

Landing Your First Wholesale Account

Are you thinking you'd like to
get your handmade creations
into brick & mortar retail
stores... but you don't know
where to start?

1. Do Your Research

- First - start by researching your local area/state/country.
- Before you even think about reaching out to a shop, make sure you have a good understanding of the style of product they sell, and who their target customer is.
- Create a spreadsheet and start writing in the shops - keeping track of their name, address, the owner's name, email address - and, as you progress, you'll keep track of when you contact them, too.

2. Terms & Conditions

- The next step is to get a clear terms & conditions document prepared - you'll be sending this out to potential customers, and it will save a lot of headaches down the line.

Include information like:

- What's your turn-around time from order to shipping?
- What's your payment policy? (I recommend full payment up-front the first time you sell to a new store - you can change this to half-half or payment on delivery later if you decide to).
- What's your wholesale order minimum? (Is it a dollar amount or a product number?)

3. Make a Line Sheet

- Your line sheet may be a document, or you may instead choose to have a wholesale buyer's website where you have all of your products available.
- You need to have simple, clear product photos, concise descriptions, and wholesale prices (typically 50% of retail, but not always). You can include a Recommended Retail Price (RRP).
- For a lot more detail on line sheets, check out [this excellent post](#) by Indie Retail Academy.
- Now, it's time to start reaching out to shops. Let's talk about the best way to go about that!

4. Start with an Email

- The absolute best way to first reach out to a shop is via email. Don't just walk in. Don't call. Make the first approach softly softly - so that they can read your email and check your work out without feeling pressured.
- If you don't get a reply straight away - don't panic. Don't take it personally!
- Follow up in 1 week with a friendly reminder email - in this, perhaps offer your phone number (if you didn't already) and invite them to call you if they have questions.

4. Start with an Email

- Still nothing? Leave it be for at least a month. Then, try again.
- If you're not getting a response, don't lose all hope - just pop that shop down for a follow-up contact in 6 months time or so - and move onto the next shop!
- But, hopefully, some shops will start getting back to you with a positive response!
- At this point, you'll want to send them your linesheet/link to your online wholesale site, and go from there.

5. Got a Reply? Now What?

- Yay! Someone is interested in stocking your work.
- Now is when you send them your line sheet and T&Cs, and invite them to place an order.
- If you have a wholesale website, explain the process they need to follow to make an order.
- If you are offering a traditional line sheet, it's a very good idea to also include an order form that they can simply fill in (which has all the relevant columns, like item, quantity, price etc).
- If there are any circumstances altering your turn-around time, now is when you make that clear.

6. Decide on Packaging

- If you haven't already, you need to decide what sort of packaging you are going to use to send your creations, AND if you're going to offer any packaging/display items to the shop.
- Some businesses offer display stands – but don't just send them, check with the shop first, because it is up to them to decide how they display your work.
- You **MUST** make sure not to lose money on packaging. It should be factored into your prices – or your shipping cost.

7. Ship Safely

- The customer should be paying for the shipping.
- If you are selling to a local shop, you may prefer to deliver the items yourself, especially the first time – it's a nice way to make more of a connection with the shop owner.
- If you've never shipped before/or never shipped a volume, make very sure that your packaging is up to scratch.
- Some makers send a 'test parcel' to themselves to see how it holds up in transit!

8. Follow Up

- This is not the end of the story!
- Make sure to follow up with stores who stock your goods on a regular basis.
- Maybe a month after they first stock your goods, reach out and ask how your stock is going – if particular things are selling well, (or not) for example.
- It's a great idea to have a 'stockist' email list, too – which you can email when you have new designs available, or on a regular (say, 3-monthly or prior to big holidays) basis.

Wholesale Know-How

Learn how to successfully sell
your handmade goods to
retailers.

create & thrive



**Good luck getting your work
out into the world!**

Questions?

