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19 Ways To Get Your Product In Front Of Retailers

If you're ready to get your product in a big name store, you have to get creative and know how.

Scott Gerber

Founder, The Young Entrepreneur Council (YEC)

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JUNE 03, 2011 *Recently I was asked by Winifred of California: How can a small business get its product in front of retailers?*

owner/inventor get their product into retail stores, particularly national re

Below are answers from the **Young Entrepreneur Council**, a nonprofit orga provides young entrepreneurs with access to tools, mentorship, communi resources that support each stage of their business's development and gro



What do you do if customers aren't converting on your w

Respond

1. Develop a retail pitch plan

Gain access to national retail chains by developing a quick and dirty retail li like to approach. Make sure that your product aligns with their current mer Then reach out to buyers and distributors and share a pitch package that in letter, press kit, and product samples.



- **Erica Nicole**, *YFS Magazine: Young, Fabulous & Self Employed*

2. Get straight to the point

Buyers from national retail chains will only give you a limited time to pitch y

is imperative to be well prepared with a concise presentation. Skip the story straight to the point. Provide critical data on your products—price points, production capabilities, and data on consumer needs.



- *Anthony Saladino, Kitchen Cabinet Kings*

3. Know their needs

You'll have an advantage if you do your research to know what stores carry your products. It's also good to find the chains that don't know they need your type. Regardless of whichever situation it is, understand how the stores would benefit. Be sure they realize it as well.



- *Logan Lenz, Endagon*

4. Brand yourself

One of the best ways to get into national chains is to build a solid following on social media sites, before you ever go in for your first meeting. Make a name for yourself, build brand equity before you step foot in their building.



- *Kris Ruby, Ruby Media Group*

5. Sell at independents

Start small and sell at independent shops and even Web shops. The more you get the better, creating legitimacy for your product, so you can approach and say, "I sell 10,000 widgets a day, perhaps you'd like to sell them, too?"



- *Danny Wong, Blank Label Group, Inc.*

6. Reach out to the gatekeepers

Networking is the fastest path into tight-knit, highly competitive markets. And nothing that gets attention faster than a personal introduction. Sometimes gatekeepers are easier to reach than you might expect and may only be one or two levels away from you. Use LinkedIn and other platforms to discover how your contacts can help you reach the gatekeeper's center of attention.



- *Kent Healy, The Uncommon Life*

7. Slow and steady wins the race

Start off with growing your business and building your brand, get the product in local stores before going national. Make sure your business is ready for the low volumes they will demand from you just to be in a "national" store. Once your company can support that structure work through regional managers and then work your way up the ladder.



- *Jerry Piscitelli, Portopong LLC*

8. Does my product need to be in retail stores?

I don't have a product that would sit on a retail shelf, but I deal with hundreds of years of experience that setting your product on a retail shelf only makes it harder for you to sell. The Internet is such a huge place and offers so many opportunities to sell a product that is overwhelmingly successful.



- *Jason Sadler, IWearYourShirt.com*

9. Prove yourself

The biggest issue for many retail chains dealing with a small business is whether they are going to be able to keep up. That's why many businesses start by supplying a small number of products. It's not impossible to skip that step, but you have to be able to show that you can keep up with demand and handle working with a big chain.



- *Thursday Bram, Hyper Modern Consulting*

10. Eat and sleep with procurement

Most retailers, especially the national ones, would have a procurement/ buying department. These are the people who decide what to buy, from whom, and at what price. Individual stores have very little say in such decisions, so your best bet is to be best friends with the procurement folks at the retailers.



- *Devesh Dwivedi, breakingthe9to5jail.com*

11. Conduct interviews

Schedule non-sales informational interviews with key decision makers. Offer lunch or invite them to an industry related event. Prepare 3-7 key questions for the process from a purely information place. Learn all you can and apply it. Be positioned to approach them with a well thought-out plan.



- *Lisa Nicole Bell, [Inspired Life Media Group](http://InspiredLifeMediaGroup.com)*

12. Try, try again

Every industry and product is different, but the one constant is those with passion consistently have better odds of success. Try every angle, meet every person who can help you succeed and I promise you your passion will be rewarded eventually.



- *Timothy Sykes, TimothySykes.com*

13. Guarantee success

Tell stores you'll guarantee sales—it is no risk for them by letting you go in to it until your product sells out. Start with one store, sell it out, go to the second most important to build that buzz/confidence with retailers so they invest in your product themselves into the other stores.



- *Alejandro Velez, [Back to the Roots](#)*

14. Find the right distributor

Distributors already have relationships with the large retailers. Put them to their relationships to place your products. Large retailers don't like to waste someone who knows the system. Find a distribution partner who understands the customer you are targeting and has the relationships with retailers that serve that market.



- *Brad Kendall, Digihedron*

15. Creating comfortable relationships

It's all in the pitch and doing due diligence to know who you will be presenting to. For example, for the brand Vision Vodka, I watch my team prepare for meetings with different types of retailers to take our product. Most liquor stores are mom and pops and only care about how the product looks. They put it in front of them and if they feel confident the product will move.



- *Michael Sinensky, Village Pourhouse*

16. Big margins, quick Turnover, small footprint

The best retail products have the highest margins, fastest turnover and small footprint. That means they make a lot of money selling your product tons of times over in a small area. If you don't have a product with that criteria you don't have a product



- *Lucas Sommer, Audimated*

17. Create a YouTube video tailored to one person

I know an author of a book who convinced a national publisher to sign him. He created a well thought out video as to why they need that book. This video was tailored to one person only and it was clear it took him some time to do. Needless to say he got the attention and got in the door. Sometimes the hardest part is getting in the door. It can be a good way to get through.



- *David Schnurman, Lawline*

18. Be unique and different

I was able to get into national retail chains with my first business because I was the only one else had. We sold customized sports apparel. We knew what the market was and they were our custom designs they were only able to buy them from our company.



- ***Doug Fath, Faithful Investments, LLC & Wealthy Passion Corporation***

19. Don't be afraid to reach out and sell yourself

Don't be afraid to research who the appropriate point of contact is for the retailer and pursue them! Call their office, e-mail them, find out when they are reviewing what they look for in products and their placement, and any special programs they have throughout the year that are applicable to you whereby they highlight your product even if just on a trial basis.



- ***Lauren Maillian Bias, Luxury Market Branding***

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 **Kelly Johnson** *Founder, Part Distribution LLC*

It's also good to reduce your cost of goods as much as possible so that you have enough wiggle room cut in the retailer and even a distributor. Never think your manufacturer is giving you the best price, you will be surprised how much lower priced a different manufacturer can be. Mr. Kelly Johnson Cost Reduction PartDistribution.com

 **Mohammed Nizam** *Sales Executive, Graphic International Centre LLC*

its really helpful,

 **Derek Tigges**

This is very helpful. In my opinion it is also good to use your own network. Both offline and online, your network can help you connect with the right retailer. There is always someone who knows a guy... etc. If you have a network like you and your product, there is a big chance that they will stand for you and help you out. Indeed the strongest marketing tool. Next to that, practice your sales pitch. Not only to make it perfect but to build confidence and get input from people you know (or people you don't know). Derek Tigges - Creative men's fashion brand) www.facebook.com/dereksfashion

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