

GROWING YOUR BUSINESS WITH CATALOGUES

Discover how to unlock your business with catalogues



CONTENTS

THE POWER OF CATALOGUES	01
CATALOGUES FOR YOUR BUSINESS	03
BEFORE GETTING STARTED	05
CREATING YOUR CATALOGUE	08
DESIGN AND LAYOUT	09
COPY	09
PHOTOGRAPHY	10
PAPER QUALITY	11
PRINTING	12
DATA AND AUDIENCE TARGETING	13
POSTAGE AND FULFILMENT	13
COSTINGS	14
TIMING	15
CASE STUDY	16
HELP AND SOURCES	18
ABOUT MARKETREACH: HOW WE CAN HELP	19

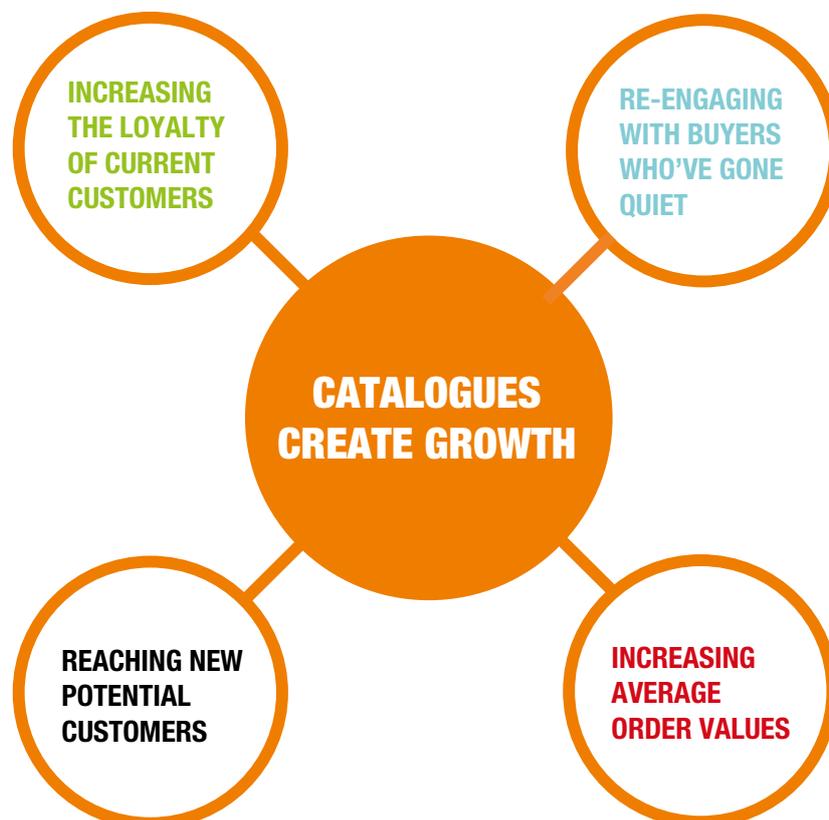
THE POWER OF CATALOGUES

WHY CATALOGUES WORK SO WELL – AND WHAT THEY COULD DO FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Catalogue marketing plays an important role in business growth today, thanks to how well catalogues work with the online world. If you're a digital seller, you may find that regularly issuing print catalogues boosts business in many useful ways. And the advent of short-run printing and personalisation means that any size of business can now try catalogues – you can start from as few as 250 copies.

This guide outlines the key considerations in getting started with catalogues – one of the most effective direct mail formats. Soon you could be putting your brand and your products directly into the hands and hearts of your customers.

HOW CATALOGUES CAN HELP YOU GROW



CATALOGUES ARE VALUED

People keep catalogues, refer back to them and even share them with others. In fact, 86%¹ of people said they keep catalogues for a period of time in the home. They're a great way to keep customers aware of your brand and interested in your products.

CATALOGUES ARE CONVENIENT

They let customers get to know your products better – 63% of people say it's easier to browse through products in a catalogue, rather than in-store or online.²

CATALOGUES ARE YOUR CONNECTION WITH CUSTOMERS

Sending a catalogue is like putting a shop window in your customers' homes, so they're free to learn about what you offer at their leisure. 65% of people report they enjoy sitting down to look at catalogues in their own time.³



Our customers look forward to our annual catalogue. It usually has lots of new products in it. Of course you can put new products online as they become available, but that has less impact.

**Bruce Todhunter – SpaceKraft:
Sensory solutions for special needs**



Catalogues drive sales

52%

**of people bought more than
planned when shopping
with a printed catalogue⁴**



CATALOGUES FOR YOUR BUSINESS

GROWING YOUR BUSINESS WITH CATALOGUES

If you sell through your own website or via online marketplaces, you may never have considered marketing beyond the digital channels. But today, more than ever, catalogues are driving sales for businesses like yours. As well as putting your products literally into the hands of your customers, they let you establish a brand identity it can be hard to achieve on anonymised marketplaces.

75%

say catalogues can give them ideas for things to do or buy⁹

71%

say catalogues let them know what a brand can offer⁹

TOP TIP

If you're considering taking orders via a catalogue, anticipate what kind of demand this may create and make sure you have the processes in place to scale up – you don't want to disappoint new customers as they're just getting started.



Although 70% of our orders are taken online, they are still driven predominantly from the catalogue mailings.

Zoe Bray – Head of Marketing at Celtic & Co



HOW DO I KNOW IF CATALOGUES ARE RIGHT FOR MY BUSINESS?

You may have been selling successfully online for a while, but have you noticed the pace of sales growth slowing? If you can answer 'yes' to one or more of the following questions, a catalogue could get your business growing again.

1. Are sales failing to grow as quickly as you wish?
2. Is it increasingly difficult to find new customers?
3. Are your digital marketing efforts no longer delivering such impressive returns?
4. Are you concerned you may be losing customers?
5. Are you looking to make the next step to growth but feel your business has plateaued?

BEFORE GETTING STARTED

Although catalogue marketing is much simpler and easier than it used to be, every catalogue still needs careful planning and thought. Considering these factors can help you achieve a lasting impact.



YOU CAN TEST THE WATER

The days of businesses having to run many thousands of catalogues to make it worthwhile are gone. New digital printing techniques let you start from a few hundred copies – and will also help you add the personalisation that can make all the difference. You can test which products to hero, which photographs pull most orders, and what offers resonate most deeply.



TIMING IS EVERYTHING

To give your catalogue the greatest impact, think carefully about when you'll mail it out. If you sell garden supplies, for instance, you'll want to get your catalogue in market by February or March in good time for Spring. Should you be running a gift company, you might send your main catalogue out in the run up to Christmas.



MAKE IT PART OF THE MARKETING MIX

Much like your website is the heart of your digital ecosystem, your catalogue should be at the centre of your offline marketing mix. Creating marketing that complements your catalogue will elevate its sales potential. You might send an email campaign to get customers anticipating the arrival of your catalogue, or send out mailshots with follow-up offers people can only redeem on products featured in the catalogue. And with many consumers liking to request a catalogue from a website, make sure yours is clearly advertised.



CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE

Many companies selling to individuals – like clothing retailers, for example – will send their first catalogue out to an existing customer database, with the aim of increasing sales to an already receptive audience. Customers in the business to business space may find that catalogues can be used to prospect for new customers – many companies will keep catalogues from stationery suppliers around for months, for instance – so they can order items as the need arises.



Mailing a catalogue is a great way to reach prospective customers. When we send one to a school, we know many teachers will be looking at it in the staff room.

**Bruce Todhunter – SpaceKraft:
Sensory solutions for special needs**



MAKE IT PERSONAL

You've probably seen how effective personalisation can be in digital marketing, and it's just as powerful in catalogues. You can apply data about your customers' demographics and buying habits to create a catalogue just for them. Products you know they'll respond to can take centre stage, with plenty of cross-sell and up-sell opportunities.



DEFINE YOUR OBJECTIVES

Having clear objectives for your catalogue is important. Outlining what you want to achieve will help focus your efforts. You may want to:

- Drive sales and increase online revenue
- Encourage lapsed customers to return
- Increase current customers average spend
- Increase the number of new customers buying from you



MAIL IT THEN MEASURE SUCCESS

Once you've chosen your objectives, use these to inform how you'll measure your catalogue's success. You'll need to establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), for example, uplift in sales over the next three months or the total number of new customers ordering from you. You'll also want to consider how you'll measure success so you can attribute new orders correctly to the catalogue.

You'll need to know:

- What you want to measure (sales, customers etc)
- How long you want to measure for
- Previous data for comparison

Mail Made Easy is Royal Mail's network of expert partners who can help with every aspect of catalogue production, from design and print to mailing and fulfilment.

TOP TIP

Testing is a great way to see what works and what doesn't work for your customers. You can test different offers, paper grades, cover designs and more to really hone your catalogue's selling power. A Mail Made Easy expert can help you explore the options.



CREATING YOUR CATALOGUE

A catalogue is essentially an extension of your business – it's unique to your brand, your offers and your audience. From product selection to design choice, many elements go into creating a catalogue that works for you.

The first step is to complete a full inventory of your products, so you know what stock you're working with. Then consider the following:

- How many products do you want to include?
- How will they be structured or organised? Think about themes as well as ranges – people shop for occasions not just products, so you could organise fashion around parties, for instance, or plants around seasons
- Which products will you hero? For example, products on the front or back cover typically sell more
- Are you missing any product information? E.g. Specifications or prices

TOP TIP

This is the perfect time to check that your online store is up to date and fully reflects the content in your catalogue. Product information should be consistent across all touch points for a seamless consumer journey.

DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Most companies will want the help of an experienced designer or marketing agency to put a catalogue together. But before you meet with them, it's worth going through these steps.

Check out other catalogues (especially those of your competitors) for inspiration. What are they doing well? What might you do differently?

Get together your visual assets including logos, colours, fonts and guidelines

Think about what you might want on the front cover – products, personalisation or both?

Mail can land either way up on the doormat, so the back cover is just as important as the front

Design for your audience, not for your business. Think about what your customers are like and what they want from you

What contact information will you include so customers can easily place their orders?

COPY

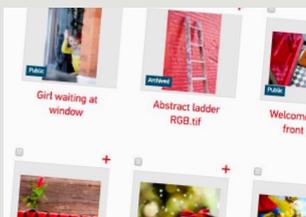
If you already have an ecommerce site, then most likely you already have product descriptions. These are a great start, but catalogues offer more space to explain the benefits of your products. A professional copywriter or marketing agency can craft your copy so it works specifically for the catalogue format.

TOP TIP

Remember to tell people how to order, or include clear signposting to your online store.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Just as in online sales, your product imagery is critical to the impact your catalogue will make. Professionally shot photography can make all the difference, so:



REVIEW YOUR EXISTING IMAGES

Take a look at the images you are using online. You'll need to save them in a different format (CMYK as opposed to RGB) if you're going to supply them to your designer and printer.



IMAGE INVENTORY

See what images you're missing and use this as an opportunity to align the imagery across your site and catalogue.



CONSIDER HIRING A PROFESSIONAL

It may seem like an additional expense, but when product sales are what matter, a professional photographer will present everything in its best light.



THINK BEYOND PRODUCT PHOTOGRAPHY

Depending on what you're selling, it may be time to bring in lifestyle elements. These can add context and really make your products pop off the page. If you are selling fashion or homewares, for instance, a model or a few interior shots can work wonders.



MAKE MORE WITH LESS

If you're working with a small budget, limit lifestyle elements to just a few key products or best-sellers. And ask your friends and family to step in as models.

TOP TIP

For best picture quality, images should be high resolution wherever possible.

PAPER QUALITY

Your printer will help with this but it's worth knowing a few basics. Most catalogues are printed on what's called coated stock (as commonly found in magazines). Coated stock lets the ink sit on its surface, and generally makes for brighter and more faithful photographic reproduction. Uncoated stock can be better for ethical products (and is easier to write on if you plan to include an order form). Satin stock can be a good compromise if you want good reproduction but an authentic feel.

Paper is also categorised by weight – an 80gsm sheet will make for quite a flimsy page, while a 130gsm or 150gsm sheet feels more premium and more substantive. Ask yourself...

- How many pages will your catalogue have? The number of pages and the weight of paper you choose will make up the overall weight of each piece – which will have implications for postage
- What do you want to communicate about your brand? Different finishes and feels show different qualities
- What kind of content does your catalogue feature? This could influence the kinds of paper you print on – if you are selling fashion or premium goods a more expensive stock makes sense



80G – 120G

Thinner and more flimsy, this may be appropriate for catalogues with heavy pagination.

130G – 170G

High-quality and heavier, this is good for your inside pages and will give your catalogue a professional feel.

170G – 200G

Halfway between paper and card, this is a good choice for your catalogue cover.

PRINTING

Printing can seem like a complicated process. But an expert print partner will have answers to your questions and will guide you towards the best approach for your catalogue.

Digital printing, lithography or web printing? Most short run catalogues are printed digitally these days. Digital printing is highly versatile and supports personalisation. More traditional techniques like lithography and web printing only really come into play when you start producing longer run jobs, involving thousands of copies, with many pages in each book.

TOP TIP

Our approved Mail Made Easy partners are printing experts. On top of that, they can also talk you through design, data, mailing and more.

A QUICK GLOSSARY OF PRINTING TERMS

Here's a list of some print acronyms it might be helpful to know:

DPI – Dots Per Inch

This is used to describe the resolution at which your images will be printed – generally 300 DPI, could be 600 DPI for higher end productions.

CMYK – Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black

These are the four base colours used to create all images on printed materials. You'll need to save all your images in a CMYK format rather than RGB.

RGB – Red, Green and Blue

This is the format in which digital photography is typically saved.

EPS – Encapsulated Postscript File

This is a type of high-resolution file format usually used for graphics. An EPS can also include text.

PDF – Postscript Document File

A bit like the PDF files you are already familiar with, your printer will often ask for artwork to be supplied as a print-ready PDF.

GSM – Grams per Square Meter

How the weight of paper is measured.

DATA AND AUDIENCE TARGETING

Who are you trying to reach?

A catalogue is a marketing investment. You'll want to make sure each one you send reaches its intended target. So if you're mailing to your existing customer database, you may want to consider data cleansing. This will eliminate any outdated or duplicate contact details saving you money.

Reaching new customers

If you're looking to widen your customer base, Royal Mail data insight services can help you analyse your audience and target the right people. Once you've defined your audience profile, you can add prospects who match your existing customers very closely – so are highly likely to be receptive to your offers.

TOP TIP

A Mail Made Easy partner could help you find new prospects and get your customer lists in order. Royal Mail can also help you optimise your data and connect with customers.

POSTAGE AND FULFILMENT

Once you've created a polished catalogue and decided on your audience, you'll need to think about fulfilment. Several factors affect the price of postage – from weight and size to the number of items you're planning to mail. It's always good to create a timing plan – this gives you a deadline to get your catalogue out there and start measuring its success.

Many printers will help you with postage and mailing. Some will address and mail your catalogues in-line – as the final stage of the printing process. You simply need to supply them with the relevant data.

Royal Mail has regular offers to help customers who are new to direct mail trial its effectiveness, call us to find out more.

COSTINGS

Sending a catalogue for the first time can seem like uncharted territory. So we've put together some sample costings to give you an idea of the type of investment you could be looking at.

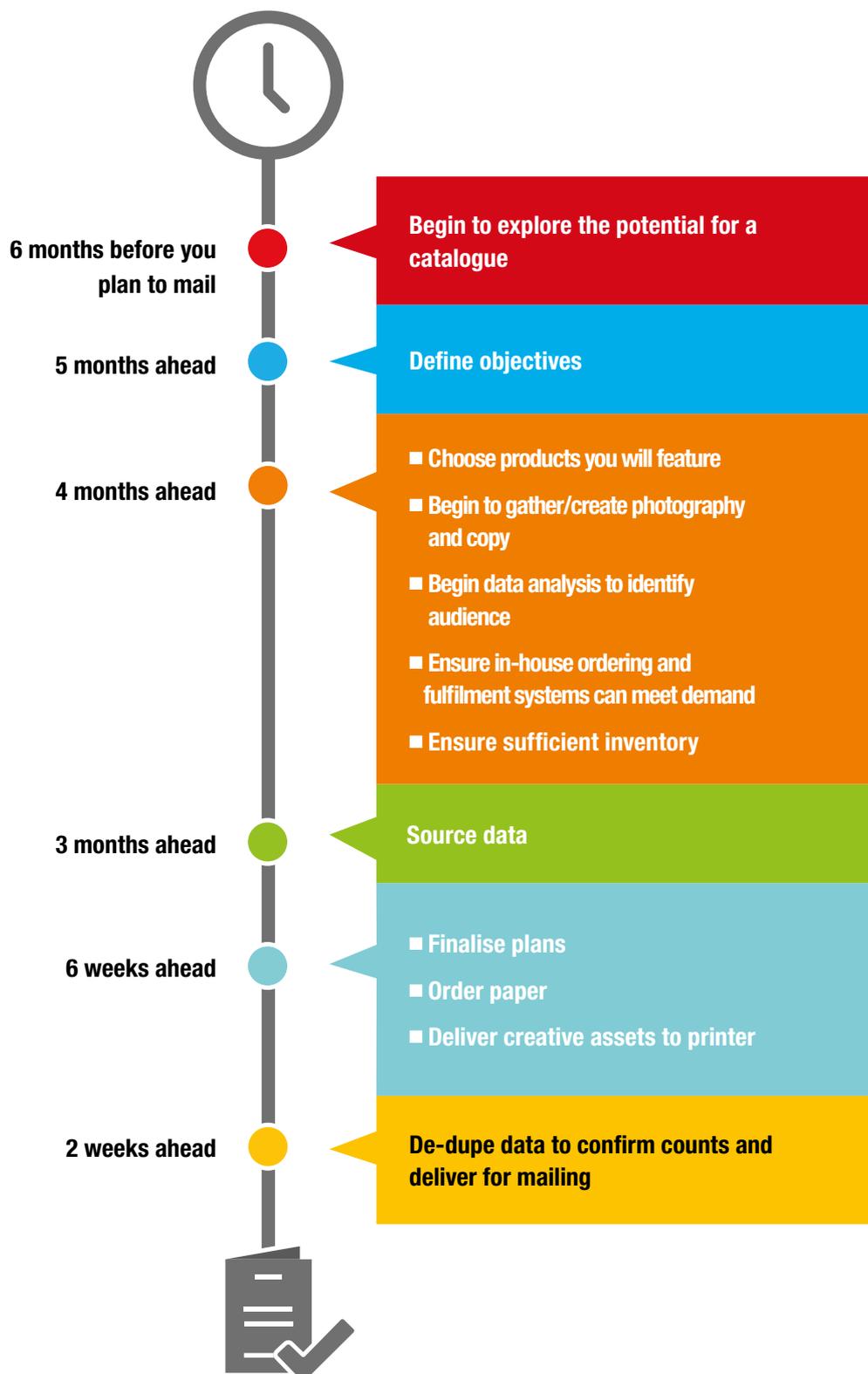
For your first one, a simple rule of thumb is to aim for a cost of 50p per catalogue. This is based on:

- A 36-page catalogue (4 pages of cover and 32 for content)
- An initial mailing of 20,000
- Weight under 100g
- No larger than 240 x 165mm
- Self-mailed (no envelope or poly wrapping, just an address label and postage printed on the catalogue)

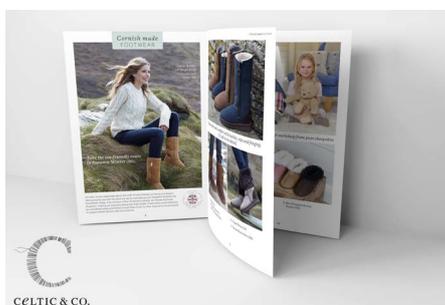
COST AREA	COST PER CATALOGUE
Design and Photography approximately £3000	10-15p
Print	8-11p
Data	6-7p
Data processing (dedupe, suppression)	2-3p
Fulfilment (label, deliver to mailer)	3p
Postage	21p
TOTAL	50-60P

TIMING

Catalogue production is not an overnight task. It can take six months from deciding to move into catalogue marketing to getting your first edition in the mail. Here's a sample timeline to give you a clearer idea of the planning stages involved.



CASE STUDY



CELTIC & CO BUILDING A BUSINESS WITH CATALOGUES

Background

Celtic & Co is a direct to consumer brand selling luxury fashion, accessories and homewares. The business has been built almost entirely on catalogue marketing.



We still mail up to 2 million catalogues a year to our customers and prospective databases. Although 70% of our orders are taken online, they are still driven predominantly from the catalogue mailings.

As an acquisition tool, it is our most successful way to reach customers and provides the best lifetime profitability for investment spent in that channel.

Catalogues allow us to really display our products well, giving us space to showcase our brand to our existing customers and new recipients in their own home and in their own time.

Our customers repeatedly tell us how much they look forward to our catalogues and how they keep hold of them for the lifestyle they portray. This allows us to stay in the home and at the front of their minds for weeks rather than just minutes.

Zoe Bray – Head of Marketing at Celtic & Co



MAIL MADE EASY CREATE YOUR CATALOGUE WITH AN EXPERT PARTNER

Our Mail Made Easy catalogue specialists can take the hassle out of creating your first catalogue. Chosen for their experience, quality and reputation, our partners can help you with some or all of the elements highlighted in this guide.

From creating stand out catalogues to achieving measurable results, a Mail Made Easy specialist will be dedicated to helping you create successful catalogue mailings that increase your returns from existing customers and help you find new ones. After all, if your catalogue mailing works well, it's likely to become a regular feature of your marketing campaigns.

royalmail.com/mme



Document Dispatch [their Mail Made Easy partner] were brilliant, they sorted it out from end to end. It [the process] was very efficient and happened like clockwork. I would recommend it.

Nick Pringle – Susie Pringle Cashmere



HELP AND SOURCES

Sources

^{1,2,3,5,6} Source: Royal Mail MarketReach, The Power of Print Catalogues, Illuminas 2017
Base: 2,000 UK adults 18+ receiving a mailed catalogue in the last 6 months

⁴ Source: Royal Mail MarketReach, The Power of Print Catalogues, Illuminas 2017
Base: 806 UK adults 18+ who bought from the sender of a mailed catalogue in the last 6 months

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ABOUT MARKETREACH: HOW WE CAN HELP

Do you want to get the very best value from your marketing investment in direct mail?
We have a dedicated team of experts with a unique set of skills, tools and services.
We have what it takes to help you:

- Plan the delivery of your campaign
- Ensure effectiveness and efficiency
- Improve your results and return

You'll also get access to research and insight tools, data planning, workshops and much more – all in a one stop shop. Our services are completely free of charge because we're 100% confident in the commercial value that great mail generates.

Call us on **0333 456 1395** or visit marketreach.co.uk



As the UK's leading expert on the power of mail, we help organisations to achieve their goals by unleashing the magic of mail.

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For more information, visit [marketreach.co.uk](https://www.marketreach.co.uk)

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