Agree on some sort of timeframe for your products to be displayed. 30 to 60 days is usually plenty of time to sell your products. If some items have not sold within 60 days, then you most certainly want to replace them with new or different items.

If it's just that certain colors sell better than others, simply providing more of the popular colors of your items will be enough to keep your products moving quickly.

5. Some stores that deal strictly with consignment sales only, will charge an additional fee along with their percentage of the profits. They may label this fee as a "storage" fee, "administrative" fee or "inventory stocking" fee. You would usually be charged this fee rather your items sell or not.

This is a cost that is tapped on by some that you honestly do not have to deal with. If a storeowner tries to charge a fee for their space, then tell them that you will be happy to pay this fee (if it's within your budget and if you don't mind paying it) but then that would eliminate their percentage of the profits and all of the sales proceeds are to go directly to you.

This is usually enough to cause them to waive whatever additional fee they try to charge you, and if they don't agree, just find another owner to deal with.

Although many think that additional fees are considered quite normal, and most do not mind paying these fees, I don't recommend crafters paying them.

The storeowners are usually receiving a hefty profit already for the sales of your products, and in my opinion those that charge additional fees are just a bit greedy and taking advantage of those that work hard to provide their customers with fine merchandise.

There are enough storeowners available that do not charge additional fees, and who are delighted with the profits they make just off their percentage of sales, that you can easily afford to take your products elsewhere.

6. Don't forget to advertise your products. Even though your items are being sold in the stores, you can still do press releases about your fine products, while informing others about which stores people can visit to purchase your goods.

Flyers and small ads in the local papers are also good ways to advertise your products. Don't rely strictly on the storeowner to generate your sales.

Treat consignment sales as you would any other method of selling, and make sure that you advertise.

This concludes this section of volume two about selling your products on consignment.

In the next section of this volume, we will cover methods for profiting from your crafts by creating your own publications, and by selling your own patterns and project ideas to other publications.

Getting Your Projects Published

If you design your own patterns, projects and crafts, then you'll find this section of volume two very helpful indeed.

If you don't design your own projects, then volume three of profitable crafts covers techniques that will have you designing your own products quickly, easily and affordably even if you think designing is something you could never do.

More information about volume three can be obtained at the following URL:

<http://www.aismarketing.com/ProfitableCrafts/vol3/>

In the meantime, let's cover the most popular methods for getting your projects published where you can generate even more profits from your crafts.

There are a number of ways to profit from your publications, with a favorite of crafters being to have their patterns published in national crafting magazines.

Having one of your projects accepted for national publication is one of the greatest things you could do for your business. Although this is sometimes difficult to achieve, it's well worth the effort, and headaches sometimes endured, in the long run.

Sometimes you won't make much in the way of profits, but you will build name recognition that will help increase sales of your products locally.

This is also a wonderful way to obtain free publicity for your business. Every time I have had one of my patterns published in a national magazine, I had always had the local paper do a story about my work, which has always helped to increase sales.

Another way to generate profits from publications would be to publish your products and/or patterns yourself. This is much easier and than

you may think it is, because really all you need is your computer, a good printer and a nice word processing program.

The benefits of publishing your patterns yourself, are that you also will build name recognition for yourself and your profits will increase a hundred times over because you can sell your patterns as many times as you like, instead of relying solely on a one time publishing fee that's paid by a national magazine.

The third favorite method of getting your products published would be to submit a number of projects to book publishing companies.

This is very difficult to do, and can be quite stressful as well, but if you were to get a book accepted and published by a well known company, then your crafting career would pretty much be established for life.

I'll cover the two first methods of publication, because these are the two I am most familiar with.

If you would like to try to get your projects published in book format, then you can find tons of information for writers at:

<http://www.writersdigest.com>

You can also self-publish your own book, completely free at [Cafe Shops](#). At café shops there's no minimum quantities like some self-publishing providers require, no minimum fee and you set the prices for your books.

[Click here](#) to visit café shops, and click on the "Create & Sell" tab to open your free shop.

A Few Words About Copyrights

When publishing your own designs, projects and/or patterns, you must first make sure that you are never infringing on someone else's copyrights.

Many times I have seen crafters "adapt" a pre-existing pattern, and then call the project their own creation.

Making a few changes to another's pattern, project or instructions does not make you the owner of the changed design no more than if I were to paint your house for you and call it mine just because I made a change to it.

Your house is your home, no matter what changes another makes, and others creations, patterns and projects are their own no matter what changes you may make to the finished product.

This is not only illegal it's also dishonest and just plain wrong. For a project or pattern to be completely yours, then you need to design it from scratch completely, before you can proudly call yourself the owner of the projects instructions, and before you can claim the copyrights for yourself.

Yes I also know most crafters do not get caught, and some even brag about this on various crafting boards. Many even encourage this as a method for "quick creation" for projects that they can develop fast for submission to publications.

People who do this, or encourage others to do this are thieves plain and simple.

Don't be a thief, work honestly and it won't bite you in the rear when you least expect it to.

If you use this method of stealing another's work, you never know when you could find yourself facing severe penalties and a lawsuit that you probably cannot afford. The only way to protect yourself

from suit is to make sure that you only use your own creations and original designs.

It's not hard to design your own projects, and it's much better than stealing another's work and calling it your own. Volume 3 of profitable crafts covers designing your own products in depth and can be obtained at:

<http://www.aismarketing.com/ProfitableCrafts/vol3/>

Once you have designed your own projects, then you will want to protect your own copyrights as well.

US citizens can register copyrights to their projects, at the United States Copyright Office for a \$30.00 fee. Information about registering your copyrights can be found at:

<http://www.copyright.gov/>

In the US, your work is automatically copyright protected the instant you put your work on paper. The registration of your copyrights is something needed if you have to defend your rights to your designs in a court of law. To better protect your copyrights, make sure that you always include a copyright notice on all of your patterns, projects and designs.

A copyright notice looks like the following:

Copyright 2004 © Your Name All Rights Reserved

The date would be the year that you designed your project, and your name would be you as the creator of the design.

Now I personally do not like to pay \$30.00 for each individual pattern that I design. For crafters, this cost can add up quickly if we file separate registrations for each individual pattern that we've created.

Instead I take each pattern as it's created and seal it in an envelope, addressed to myself. I then will have a notary public stamp his/her notary seal over the edge of the envelope so that it can prove that the envelope had not been opened (therefore showing the contents remain unchanged) since the date it was sealed. I then mail my

pattern to myself to get it postal date stamped, and then file it unopened in my safe.

This establishes the date that my design was created, and gives me something extra to help prove my own copyright claims. This is commonly referred to as the poor man's copyright and, is a method used by many to help establish their copyright claims.

Once you've collected about 30 to 40 different designs this way, then you can submit them all to the copyright office (do not use your sealed copies, keep these sealed and submit copies instead), and register them all together as one completed work in book format, therefore paying the registration fee one time while still protecting many designs.

I still have patterns sealed from the early 80's, where I designed crocheted dresses for fashion dolls. There's no purpose in unsealing your designs unless you need some sort of proof in a court of law. Just put them away in a safe location in case you ever need them.

Before I conclude this chapter, I want to also issue one word of caution. NEVER submit any of your designs ANYWHERE until you get your stamped sealed copy back in the mail.

You want all of your submissions to be dated AFTER you've established your creation date, just in case some scrupulous editor uses your pattern without paying you properly for your work, or in case someone steals your design.

When dealing with national magazines, I have never had an editor publish without paying for my work. Those that run large magazines are not so hard up for designers that they have to steal others work without remitting proper payment, and are usually very good about treating their designers very well.

Although I have never had my work stolen (that I am aware of), I have heard horror stories of smaller publications doing this to other designers and crafters. So always make sure before you submit or publish your designs anywhere, that you have your sealed copy in hand and in a safe location just in case it's needed.

Submitting Your Projects To Magazines

Submitting your projects to magazines can be a time consuming process, especially if you have many designs ready for submission.

We're going to take the submission process in a slow step-by-step format in this chapter, so that you will easily understand what is required for submission in an easy to understand way.

There are many books written on the topic of submitting to other publications, but I have found that most of them are a bit too confusing for the average person.

I have also found that the instructions for proper submissions in a lot of these publications are usually not in proper order, which causes others to make mistakes that you won't want to make.

First Step:

First, you will want to visit your local bookstore, as well as your local office supply store. You need to make a few purchases before you get started so that you can start in an organized fashion, to prevent mistakes in the future.

At the bookstore you will want to purchase one each, of every crafting magazine that you locate on the racks. You will need to go through these magazines, to see what types of projects and articles are published to get a general idea about the types of things readers of that particular magazine like.

At the office supply store, you will want to purchase envelopes, copy or typing paper, index cards, tabs to stick onto your index cards and two index filing boxes to keep your index cards in.

When purchasing your envelopes, make sure that you purchase the regular sized envelopes because you do not want your correspondence to be folded un-neatly due to the envelope being too small.

When you get your supplies home, you will want to setup your index filing boxes where one box will help keep track of dates, and where the other will help you keep track of the companies you have contacted.

For one filing box, you will want to add tabs to 31 of your index cards, and number them 1 through 31.

You will be making what is called a “swap file” to help keep track of letters and projects that you have mailed in a neat way where your information is easy to access.

I know many crafters who rather use their computers to keep track of their mailings, but I have found that a well maintained swap file is much better and helps keep things in much better order.

A dear friend who used this same method to keep track of legal paperwork and legal cases that he was involved in taught this swap file method to me, and it has proven to be a wonderful time-saver when trying to keep track of who has been contacted, and when you need to follow-up on correspondence.

Once you have your index cards tabbed and numbered, then place them in one filing box and set it aside.

For your second box, you will want to create tabbed index cards, lettered from A to Z to help keep track of editors and companies that you have contacted.

Once you have these cards tabbed and lettered, set them in your second box and set it aside until needed again.

Now that you have your magazines, and your filing system ready, we'll start with contacting editors for their designers guidelines for each publication.

Step Two:

Take each magazine that you've purchased, and look in the very front of the magazine for their corporate/business address and phone number.

Next, take a blank index card, and write on the front of the card the companies name, address, phone number and website URL if they have a website as well. Under this information, leave a space for the editor's name. Call the company and get the main editors name, to ensure that you'll be writing the correct person.

Usually the editors are named in the magazine under editor's notes or some other introduction in the magazine, but it's always best to confirm who the editor is by making a quick phone call to the company.

You don't want to speak with the editor when you make your call, the receptionist can give you this information much faster and you want your first contact with the editor to be in writing.

Once you've created an index card for each magazine, then you will want to neatly address your envelopes, to prepare them for your letters requesting the publications designers guidelines, and you will also want to enclose a S.A.S.E. (self addressed stamped envelope) that the editor can use to return their guidelines to you in.

I usually address my envelopes by handwriting in the publication's address, and attaching a printed label of my return address. Once you have your cards filled completely with the editor's names, and your envelopes addressed, then move on to step three.

Step Three:

Next you will want to print or type a short simple letter, addressed to each editor, requesting that publications designers guidelines and editorial forecast. On the next page I share with you a letter that you are free to use for your on guidelines and editorial forecast requests, just make sure to change the information to your own contact info as well as the publications contact info.

BEGIN LETTER

Date: 00/00/0000

Publication and/or company name
Address
City, State
Zip

Attn: Editor's name here

Dear Mr./Ms. Editor's last name here,

Please send me a current copy of your company's designer's guidelines and editorial forecast.

I have enclosed an S. A. S. E. for your use, and look forward to receiving this information at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Your name
Your address
Your city, state
Your zip

END LETTER

Now in case you are wondering exactly what you're requesting, the designer's guidelines are the submission guidelines you must follow when submitting your designs, and the editorial forecast is a schedule of what types of products are going to be included in each issue of their publication for that year.

Each magazine can have separate submission guidelines, and you'll need to know what's required of each company before you ever submit your work for publication.

If you submit your designs without following the guidelines, then the editors will normally not even bother to look your design over, but will instead either toss it directly into the trash, or they will send a polite letter refusing your submission.

Usually, an editor will have the attitude that if you can't take the time to submit your designs properly, then they shouldn't bother wasting their own time to even reply to you at all and you can't really blame them for this.

Now I know for a fact that some editors can be extremely nice, especially if they like your design particularly well.

The first project I ever submitted for publication was what I call a "Can in a basket". My can in a basket pattern is simply a basket crocheted to fit around a regular can, with an attractive handle using the basket weave pattern so that it would look like a basket.

This was in the late 80's, and at this time, recycling trash into useful projects was very a popular thing to do.

When I submitted my pattern, I did not know that there were submission guidelines that I should have followed, so I basically took a picture, and submitted the picture alone with nothing else, not even project instructions. The letter that I enclosed with my picture was very short and extremely amateurish.

My letter basically stated that I had created this pattern, it used recycled cans, was crocheted and that the basket would be a great pencil holder for desks.

If the editor had written me back a very hateful letter about the way I wasted her time, I wouldn't have blamed her a bit. I mean my first submission was horrible!

Luckily, the editor was very kind, and wrote me a very polite letter informing me that she had enclosed their guidelines, and that she was very interested in publishing my project in a future edition of their magazine. She asked me to resubmit my pattern following their guidelines then she would send me a contract agreement to sign so that I could get paid.

I was ecstatic at first, until I saw the guidelines and realized how badly I screwed up. I just knew that this editor thought I was some ignorant child that was overly excited about a project that she designed.

I'm not sure if the editor thought this or not, but it's exactly what I would have thought if I received such an unprofessional, handwritten letter as I had submitted to that editor.

I was so embarrassed that I almost didn't resubmit my design. It was my mother that convinced me to resubmit it, because she firmly believed in my designing capabilities and she was as ecstatic as I was at first to know that one of my patterns was close to being published.

She helped me type my instructions properly the way crochet patterns should be typed, and also helped me take better pictures of my project.

I then resubmitted my pattern, signed the contract agreement that was later sent to me, and had a small check arrive in the mail several months later.

My pattern did not make the cover of the magazine. It didn't even get a full page devoted to it. It was posted in the section provided each month for easy projects using recycled materials. It was nothing major, or very impressive to most published designers, but to me as a beginner it was a wonderful start for my publishing career.

So when submitting your designs, make sure that you follow the guidelines. Some editors are not near as nice as that editor was towards me, and if you don't submit properly the first time, then you may not have another chance for resubmitting.

Once you have your letters completed, printed and signed. You want to mail them to the editors with your S. A. S. E. enclosed. Once you've placed them in the mail, you will want to make a notation on the back of the index card that holds that company's information.

I usually write "DG 00/00/0000" with 00/00/000 being the date I mailed my request, and DG meaning designer's guidelines.

Once you've noted the date that you mailed your request on the back of your cards, you will then want to file them in your numbered filing box.

The way your swap file works, each number represents one day out of the month. 1 would be the first day of the month, with 31 being the last day of the month if that month has 31 days.

If you mailed your request on the 5th of the current month, then you will want to file your index card in the number 5 slot. The reason for this is so that each morning you can look in each day's slot, and see if there are any companies that you would need to follow up with.

Four weeks is generally long enough time to wait for your guidelines to arrive by mail, so by placing your cards in the same days slot, you will then see if there are any cards left for that day exactly one month from the date you mailed your requests.

As your guidelines arrive, you would then want to remove that company's index card from the number five slot and mark on back the date you received the guidelines, and then file that company's card alphabetically in your other filing box.

Now when the 5th of next month rolls around, you can tell at a glance which companies you would need to send another request too, based on which cards are left in the number 5 slot.

Usually you won't need to send another request, because most companies are very good about mailing their guidelines quickly.

But sometimes mail can get overlooked, and if you haven't received the guidelines within four weeks then it's best to request them again.

Step Four:

Now that you have sent your requests for guidelines, you will want to study the magazines that you purchased to get a good idea about the types of projects the magazine publishes, so that you will know which of your own projects will have a better chance for acceptance.

If you don't have any projects already designed, then you can spend the time waiting for your guidelines to arrive, designing something you think would be appropriate for each magazine.

You can also locate more magazines to submit your request for guidelines to. If you've already requested guidelines for all of the magazines you can locate in your local bookstore, then you can visit the following URL for information about other publications that are not available in your area.

<http://www.lyciatl.com/magazines/>

Move onto step five once you receive your first set of guidelines from one of the companies that you've submitted your requests to.

Step Five:

Once you receive your designer's guidelines for a company (or several companies) you will then want to prepare your project for submission.

Follow the guidelines carefully, and make sure that you do not submit the same project to multiple publications at one time. This is frowned upon by editors and they usually will not accept projects that have already been published in a competitors magazine.

The contract that you will be required to sign usually stipulates that your project has not been published elsewhere, so make sure that you only submit each project to one company at a time.

Also note that some publications require that you sell all rights to your design to them upon receipt of payment. When you sell a publication

all rights, you are basically selling any rights you have for your design and can no longer use it in future publications, in any form or fashion.

You will basically be forfeiting your right to ever use your design again, because the rights to your pattern or project would now be sold to the company that you sold all rights too.

If you do not want to sell all rights to your design, then you will need to find another company to submit your design to that doesn't require that all rights be granted.

Some publications require first time rights (meaning they are the first to publish your design) or one-time rights (which means they are free to publish your design one time only).

If the rights purchased are not stipulated in the guidelines, then make sure you read your contract carefully if your design is accepted so that you will know exactly what rights you're selling for your design.

Now once you have your project ready for submission, following the guidelines of the company that you are about to submit to, then you will want to get your project ready to mail and prepare your swap files again for easy record keeping.

Make sure when you mail your submission, that you also include an S. A. S. E. so that the editor can return your photos and instructions in the event that your project is refused.

Pull the index card from the alphabetical filing box, for the company you are about to submit your design to, and make another note on the back of the card.

You would want your note to look something like:

PD# DOLL001 SUB: 00/00/0000

Where PD would be any number you assign for your "project design" and SUB would be the date you mailed your submission.

Make sure that you file a copy of your design in a filing cabinet somewhere, with your PD number at the top for your own records, so that you'll be able to tell at a glance which project was submitted.

Now file your card in your numbered swap-filing box, in the number slot of the date that you mailed your submission.

Now all you have to do is wait to see if your project is accepted.

It usually takes 2 to 3 months for editors to respond about submissions, so make sure that you give them plenty of time to respond before you send a follow-up letter concerning your submission.

The reply that you receive will be one of two things. Either an acceptance letter with a contract for you to sign, or a refusal stating that your project does not meet the magazines needs at that time.

If you receive a refusal, don't sweat it and don't let it get you down. Even the best designers get refused at one time or another. It doesn't mean that their designs are crap, it usually means just that the editor doesn't think that his/her readers would be interested in that design at the present moment.

Instead of letting a "no" get you down, just grab your filing boxes, grab the card out of your swap file where you earlier put your PD number and submission date, write in Refused 00/00/0000 beside the submission date, and file that card back into your alphabetical index box for later use.

You have now noted which project has been submitted to that publication, and will be able to tell at a quick glance in the future, which project to submit next because you never want to submit the same project twice to the same publication.

Now look through your other index cards and locate another company that may be suitable for your project, and submit it to that company instead. Never toss a design out just because it was refused.

You may go through every company in your filing box, with not a single acceptance, yet you can still profit from your design, as I'll show you in the next chapter.

So never let a few refusals get you down. You can always design another project for the publication that refused your first project, and keep trying with each publication until one of your projects are finally accepted.

Now if your project is accepted, you will usually be provided a contract to sign that explains the payment you are to receive, and what rights you are selling the company for your design.

Make sure you read your contract very thoroughly before signing it, and make sure that you understand it completely before agreeing to the terms.

If you have any questions, now would be the time to ask them of the editor. You can simply place a call to the editor, or you can ask in writing. I prefer to ask in writing to verify everything covered that I was concerned about.

When you sell your design to a publication, you are basically selling the right to publish your design and should know exactly what rights you're signing before you agree to any contract.

The most common rights for most publications would be first time rights, where you agree to let the publisher be the first to publish your design. Once your design is published, then you are free to sell publishing rights to other publications as well as long as the other publication agrees to reprint or second rights.

You would not be able to offer first rights to another publication once your design is published, because there is no way the company can publish it first since another has already done so.

If a publisher asks that you sign all rights to your design over to them, you must take careful consideration before you ever agree to sell all rights to any company. When selling all rights, you are basically

agreeing to let the publisher publish your design as many times as they like, with no future payments made to you.

Electronic rights are another form of rights that you can sell. Before a publisher can use your design online, they must have permission from you to do so, and must pay for this right separately because it's not included in first or second rights automatically unless they have already stated that they are purchasing electronic rights in your contract.

Once more, if you sell all rights, then you are basically selling all rights to your design, you can never use it again for yourself, and the publisher is free to republish it in any way they like.

The rules that I have set for myself, concerning rights sold to publishers are as follows. Now these rules are my own personal preference, you may or may not have a different attitude about your rates and rights as I do.

Whatever it is that you're comfortable with selling, then it's right for you. Just make sure that you understand your contract thoroughly before signing on the dotted line.

Usually I have no qualms about selling first or second rights. So long as I retain rights to my own designs, and can offer them for sale in the future, then any payment is grand enough for me and I'm quick to sign my contracts.

When a publisher requires all rights, I make my decision based on which design they are accepting, and how much payment they are remitting.

If the project took me an hour to design, and they offer several hundred dollars, then yes I'll sign the contract quickly because several hundred dollars is well worth an hours worth of my time.

I can always design new projects, and that would be a nice chunk of change made for very little work so I'd be extremely happy with accepting the agreement.

Now if a publisher offers me 50 dollars, for a doll dress that took me a week to design, I will send a polite refusal pretty quick and inform them that they could purchase first rights only for that amount.

Sometimes the editor will agree, sometimes they won't. If they don't then I prepare to submit my design to another publication that will hopefully pay more, or at least settle for first or second rights instead of all rights so that I can also use my design again for more profits in the future.

I can make much more than 50 dollars on ANY project that I design, by self publishing it myself, and I'm not about to sell all rights for such a low amount for projects that took a long time to design.

Yes I have had some publishers offer me extremely low amounts for well-designed projects, and to me this is an insult to designers.

Some publishers seem to have the attitude that we need their measly 50 dollars to pay the bills, and yes I understand fully that to some designers, 50 dollars is a lot of money.

But no designer should ever work for free, and if it takes a week to design a project and you only receive 50 dollars for payment, you are basically working for free. Especially after adding cost of materials used when designing your project.

When selling first or second rights, you can at least offer the project to other publications as well to increase the profits from that design, and you can also self publish it yourself.

But 50 dollars for all rights is ridiculous and no self-respecting designer should ever agree to such terms.

The next chapter covers self publishing your own designs, and you'll find that you can make 50 dollars by self publishing your designs yourself, and you'll also profit more quickly by self publishing your designs yourself because you won't have to wait months for your check to come in the mail.

Now that you have looked over your contract carefully, and decided if you agree with the terms, you will need to sign the contract, make a copy for yourself and get it mailed as soon as possible.

Now all you have to do is sit back, relax, wait for you payment to arrive and wait to see which issue your project appears in.

Most publishers will send you a complimentary copy of the issue that your design is published in, but in case a company does not you will want to make sure that you purchase one or several copies for yourself.

Not only so that you can see your own designs in print, but so that you can use this in the future if you ever decide to publish a book.

It's much easier to get a book published if you're already established as a published designer, than if you have no designs already published.

One more note before I conclude this chapter. Sometimes payment may arrive later than you expected. Usually the editor will tell you when you can expect payment.

If you have not received payment a week or so after you were told to expect payment, then a gentle reminder mailed to the editor would be perfectly in order.

I've never had a payment arrive late when submitting my own designs, but I have had payment for an article that I wrote back in the 90's take forever to arrive. The publisher that did this was not craft related, and I've never had such a problem when dealing with editors of crafting magazines.

Self-Publishing Your Designs

Another method that I have found to be extremely profitable when designing new projects, is self-publishing my patterns myself.

I self-publish more patterns now than I submit to publications, and I have found that my profits have increased 100 fold since I started publishing and selling my designs myself.

The two methods that I have found to work best when self-publishing my own designs and patterns, have been by printing simple booklets from my home computer system, and by selling my patterns in PDF format (this eBook is also in PDF format).

Both methods have worked extremely well for me, and my profits have increased both online and offline as I started using these methods of publishing.

Self-publishing your own designs is not difficult at all.

To make a booklet of your desired project, you would first design a basic cover that can be printed on regular card stock paper. When designing your covers, you want to make sure that the cover is attractive and pleasing to the eye.

A simple format that I follow is to place the name of the pattern at the top of the cover, a nice border graphic right below the pattern name, a color picture of my product under the border line and then my copyright information in the bottom right hand corner of the cover.

When using graphics on your covers, you must make sure that you don't violate any copyrights because images are copyright protected just like your patterns are.

There are CD's made with literally thousands of clip art graphics that people can use, yet most do not know that these graphics can only be used for personal use only and not for profit. When reselling your patterns, you would be using the graphics for profit and if the image

used does not grant that right, you could be held liable for copyright violations.

The best place I have found for clip art and graphics to use on items for profit is [Gif Art](#). Gif art provides over 500,000 images that can be used even on items that are resold for profit that also provides many top quality images to choose from.

The images at [Gif Art](#) can be used for book covers, labels, candy wrappers, flyers, business cards, T-Shirts, cards, logos, letters and virtually anything else that you'd find a need to use graphics for.

Once you have your cover designed, you will then want to type up your project instructions using any word processing program.

Your cover can also be created in your word processing program, or you can use a graphics program to design it.

If you do not have a word processing program, then I recommend Openoffice.org. You can find out more about Openoffice.org at the following URL:

<http://office.lycials.com>

Once you have your project instructions typed, you will then want to format them so that when printed, they will print on front and back of your paper in order so that when folded it will form a booklet.

You'll have to format your instructions in whatever fashion is best for you based on which program you are using.

Your cover should take up one half of a page as well, so that it can be folded over your instructions. You would then staple the pages together and have a nice, neat little booklet of your project.

If you find formatting your booklet to be difficult, then I recommend [Clickbook](#) as a wonderful program for printing and formatting booklets in a wide range of sizes. This is the program that I have personally used for years, and it makes publishing in booklet format a breeze.

You can see some of the booklets that I publish at the following URL:
<http://www.lycials.com/booklets.htm>

If you would like to publish your designs in PDF format, then it's as simple as typing of your instructions and converting your project into a PDF version.

When your project is in PDF format, you can then allow your customers to download directly off the Internet saving them shipping fees and time.

They can then print your pattern on their own home computer.

To create PDF documents, you will need a special program to convert your regular document into PDF format. Adobe acrobat is the best program available for creating PDF files, but it's also quite expensive.

To see an example of one of my own patterns in PDF format, please visit the following URL to download a free thread bear pattern:

<http://www.lycials.com/brandbear.htm>

Adobe acrobat costs \$299.00, and is probably too steep for your own budget. If this is the case, then the second best program for converting into PDF format would be Openoffice.org.

Openoffice.org is a complete word office suite that is as good a Microsoft's yet that provides many additional features, including the ability to create PDF files.

If your budget will not allow you to purchase the more expensive programs like Microsoft Office or Adobe Acrobat, then Openoffice.org would be your best solution.

[**Click here for more information about Openoffice.org**](#)

Once you've decided which format you'd like to offer your projects in then you can prepare to sell your designs both online and off.

If you are providing your patterns in booklet format, then you can also offer these on consignment sales as you would your completed projects.

I have also found that patterns successfully sell on eBay™ in both booklet and PDF format.

If you have a website, then you can also offer your project designs from your site.

I sell my patterns mainly from my websites, and on eBay™. Prices for my designs range from \$1.50 for a basic crochet pattern, to \$19.99 for more complex patterns.

I know that \$1.50 isn't much, but over time the small change adds up to where a pretty decent profit is made for just one pattern.

Considering there are so many aspects that must be covered when self-publishing your own designs or work, it would take another eBook to explain all the ins and outs of profiting from your self-published designs.

Instead, I'm going to share with you a short step-by-step system that you can follow, to help you get your sales started quickly using eBay™ and your website.

First, you will want to develop a simple website, if you don't already have one. Before starting your website, you will want to ensure that you have a minimum of at least 3 of your own designs that you plan to sell, so that you can offer a nice variety of designs to your site visitors.

The more designs that you offer, the more your sales will increase, and 3 is perfect for if you're just starting to self-publish your designs.

To start your website you will first need to register a domain name. I recommend [000 Domains](#) for domain name registrations. I use 000 Domains myself, and have found this company to be extremely reliable and affordable.

Next, you will need to choose a web-hosting provider to host your site with. I recommend [Host 4 Profit](#) , not just because this is the company I use but because this company offers top-notch support and service as well.

When you become a [Host 4 Profit](#) customer, you'll also gain access to the Warrior Forum, where you can seek help and guidance from many wonderful people if you run into problems building or promoting your website.

Once you have your hosting, you will then want to create your sites web pages. You do not need to know a lot about HTML to create a beautiful site.

You can purchase what is called an HTML template, where the HTML is already coded for you into a nice looking web page. Using the template, all you would need to do would be to add your product information, include some way for your site visitors to make payment, upload the files and prepare to sell.

The best place I have found online to purchase attractive and affordable templates is [Basic Templates](#).

Basic templates also provides template designs for craft related sites, and considering their templates are only \$5.00 each, then the templates are wonderful time & money savers because you won't have to code your site from scratch nor pay someone to create nice graphics so that your site will be pleasing to look at.

Once you have added your products to your template, you will need some way to process payments for your sales. If you use PayPal, then you already have a wonderful processor to use because PayPal provides tools for members to help make ordering easy from member's websites.

Just login to your PayPal account, click the "Merchants Tools" tab, and you'll see several options that you can use for your site under the "Website Payments" section. You can create PayPal buy now

buttons, or PayPal shopping cart buttons easily using these tools provided.

To see an example of how I use PayPal to sell patterns on my main website, please visit the following URL:

http://www.lyciall.com/bear_patterns.htm

This is the page that I sell my three most popular miniature bear patterns, and as you can see, the page isn't that complicated at all.

I sell these patterns in booklet format, and generally make from \$50.00 to \$150.00 per month in sales just from this one page of my site, which is plenty enough to cover my hosting bill and still generate a nice profit.

The little white "Buy Now" buttons are buttons that I created using PayPal's merchant tools.

Once your website is up, you will then need to generate traffic to your site. Now there are literally hundreds of manuals that have been written to help one market their website.

Some of the information is quite complex, and difficult for some to understand when first starting a site.

We're trying to keep things simple here, so I'm going to share with you a simple technique that I have found works wonderfully for generating sales for my patterns on my website.

I use the popular online auction site eBay™ (www.ebay.com) to gain new customers and generate sales for my patterns.

There are two methods that I have found, when selling in eBay™, that have proven to be extremely successful time and time again.

First, you can list an auction selling your patterns directly. This is quite easy, and I do this quite frequently for my thread bear patterns.

The second method is the one that I like the most, because it let's me test to see what types of projects will sell best, so that I know what types of patterns to design next when I've completed a new design.

I first do a search of completed auctions, using various keywords (usually crochet pattern since I mainly design in crochet), so that I can see what types of projects and patterns are getting bids.

I usually spend 2 to 3 hours researching previous auctions, while making a list of the auctions that I see that have received good bids.

I will then next go through my list, and see which type of project I would like to design.

For example if I see a lot of purse crochet patterns listed, with most of the auctions receiving bids, then I can safely assume that if I design a nice crocheted purse pattern that it will do reasonably well both on eBay™ and my website.

To make sure, I would first try to locate a vintage purse pattern that has become public domain material.

If I can locate a pattern that has passed into the public domain, then I can use it to run test auctions, before investing my time into designing my own pattern.

Public domain means that no one holds a copyright to the material any longer so you are free to use the material as you please.

When materials falls into the public domain, this means that they are free for anyone to use, and free for anyone to profit from if they so wish.

There are many things to look for when researching to see if material is in the public domain.

I can't cover everything about public domain materials here, but if you would like more information about profiting from public domain materials, [please click here to check out "How To Profit From Public Domain Information"](#).

When listing my “test” auctions, I can usually find a crochet pattern that’s in the public domain that I can use to see how well those types of projects are wanted by consumers.

This saves me from designing a project, only to find out that it’s not something that’s wanted by many, after wasting my time and materials in the designing process.

Now I do design things for pleasure all the time, without doing any sort of research. But when I’m designing for profit, I want to make sure that the project can turn a profit before I invest too much time and energy in designing something.

After I have found a suitable pattern, I then create a basic auction ad and list several separate auctions on eBay™, using different keywords that I wrote down in my earlier research in my titles.

eBay™ only allows sellers to list 10 auctions of the same item at the same time, so make sure that you do not list more than 10 test auctions of the same pattern at any time or you may have your auctions canceled.

I always provide patterns for my test auctions in PDF format so that bidders can download them online. This saves shipping fees for my bidders, and this way I don’t have to keep track of payments received and who received their item, as I’ll explain below.

When listing test auctions, you will want to start them on a Sunday and run them for 7 days.

Bidding is at it’s best on the weekends so you want to ensure that your auctions end during the best bidding time.

The reason for this is because bidders will only click so many pages to find what they’re looking for, and may never see your auction if it’s not ending soon.

If they do see your listing, and if you’re auction isn’t about to end, they are also likely to put it on watch and forget to bid. But if your auction

is ending soon, then they'll usually go ahead and bid to ensure that they win your item.

You also want to list your test auctions as dutch auctions. I usually list 5 to 15 items for sale, and start them at one or two dollars each. These auctions aren't meant to be very profitable but are instead to just see if consumers are interested in certain designs.

Even when listing just test auctions, I usually make \$10 to \$20 dollars per week (this is after fees are covered) just for hitting the relist button and sending off one email after the auction ends with my eBud program.

The email has the download link for the PDF files included with them, because it's not worth my time to try and track down who made payment over a \$2 downloadable item, and the money trickles in over time.

\$20 dollars for less than 5 minutes worth of work isn't bad at all. Using this system, it's as easy as create your auctions, put up a download page on your website, then spend your time just hitting the re-list button and sending your emails to winning bidders.

Once your auctions have ended, then you can better determine how well that type of product might sell from your website, by the number of bids you get.

If you listed a dutch auction of 15 items, and received 15 bids or more, then you're research is completed.

That shows there's a great interest in that type of project and you can start designing your own project or pattern.

If you have 5 to 10 bids, then you have something that will still sell well, but I would recommend that you run a few more test auctions using different keywords to see if you can get better bids.

If you received less than 5 bids, then you can do 1 of 2 things. You can put that project on hold and try running the test auction again

later, or you can try changing the description and try using different keywords in the title.

Me, I usually run a few more test auctions just to make sure, it takes no time to hit the re-list button, and the listing fee is a very minimal investment when trying to determine if you have a design that consumers may hold a lot of interest for.

Now once you have your test auctions completed, and have found something you feel will do well if you design it, you will then want to design your project and determine what format you'd like to sell it in.

Once you have your project designed, you will then add it to your website and get ready to promote it, once more using eBay™ as your main traffic generator.

Now using the same pattern that you used for your test auctions, you can inform your bidders about your new design located at your website.

You can do this by mentioning it in the email that you send to your winning bidders, or you can use the same pattern that you used for your test auctions, but instead of providing it in PDF format, you would want to print it out and mail it in regular paper format.

When mailing your pattern via regular mail, you can then include a letter with their purchase informing them about your new project on your website.

When sending via regular mail, you would then need to charge for shipping costs, but I have had much better results with repeat sales from eBay™ bidders when sending them an actual physical paper product. I guess because bidders take more time to read the letter enclosed with their printed pattern, than they do emails.

Now to summarize all of this information in a quick fashion to help eliminate confusion, I'm going to shorten this a bit and explain exactly why my system is setup this way.

This system has really generated some nice profits for me, and it will you as well when setup and used properly.

The information in red explains in depth why you need to complete each step.

If you skip a step, then this method will not do you much good because this system is based on testing first, gaining a customer by providing a small product first to help establish trust, then having your customers purchase your main product for repeat business from the same person.

First:

Register a domain name ([000 Domains](#))

You will need your own website if you plan to use this method, because you have to provide a page for your customers can download their patterns, and you will need your site to gain repeat orders from your previous bidders.

Second:

Choose a web-hosting provider ([Host 4 Profit](#))

You can't run a site without a hosting provider. Although there are many web-hosts to choose from, [Host 4 Profit](#) is the one I recommend because they provide wonderful support, as well as plenty of bandwidth and space for your patterns and web pages.

Third:

Either create your web pages from scratch or purchase a pre-designed web template. Add at least 3 products to your site before you get started so that it's not sitting unused. ([Basic Templates](#))

Fourth:

Determine which format you will provide your projects in. I use both printed and PDF format because PDF is easier for running test auctions, and paper is best for repeat sales from your bidders.

Fifth:

Spend some time researching completed auctions on eBay™ to see what types of projects are getting good bids.

If you do not take the time to research first, then you will be wasting time and money listing test auctions because you will have no idea if anyone is even interested in the type of product you're wanting to offer.

If you don't want to take the time to research, then you don't want to make many profits and I suggest you not go even one step further.

Sixth:

Choose something that you see receiving good bids, and try to locate a pattern that is already in the public domain that you can use for your test auctions. If you cannot locate something already in the public domain, then design something that's not too complex to use instead.

With enough research you can usually always find something that you can use for your test auctions that is already in the public domain though.

If you crochet, then you will find many public domain patterns at www.daintywork.com that you can use for your test auctions.

Seventh:

List your test auctions, if selling your project in your test auctions in PDF format, make sure to put up a download page on your website that you can direct bidders to for easy delivery.

Once more, if you don't want to spend time researching and testing, then you don't need to go a step further. If you don't test, then the only way you'll know if your products will be very profitable is if you go through a lot of trial an error. Save headaches, save time and save money by testing first.

Eighth:

When your test auctions end, send your winning bidder emails, and deliver their products. If your test auctions did well enough, then start designing your own project. If not, try different keywords in the titles before you move on to something else.

If you did your research properly you should have received good bids because you would have known ahead of time already if that type of project were selling well already.

Ninth:

Design your own project.

Tenth:

Add your project to your website.

Eleventh:

Start regular auctions now using the same pattern used for your test auctions, just modify your listings a bit to where you are providing the pattern in printed format instead of PDF format.

Twelfth:

When delivering your printed patterns, include a thank you letter with their purchase and inform them about the projects/patterns/designs that are available from your website.

The purpose of selling your test pattern, is so that you can now use your auctions not only for testing to see if there is interest in that type of project, but so that you can generate more sales from your bidders.

The thing about this system, is that you now have a targeted list of customers that have already purchased from you, that you already know likes the type of product that you're providing, and that you've already built a good relationship with.

These are the ideal customers, and who are more likely to purchase your current products as well as multiple items from you in the future when you create new products.

If you follow this simple 12-step system, then you'll find that you'll make more for your designs over time than you would even if your design is accepted by a national publication.

For example, if you've designed a small 6 inch doll that sticks on windows in a cute fashion, and submit it to a publication, who accepts your design and agrees to pay you \$150.00 for the rights to publish your design, then within 3 or 4 months after signing your contract you will receive payment of \$150.00.

Now if you decide that you'd rather self-publish your design yourself, then let's assume that you get about 5 bids per week (which is a low number) for your test auctions that were listed at \$2.00 each. Now to round out your profits, we'll say you made \$1.00 per auction after listing and final value fees have been deducted.

So you would be making \$5.00 in profits for one week's worth of test auctions.

Now let's say you list your test pattern in printed format and list the same pattern at \$3.00 per auction, to help cover printing costs, and charge .75 cents for shipping.

It would not take more than two stamps to mail your pattern and thank you letter, and you would still clear about \$2.00 in profits for each pattern sold.

That would be \$10.00 (or more) per week that you'd make in profits for your printed pattern if you receive 5 bids per week (which again, is a low number). We'll multiple this times 3 months (12 weeks) for \$120.00 dollars in profits. With 3 months being the time you would usually wait for payment form a publication.

So for that one pattern, you would make \$125.00 in profits total so far, and I'm using low numbers here to demonstrate the potential.

Now you have made a bit of money, and have 65 customers that will probably show an interest in your main product offered from your website.

If you are selling your design form your site for \$5.00, and if only 10 of your bidders order form your site, then you'd make an additional \$50.00 in profits.

So within 3 months, you would have made \$175.00 in profits from the same pattern, in the same amount of time it would take for you to receive payment from the publication that accepted your pattern.

But you don't have to stop selling now, if you continue to sell your products like this for a year, you will have made \$700.00 from this one design instead of just \$150.00.

Hopefully now you can see the benefits of self-publishing your own designs, especially if a company asks to purchase all rights for your product. \$150.00 for all rights to your design is not worth it when you can make 4 times that amount in a year by selling it yourself.

Now if a publisher decides that first-time rights you can always sell to the publications, and then provide it from your website once the publications issue has run because you would then have control of your design and how it's published again.

Your profits will increase even more if you design a new project every week (or every month).

If you make an effort to design, submit, accept when the terms are right, then publishing your designs yourself after your acceptances have run in issues they have been accepted in (if you don't sell all rights), then you would have a tidy income flowing within your first year of start-up.

And this is just using a simple system that has worked for me every time I have created a new design, with the exception that I rarely submit to publications any longer because I do much better now with sales from my website.

If you choose [Host 4 Profit](#) as your hosting provider, you will find many other methods that you can use to market your website to increase your profits even more in the warrior forum. Access to the forum comes with your [Host 4 Profit](#) account.

This concludes this volume of profitable crafts. I hope that you have found this issue helpful and informative.

Remember that in volume 3 of profitable crafts, I cover designing techniques that make project designing extremely easy, even if you've never designed a single project in your life.

Volume three will be released on May 15, 2004, and more information concerning volume 3 can be obtained at:

<http://www.aismarketing.com/ProfitableCrafts/vol3/>

Volume 1 of profitable crafts has already been released, and explains in depth about how to price your products for maximum profits. If you do not already have volume 1, then you can obtain it at the following URL:

<http://www.aismarketing.com/ProfitableCrafts/vol1/>

I hope that you have enjoyed this information, and don't forget that you also are allowed to resell this volume as well from your new website. Just don't forget to register as a reseller. Registration is free and you can register as a reseller at:

<http://www.daintywork.com/crafts/vol2register.htm>

Until next time, I would like to wish you much joy and many profits in your crafting adventures!