

AMAZON FBA

BLACKBOOK

Everything You Need To Know to
Start Your Amazon Business Empire



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Amazon FBA Blackbook

**Everything You Need to Know to
Start Your Amazon Business
Empire**

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Introduction

So you hear the calling. Amazon, the king of online retail, calls to you. You see a great opportunity here, because Amazon is already the biggest in the market, and will continue to dominate. There are so many who want to jump on this bandwagon and enjoy the benefits of selling on Amazon.

You're among these people, and you want to set up a business without investing too much capital. But you don't know how to go about it. Well, that's what this book is for.

First of all, thank you for downloading "Amazon FBA Blackbook: Everything You Need to Know to Start Your Amazon Business Empire". In this book, we will see how you can start your very own Amazon trading business in no time and with minimal capital. I will show you the power of Amazon, and how you can use it to your advantage.

Unlike those "Get Rich Quick" books you find on the Internet all the time (which are total gimmicks, by the way), this book contains actual strategies used by thousands of people. Yes, you will have to put in some efforts, but it will be worth the pay-off, trust me. People have created million dollar empires with these strategies, and so can you.

So let's get started.

Chapter 1: Amazon Is the Best Place to Sell

Sellers have a lot of choices these days because so many online retail websites have popped up in the market. People can sell their material through so many platforms and make a quick buck by selling off their old stuff. You can also start a serious business if that's what you want. Most of these e-commerce platforms don't care either way. So making a choice between popular ones can be difficult.

If you're in for serious business, though, Amazon is the best choice for you. There are so many things Amazon makes easy for you. Here are some convincing reasons why Amazon is the best place to start your e-retail business:

Great Pricing: Amazon gives its sellers the most competitive prices in the market. Amazon's ASP, or Average Selling Price, for most items is higher than most other similar sites, especially for the items it sells through FBA (Fulfillment by Amazon). Another great thing at Amazon is that customers that show up on there are looking for options and ease of shopping, not for the lowest prices or very unique products.

Simplicity: The interface Amazon provides to its sellers is known for its elegance and simplicity, much like its customer platform. It's much more efficient and professionally competent when compared to that of so many other e-retail platforms. With Amazon, things are so much easier for you because you don't have to work with multiple third party platforms like PayPal. 9 out of 19 times, you can even get rid of most of your duties, like listing the product, managing your fees, getting products shipped, and shooting high quality photos for your products. Amazon makes everything in the trade work for you.

Visibility: It's much harder for small sellers to get visibility for themselves and their products on most e-retail platforms. They start out as a tiny part of this huge system, and it's really difficult to get

to the top. Amazon gives small sellers much better visibility than any other platform. This is because Amazon uses a rotating search algorithm, which keeps shuffling search results for customers from time to time, giving new sellers better exposure. If you can afford to, you can even buy sponsored links, which will drive much more traffic toward your products and boost your sales. You'll make healthy sales if you have a solid product.

Listing Fee: Most people who have worked in this business before have a fair idea about the margins. They're really tight, aren't they? That's the main reason why every seller wants to minimize his listing fees. Once again, Amazon comes to your aid and saves you money. On Amazon, you don't have to pay any listing fee at all for most items. Some special types still require a listing fee, but it's so minimal compared to other platforms that you'll gladly pay it. This helps you keep your inventory flexible because your upfront costs are minimized.

Easy Order Fulfillment: Most e-retail platforms don't care about your shipping needs and how you're going to be able to ship your products to the customers on time. Amazon is different, and it makes *your* headache its own! If you want, Amazon can take care of all your orders and fulfill them for you. You don't have to work hard to fulfill orders yourself or maintain links with fulfillment partners. Amazon takes care of it for you, making your job much easier and the system running more smoothly.

Overhead Costs: Overhead costs are inevitable in any business, and every seller wants to minimize them. Amazon emerges as a champion for the sellers here, too. It helps you cut down your overhead costs in so many ways. You don't have to spend on getting high-resolution photos for your products, pay any listing fee or maintenance cost most of the times. You even save up on communication time. This makes Amazon one of the cheapest platforms available today.

Growth Prospects: Amazon leads the e-retail industry and it will continue to do so for the foreseeable future because of its efficiency and love for innovation. The market is expanding and

Amazon will continue to grab a big part of it, thereby maximizing your exposure. This is the place for you to grow.

Integration: If you're among those people who don't want to deal with the trouble of interacting with a payment provider like PayPal, market research provider like TeraPeak, fulfillment partner like ShipWire or Fulfillrite, and don't want to choose what tools and listing formats to use, you should go with Amazon. It makes everything streamlined and easy to access for you without you having to make a lot of hard choices. You can do away with learning how to navigate through all these different services and manage everything from a single interface. You have full integration with all sorts of services, and everything can be controlled from your Amazon account.

Stability: Amazon has one of the most stable and efficient interfaces. It functions smoothly and isn't prone to frequent changes, so you don't have to go through a learning curve every so often. So many other platforms keep changing their interface and workflows just to seem dynamic, but that can pose a problem to sellers. Amazon is very stable, so you don't have to worry too much about the constantly changing demographics, marketplace rules, fees, and features.

Chapter 2: The Importance of Private Labeling

Private labeling is very popular at the moment, so you might've heard of it most probably. Most online retailers use private labeling for their products these days. This gives the products a unique identity that showcases the seller's brand. Private labeling also helps in marketing the product better and creating a reputation for your brand. But how does it all happen?

First, you buy the products from a supplier to sell them under your brand name. You don't actually manufacture them, which is the conventional way of doing business. You create a private brand and then put all the bought products under that brand so you can resell them. For this, you need to get custom logos printed on the items and their packages, and get the previous brand identities (if any) removed. This ensures that the customer will associate the product with *your* brand, not with that of the manufacturer. This strategy is extremely popular right now and most online sellers use it. You can find companies that will help you in creating your own brand identity. They'll advise you on extending, promoting, and positioning your brand in the market, so you can make the best of it. J&D Consortium is a good example of such a company.

Let me tell you how a private label brand on your products helps your business.

Easier to handle: Trading is easier than manufacturing, that's pretty obvious. There's a lot less trouble in comparison, so throw away any misconceptions you might have about private labeling. Some people believe that selling products you manufacture yourself is the only way to roll and that private label products don't sell. Let me tell you that nothing could be further from the truth. As long as you have a good quality product that you're selling at a fair price, nobody cares who manufactured it. Avoid huge costs and sell under a private label, it's a wise decision.

Modification: With private labeling rights, you can make some modifications to the products according to your needs and wishes. This means you can make your products unique without having to come up with groundbreaking product ideas. Take products already existing in the market and make small changes to them to give them a personality. Private labeling is different from reselling, as reselling rights don't allow you to make any modifications, which isn't the case with private labeling rights. So come up with new ideas and incorporate them into your product design. It's your product, do what you want!

Customer Satisfaction: Private labeling makes things easier for you by removing steps in your business journey. First of all, when you do private labeling, you won't need to spend time on product conceptualization, which is pretty difficult by the way. Even if you come up with a good product concept, someone will do it better than you in all probability, and you'll have to start over again. There are many giants in almost every industry niche, so it's futile to try and beat them at their own game. Instead, just buy the products and give them your personal brand. This way, you can concentrate on other important things, like customer satisfaction. Your maximum attention will go to your customers, because you don't have to worry about stuff like personnel management, product planning, efficiency control, and other big tasks.

Riding the Bandwagon: When you introduce a new product in the market, it's always risky. New ideas tend to be like that in nature. They'll either be super flop or super hit most of the times, and one can never be sure. A high margin of error makes things expensive and difficult for the manufacturer if the product fails. It's not the road for everyone. Private labeling, however, is much easier. You don't have to worry about losing money since you can pick an already popular product and sell it under your private label brand to benefit from its popularity. You'll get a customer base with minimal effort, and without having to spend much money on promotion.

How to Choose the Best Private Label Products for Amazon FBA

One of the most popular practices for selling on Amazon FBA is private label products but the problem that most people struggle with is working out which products to sell, what the best ones are to build up their own brand around. There are people who choose the complicated route, choosing items that need a lot of modification and cost a fortune to produce and there are those who choose the easier route.

The first question to ask yourself is why you are choosing private labelling. Most people choose to use Amazon to create their brand are those who are fed up with trying to find decent goods on EBay that they can flip on Amazon for a profit, or vice versa. Reselling is not a good game to get into – it might bring you a little extra cash but it will never be a stable income and there is a lot of work involved.

Private label products give you the best chance at a consistent and relatively passive income while keeping labor and time to a minimum as well as overheads. Most people can see the real benefits to building their brand around private label products, without the need to keep on looking for new ones to keep the money rolling in. However, there is one huge hurdle that stands in their way of true success – unnecessary complication.

Keep it Simple

It is easy to see the benefits of brand building but the more complex a product you choose, the more work has to be put into it and that should lead to a much higher chance of generating revenue. Ok, that may be true; after all, the iPhone is far more valuable than a pack of plastic food containers but building a new iPhone does not mean that people are going to buy it. The most success, the most money you make, will come from simple items.

When it comes down to the crunch, the best private label products to build your brand around are simple and, if you flow these rules, you will find it works. Ask yourself these questions before you put your money down on a particular product:

- **Is it evergreen?** Will your customer keep on coming back to it, time and time again? Think about things like shampoo or conditioner – items that people will buy over and again.
- **Is your product one that people are looking for?** Imagine that you just blew a couple of thousand dollars on a product, branded it and then found that nobody is actually looking for that particular product. Not just your actual brand, but the product type itself. How would you feel? Gutted? Stupid? Do your homework first. There is an easy way to find out what people are looking for on Amazon, before you lay out your life savings and that is to run a keyword search on Amazon. You can do this by typing in specific keywords to the search bar on Amazon and see what the results are or you can use one of the many automatic tools to search for you. Some of these tools will tell you what has been searched for on specific listings and others will identify market gaps that you can think about jumping into.

- **Does your product have tons of competition?** If you choose a product that is extremely common on Amazon, you might struggle to get your foot in the door. However, there are quite a few products that are lacking in competition and these are the ones that you should look at. Even if the item does have competition, consider if you can come up with something the competition can't, like providing multiples.
- **How easy and cheap is the product to produce?** You do not need to sell expensive items that cost a fortune to make and involve a lot of modification. It's better to sell 15 units of plastic container packs a day at \$20 each than it is to sell a phone once in a while that as an extremely low profit margin.
- **Is there any proven sales data against this product?** One step that many people skip over is testing their Amazon listing with retail store products, before choosing to place a bulk order. This is an important step, one that will prove if your product will sell before you start the expensive step of sourcing your product from a manufacturer.

Really, there is nothing too scientific or difficult about this. The very best products to sell private label are simple ones. Items that will stand the test of time, products that people come back to time and time again.

5 More Rules for Private Label Selling on Amazon FBA

By now, you should already know how to get going with private label selling on Amazon FBA. However, there are still those that think it is going to be a simple job and that they can make money instantly. The following are the five most important rules to private label selling on Amazon:

You Need Capital

This is the most important rule – you cannot make money with private label selling unless you have the capital to lay out in the first place. You can't buy your stock, build your brand, and design your packaging, without having a lot of capital to start off with. Creating your very own private label is NOT the same as finding a resell product to flip on Amazon. You need the money to buy your product in bulk, to pay for any modifications that you might want and that is not free. Initially, your suppliers are not going to give you the best deal on your chosen product and they certainly won't build any prototypes for you unless you are going to purchase vast quantities – that means money, a lot of it. If you don't have it or are not prepared to pay out, go away and find another avenue because you will be wasting your time.

You Are Not Going to Get Any Quick Wins

There is a big difference between the person who resells on Amazon and those who come up with their own products and brands. Those who do the latter are building up an asset, something that will bring the money in for the foreseeable future, whereas a reseller is simply making immediate money and will need to go off and find another product to sell afterwards.

There is a world of difference between these two types of personality. Everyone wants to make money but the person who builds an asset knows that, even if their product only draws in an extra couple of hundred dollars a month, it is far superior and lasts a lot longer than the person who flips an expensive item. Why is this?

Assets are always the better option than just having the know-how to flip a single product. Assets have a more sustainable value, they will last through time. It is far better to have 10 assets worth, let's say \$500, making you a potential \$5000 per month, every month, than resell products that you flip once and they're gone.

Know Who Your Customers Are and Keep Your Risks Low

One of the most profitable ways to have success with a private label product is to know exactly who your customers are and to understand them. And the best way to understand your customers is to use Amazon Sponsored Ads.

The stupidest thing to do would be to pick a product, talk to your supplier, buy a whole load and stick it on Amazon expecting to make a ton of money. It can work but it is very rare. You need to keep your risks low when you are creating your private label product. Use Amazon Sponsored Ads to test out your product to ensure that this is something people really want and will dig into their wallets for. You need to shift your mindset for this but learn how to use these sponsored ads to your advantage before you pay out for something you can't shift.

You Are Not an Amazon Reseller So Stop Thinking Like One

Lots of people get into trouble by thinking like an Amazon reseller and not like a private label seller. To be successful and to run a real business you have to spend time building your brand and your assets. The assets you

build up are going to generate money with very little involvement from you. A reseller has to start again every week or month, looking for that next big product to flip, processing their shipments and everything else that goes with it. A private label seller who has done their homework can build something that is much bigger than they are, something that lasts for the long term.

Don't Forget to Build on the Success of Your Work

Last, and most important, build on your success. The money that you earn from your product needs to go into creating another one and sustaining it. It is so tempting to take your earnings and spend it but like anything, the more you put back in, the more you will get out.

To be successful at selling private label products, you have to keep in mind that they are not easy to create and it will be a very rare person who hits the home run the first time round. Don't despair; do your homework and test out your products before you buy them and start small. Build your business as you go and, if you do it right, you will eventually have a stable of assets that consistently generate revenue with little input from you.

These reasons are more than good enough to convince you. As an online retailer, you should definitely consider private labeling, as it will take your business to the next level much faster.

Now, let's discuss how you can start your business with Amazon.

Chapter 3: Setting up a Seller Account

Amazon gives you a big opportunity to make money online by selling there. You can earn some extra income from it, or you can even quit your job and set up a full time business on Amazon if you want to. It gives you a lot of freedom and you can take out more than what you put into it.

Let me list down some of the benefits of selling on Amazon:

- Flexible work schedule and freedom of work
- Financial security
- Good returns on your investments
- More free time to enjoy the things you love doing
- Experience to carry out bigger projects in future

It's so easy that pretty much anyone can learn to do it, and that's the best thing about it. You have control over how profitable your business will be. Your efficacy in applying the strategies mentioned would decide how successful you are. Gradually, you will also learn the ins and OUTs of the trade, and this will boost your income further. All of that, however, comes later. Right now, we must start with some baby steps. Creating an Amazon Seller Central account is your first step to starting your business.

The process is pretty straightforward. Amazon has given helpful tips to get you through it easily, and you don't need to follow anything else. I'll simplify the process for you here:

- 1) Open the following URL in your web browser" sellercentral.amazon.com.
- 2) There will be a login page. When you click on the "Register Now" button on the login panel, it will take you to a different page.
- 3) The first thing you have to do here is to choose whether you will be selling as an "Individual" or as a "Professional. Let's take a look at the differences between these two.

- a) An Individual seller can only sell a maximum of 40 items in a month. A Professional seller, on the other hand, can sell any number of items in a month. There are no restrictions.
 - b) An Individual seller is charged a commission of 99 cents on each item that he sells. There's no monthly fee in this case. As opposed to that, a Professional seller pays a monthly fee of \$39.99. In both the cases, you may have to pay some additional fees at times, like referral fees & variable closing fees.
 - c) Professional sellers can sell items in all categories available on Amazon. Individual sellers can't do that. They're allowed to sell in only limited number of categories. So it's advisable that you go with the "Professional" plan for your business.
- 4) Once you choose a plan, you will have to read a seller agreement and sign it.
 - 5) Print out this agreement before you go any further. This will help you iron out any issues in the future. Once you've read it, agree to the terms and conditions, and then proceed further.
 - 6) In the next window, you will need to fill in some important information, like your credit card details, billing address, seller name, and your business address.
 - 7) After this, you will need to verify your identity. A PIN will be given to you through a text or a phone-call on a number that you provide them. This is a standard procedure which many sites follow.
 - 8) A Professional seller also has to provide the necessary tax information to Amazon in order to proceed.
 - 9) Once you've provided your tax information, the registration procedure will be complete and you'll be taken to the home page of your Seller Central account. From here, you can manage all activities in your account.

There are several tabs in the top navigation bar of your home page. Let me give you a walk-through of these tabs.

- Inventory: You can add new products and manage existing ones from here.
- Reports: This tab lets you view all your payment reports and tax info.
- Orders: Check all the received orders and handle all the returns from here.
- Performance: All the feedback you receive from customers is shown here along with any claims made by them and other performance related information.
- Settings: In this tab, you can change any account information.

Setting up Your Seller Profile

When your account has been activated, you will need to complete your public profile. This is what prospective customers will look at so consider it as the Amazon version of your Facebook or Twitter profile. Your customers will get to know who you are, what your business is all about and what you offer in terms of shipping. They will see your returns policy; they can see feedback from other customers and much more besides.

The main parts of your profile that you should concentrate on are:

- *About Seller*

This section is where you get to introduce yourself and your business to your customers. You need to tell people exactly who you are, how your business started, what was the inspiration behind it. Talk about your business philosophy, what you want to achieve and offer to your customers and tell them anything else that is relevant. You are trying to create a connection to your customers and you need to be as transparent as possible. This will help to build up trust and your customers will be more likely to choose you over your competition.

- *Your Logo*

Prospective customers will be able to see your logo in a number of places, including the Offer Listing page, on your storefront and on your At a Glance page. Keep your logo to 120 x 30 pixels and do not include any URLs or references to your website in it.

- *Your Return and Refunds Policies*

Give your customers full instructions on how they can return items for a refund or a replacement. Let them know the address they need to send returns to and tell them approximately how long it will take you to process

a refund or send out a replacement product. When you are setting up your policies do bear in mind that Amazon has a requirement that all sellers allow customers to return goods for a minimum period of 30 days after the sale.

With this information in hand, you can create your Amazon Seller Central account, start listing your products and making money!

Chapter 4: Picking a Great Product

This is possibly the most important step in the whole process. It will all be for naught if you fail to choose a killer product. Why is it so important? Simply because the only way for your business to succeed is for you to pick a product that sells well. For a product to sell more, it has to be marketable. Without a great product, you can't make your business work.

So what makes a product “great”? Let's take a look at some important factors.

Good Sales Volume

This is an elementary rule of choosing a good product. You want to sell this product, so you need to make sure it is selling well in the market. If you pick a niche product that only sells a couple of units every month, you won't be profiting from it at all. There is too much competition in the market, so you must pick a product that is selling big. But it's also important that you make sure there are no big players in the market already selling that product. These sellers tend to dominate the markets they're selling in, taking up most of the market share by selling at low margins. This is because they enjoy the economies of large scale that small sellers can't.

Attractive Pricing

If you're familiar with a behavioral concept called **impulsive buying**, you must know how important it is to put the right price on your product. For that, you need to pick a product that falls into the right price bracket. It should be priced high enough that people don't think of it as a useless trinket, but should be cheap enough that people feel the urge to buy it as soon as they see the price. This is what we call impulsive buying. When the customer thinks the price isn't too high, she doesn't consider making comparisons with similar products, which gives you a competitive advantage.

Since you have to pay some fees to Amazon, you can't pick a product that is very cheap, because you won't profit from it. The best price range is between \$20 and \$100. If you want to refine it even further, pick a product below \$50.

Niche Product

Extremely generic products won't sell, at least not for your business. So if you were thinking of going with clothes or soap bars, drop the idea. Your products need to be a bit unique, so they can serve a particular niche. Markets of generic products are highly saturated already, and they have big players dominating the field, so you don't want to go there. Instead, what you need to do is target a specific group of customers, a group that isn't too big or too small, but just the right size to give you profitable returns. Sell a product that people don't easily find in supermarkets or malls in every city, something that isn't mainstream.

Non-Seasonal Product

You want to make year round sales? Don't pick a seasonal product, simple. You'll be amazed how many people don't consider this before choosing the right product for their business. If you wish to sell throughout the year, pick a product that is not seasonal in nature. Or else, your sales will drop hard when people don't need your product, and it will hurt your business. If you can't do away with a seasonal product, pick a few other products to sell, too, and make sure some of them are non-seasonal. This way, you can keep selling throughout the year.

Necessary Competition

Not all competition is bad competition; realize this before you start selling. A small seller like you cannot afford to spend much on advertising your product, so it's good to have some competition in your market. It's healthy for your business, even advantageous. Being the only player in the market won't benefit you since you won't be able to create awareness for your product in the market.

So pick a product that has a healthy level of competition. This will ensure that you can reap the benefits of your competitors' advertising. At the same time, be wary of oversaturated markets. Too much competition will kill your business, as discussed earlier.

Good Supplier

Good suppliers are indispensable to a business like this. When you have a good supplier, you can trust him to deliver the right goods on time. This will, in turn, ensure that you can fulfill orders on time, and will build your reputation. On the other hand, a bad supplier will be unreliable, which can hurt your business if he doesn't deliver on time.

It's ideal to have a reputed seller for your chosen product(s), and best to have multiple suppliers. That way, you can make sure your sales aren't hampered even if one seller is facing some issue.

Mobility

The mobility of your product is also an important factor. You should pick a product that is easy to ship, because Amazon enforces strict standards when it comes to packaging and shipping. You can run into problems because of this if your product is too fragile, bulky, or easily damageable. There are drop tests in place to check the packaging of most products. This determines whether they are good to be shipped.

Profitability

This is the most obvious one. What's the point of selling a product if you can't profit from it, right? In the end, you're in the business to make profit, and without a profitable product, you can't do this. So make sure the product you choose to sell allows you decent profit margins, even after paying the Amazon fees.

Now that we've taken a look at some of the most important factors in determining what product to sell, you all must be wondering how to find the right product. Let's give you a head start.

The easiest way to start is by looking at the Amazon bestsellers page. This page is updated on an hourly basis, and here you can find the highest selling items on the website. Amazon has complex algorithms in place that give you highly accurate and reliable results. Visit www.amazon.com/gp/bestsellers, and browse for a while. Eventually, you will find a product you can easily brand and start selling.

If this is not enough, you can check other venues, too. There's the Movers & Shakers section, and a Hot New Releases section on the website, both of which tell you about products that are selling well at the moment. Amazon also has wish lists, so you can check in the Most Wished for section to get an idea. Moreover, you can get ideas from the Gift Ideas section, too. Make a small list of products, and then put each one through the parameters we studied above. This will help you pick the best product to sell.

There are other places to look for potential products if you're still not satisfied. Check [eBay](#), [Google shopping](#), and other popular ecommerce websites.

Here's a small checklist of things you should do when deciding on a product:

- Check the demand of the product by going through the bestsellers list or using the Google Keyword Tool.
- Make sure the product isn't seasonal in nature.
- Check that the product is appropriately priced to encourage impulsive buying.
- Check that there are no big players in the market already selling that product.
- Make sure you can easily ship the product.
- See to it that there are good suppliers available for the product.

Viability Checklist

Now, there are those Amazon sellers who seem to be able to judge the market but get nothing else right and still make money. There are also those sellers who get the market terribly wrong but do everything else right and not make a lot of money. That goes to show that the market you are targeting is important but so is getting everything else right. Together with everything else in this chapter, I am giving you another way to make sure that you get the right product and the right market; a way of scoring your choices to see if you should go ahead or call it quits before you lay out any money or time.

The following checklist is easy to use and will help you to determine if your product is viable and if your market is viable. The system will tell you whether you should carry on with your private label venture or keep on searching. Each line has a score beside it – either give yourself that score if you can answer yes or a zero if the answer is no. At the end, we will tally up the points and see where you are at.

Market Viability

Does a National Brand Name Hold Dominance in the Market? Score 5

If your product is in competition with a national brand then, in all honesty, you may as well give up. Let's say you choose to go with cameras; the likes of Nikon and Canon would just rush you into insignificance. Think about going with items such as kitchen accessories or any other kind of accessory where there isn't any national brand name dominating the market

Is the Average Sales Price Somewhere Between \$15 and \$60? Score 5

One vital point to keep in mind is that you need some margin to pay for your marketing. If you sell something that is worth \$50, you will have to do the same amount of work as you would if you were selling items that were no more than \$7 to \$10. Unless you are running a big name department store, you will find it very hard to win the low profit/high volume game.

Is the Sales rank for the Top Three Items Below 10,000? Score 4

When you choose a product to sell, you must make sure that there is sufficient volume to meet the goals you set for income. Don't create a product for which there is little to no demand; it will be a waste of your time and money. Much will depend on the category that you choose and on the time of year but take the following as a guide. Products in the range of 8000 and 10,000 are selling between 4 and 6 products per day; those in the 5000 to 8000 range will sell between 6 and 10, those that rank between 200 and 5000, around 10 to 20 items per day and those that rank below 2000 are selling more per day than you can possibly count.

Do the Top Three Products have 400 or Less Reviews – Score 4

Reviews are extremely important in getting a ranking for your product and in convincing potential customers that they should buy from you and not

from a competitor. While it is possible to get more than 400 reviews, it will take you a great deal of time, effort and, perhaps most importantly, money. If many products have less than 400 reviews, you have a valuable chance to get in there and overtake them, using your excellent marketing skills.

Are There Any Page One Products with 100 or Less Reviews? Score 5

There is money to be made from products that fall outside of the top three positions on page one. It could be that position number 6 or 7 can still earn you a potential \$1000 or more dollars per month and there aren't too many people who would turn their noses up at that, every single month. When there are a reasonable number of products that have 100 or fewer reviews, you have a good chance of getting on page one.

Are There Multiple Keywords for the Market? Score 5

Is your market likely to search for your product using a number of different keywords? The more keywords you have, the better the chance you have at making more sales. For example, if you were selling cutting boards, some people would search using the words "chopping boards". By using good marketing skills, you can end up ranking for several different keywords and raise your sales and your profile significantly.

Are all Pay Per Click Ads in Use? Score 1

Take a look at your competitors – are they on the bottom or the side page PPC ad for long periods? If they are, it means that they are making good money from them and that is another market avenue to explore.

Is There a Product Video on Page One of the Google Search Results for the Top Keyword? Score 3

If there isn't then get yourself busy on making a video. Create yourself a YouTube channel, if you haven't already got on and make some videos of

your product. You could find yourself being ranked on the Google search results and adding links to your videos will send people directly to your product page on Amazon.

Do the Top Three Keywords Have More Than 100,000 Combined Searches? Score 5

You can use a tool like Merchant Word to find this out. Do use it because this is a good way of making sure that there are sufficient searches to make your product viable one

Do The Top Listings Contain Knowledgeable Sellers? Score 4

This might sound somewhat counter-intuitive but if other people are making some money in the market then you know that you can come up with a product that is better, take better photos of those products, write better copy and overtake them in those listings. It is also a validation test to show that there are sales for that particular product.

Can You Add Any Value to Your Product? Score 4

Always look at the negative reviews on your competitors' [ages and see exactly what the customers are complaining about. Use the issues they raise to make your product a better one. For example, could you add an accessory of some kind to your product, maybe bundle two items together or offer good discounts for buying more? Make it something that a prospective customer will see as good value – do not forget, everyone likes to think they are getting something for free or cheaper than anyone else is.

Are the Products That Are in the Market Durable? Score 5

If the products are breakable or not designed to last very long, like things made of glass, they tend to break when they are being shipped. Instead of blaming the shipping company, the customer will always lay the blame at

your feet and give you bad reviews. It isn't your fault but while this continues to happen, your sales will never rise.

Is the Product Easy to Use Without a Complicated Instruction Manual? Score 3

If a buyer doesn't understand how to use your product, it will always be your fault. And, as a reward, they will give you a bad review. If they don't understand something, it will be your fault; if they don't use it properly, your fault. Go back to that cutting board we talked about earlier – a simple product that needs no explanation and no user manual. Compare that to something electronic that might need assembling first and you can see where the problems lie.

Does the Product Lead to More Orders or Reorders? Score 5

Can you resell your product to the same customers over and over? Will they keep on coming back for more? That is the easiest way to grow your business every month.

Can the Product be Given as a Gift? Score 3

The biggest market these days is gift purchasing. If you can get your packaging to look like it is for a gift item, and the product itself is giftable, sales will rise quite significantly. You could find people ordering for themselves and then reordering as gifts for other people.

Is the Product Something that Cannot Easily Be Purchased elsewhere? Score 2

Commodity items, like that ordinary cutting board can be bought anywhere, especially in big chain stores and they are things that most people will buy from their local stores. If you were to make that cutting board into

something special, with features that customers can't get elsewhere, they will come to you to make their purchase.

Product Viability

Does the Product Weigh One Pound or Less? Score 4

The smaller a product is, the lighter it will be, usually. The lighter a product is, the less it costs to ship from your supplier and the lower your Amazon fees will be as well.

Is the Product Small? Score 4

Imagine an item that is about 8 inches by 8 inches by 8 inches; holding your hands together will usually give you an idea of how big this is. Now think about your product; is it bigger than that or smaller? If it is smaller than that, you can probably get yourself into the lowest fee bracket on Amazon, which means more money in your pocket.

Can the Product be More Outstanding with Better Packaging? Score 5

Packaging is a huge part of this business. Good packaging encourages more sales and a higher price. Make your packaging attractive and suitable for the product.

Can You Buy Your Product With Shipping for 20% or Less of the Resale Price? Score 5

Amazon fees add up – their commission is 15% of your sales price, handling fees and packing fees start at \$2.50. If your product has a sales price of \$15, you would lose \$2.25 in commission and about \$2.50 for Amazon fees, leaving you \$10.25 per item. Take off 20% for the cost price of the item and shipping and that leaves you a profit of \$7.25 per item, equating to 47%. That is not bad for working from home in your PJs! If your shipping and costings come in at more than 20% your profit will drop considerably.

Can you Make a First Purchase of 500 Units or Less? Score 4

You do not want to be laying out every penny you have on your initial order but you do need sufficient products in stock to cover promotions and sales until you get enough money together to order more. Ordering too much will kill your profit stone dead.

Is your Product A Good Private Label Product for Amazon?

Add up the points you scored and use the following to determine if you should go ahead or call it a day:

- 0 - 40 points – walk away now, don't look back
- 40 – 50 points – You probably shouldn't do this, it will end up costing you
- 50 to 65 points – you are looking pretty good here, well worth a shot
- More than 65 – what are you waiting for? Get going, now!

This checklist is designed to give you an idea of whether you have the market and the product to make a serious go of Amazon FBA private label selling.

Chapter 5: Finding the Right Suppliers

Once you have one or more products that fit your criteria, you need to start looking for good suppliers for these products. This chapter will focus on how you can find the right supplier for your products in a quick and efficient manner.

The easiest way to do this is to look on www.alibaba.com. Alibaba is a website for traders. This site has a great number of manufacturers and suppliers of all sorts of products. You'll find sellers from pretty much everywhere in the world who trade in a wide variety of goods. Traders can contact them through the website and import products. You can still use Trade magazines to find suppliers and manufacturers, as we used to do before the Internet, but Alibaba is definitely the easiest way to do this. It also gives you a lot of choice among sellers.

When you have decided which product(s) you want to sell, you can go and find them on Alibaba. There will be plenty of suppliers for each product. It's not rare to find hundreds or even thousands of suppliers for a product, which makes choosing one supplier very difficult. Oh, the paradox of choice. I'll tell you something though – all of them are not relevant to you. So you can skip the irrelevant ones and narrow down your search by using the appropriate search filters.

Let's get you up to speed on some basics. Suppliers with a good reputation on the website are given the "Gold Supplier" tag. You can check under the supplier details how long a supplier has held that status. Then there are suppliers who are verified by Alibaba or a third party. Their factory or store has been visited by authorized personnel, and they are listed under the "Onsite Check" filter. If a supplier has been inspected by a third party

inspection company, they will be shown under the “Assessed Supplier” filter. If you wish to see the inspection report, that’s available for you, too. An “Escrow” feature is available to ensure safe online payments, which makes sure payment is withheld to the supplier until safe delivery of goods has been made.

Using these filters will narrow down your search results a great deal. Even so, you’ll have a lot of options to go through. What you should do from here on is check the pricing and minimum units selling policy of each seller. In most cases, you’ll find that these numbers are negotiable, so contact a few sellers before you decide to settle on one.

Start with 6 suppliers. Contact each of them and let them know what your requirements are. Before you start negotiating the price and minimum order size with them, try and get a sample from suppliers. Your aim is to minimize price per unit without having to buy large quantities at once.

Discuss private labeling with them and let them know how you wish to brand the products. This is important because you want to create a brand identity for yourself in the market. Always ask the supplier beforehand whether they are willing to brand the products with your private label for you.

Avoid sellers who don’t respond to your emails and messages in a timely manner. Shoddy customer service isn’t something you need to deal with.

Here are some tips to help you through the process:

- 1) Understand that finding the right supplier takes some time. There will be a fair amount of hit and trial before you settle on a supplier, so don’t waste time looking for the perfect match. Try to quickly get samples from a few good suppliers instead.
- 2) You will probably settle on one supplier in the future, but you have to start with multiple suppliers in the beginning.
- 3) Alibaba has a sister site: www.aliexpress.com. Here, you can place smaller orders and get samples to test.

- 4) Treat your samples as your investment. Instead of selling them on Amazon, put them through some rough tests and see how durable they are. You don't want unsatisfied customers, so it's important that you do this.
- 5) Placing a big first order isn't necessary. There are a lot of factors that determine the size of your initial order: your capital, product demand, price per unit, and other things. Start by ordering few units from Aliexpress if you need to.
- 6) Even if you have substantial capital to begin with, don't place a big order when you start. You need to do some market testing first, which will help you ascertain the profitability and demand of the product you're selling. Once you have gauged all that, you can start placing larger orders. This also gives you opportunity to switch suppliers without suffering loss, in case you are unsatisfied by one supplier.
- 7) Your relationship with your supplier(s) will become stronger as your sales increase and become more consistent. You will soon be able to get better quotes from them, and some might even offer additional services like customer service and shipping. This will help you automate much of your business.

Shipment Methods

You may not realize this right now, but choosing the right shipping method will affect your business greatly. It's an important decision that will decide how your business operates. Your initial investment has a big role to play in this decision, along with the availability of workforce. Most sellers start with private shipping or FBA. Whatever you start with though, you should aim to get your products drop shipped once your business picks up pace.

Private Shipping

Many people start with this by turning their garage into a temporary warehouse. If you don't have much capital in the beginning, you can start with private shipping, too. Store your products in your garage when your supplier sends them to you, and ship them to your customers whenever you get an order. When you are just starting out, you don't have many orders, so this approach works well.

It helps you add a personal touch to all your orders. You can add a customized note when packaging your product, thanking the customer for their purchase and telling them a bit more about your brand information. You can add your web address on the note. If your product is good and your packaging efficient, it leaves a good impact on the customer and helps you connect with them emotionally.

For this method to work, you need to be good at time management, because shipping products on time is of paramount importance. Everything will be handled by you personally, which can either be really motivating or really stressful. You need to be able to handle it all well.

Make sure you switch to better methods of shipping once your business has picked up pace.

Fulfillment by Amazon

FBA becomes an efficient way to complete orders once you've started to sell well. It helps you automate part of your business and let Amazon take care of it for you. Amazon charges a small fee in lieu of handling the whole shipping process for you. All you have to do is ship your products to an Amazon warehouse. You can even ask your supplier to ship directly to an Amazon warehouse, which further cuts your costs. This saves you a lot of time and money.

We'll learn more about FBA in an upcoming chapter.

Drop Shipping

Drop shipping is a widely popular method of shipping products right now. It's used by a lot of online retailers all over the world. Products are sent by the suppliers directly to the customers. The trader, i.e. you, has no part in it. This means that you don't have to worry about packaging and shipping the product yourself. If you are a regular customer and bring decent business to a supplier you work with, he will agree to drop ship the items for you. What's more? The supplier might even offer to handle all customer service for you, which automates your business a great deal.

When you build such a relationship with a supplier, your business will evolve to another level of automation. You will only have to manage the front-end of the business, and you can pay attention to things like marketing and brand promotion. The supplier will take care of the back-end for you.

Private Labeling

For most suppliers, adding a private label to the products they sell to you isn't anything out of the ordinary. They'll easily agree to do it for you. In fact, many of them even have ready-made templates for your designs and logos to go on the products. Once you get a logo designed for your brand, you can choose a template and get your logo printed on the product packages. It's a really easy way to create an identity for your brand.

The first thing you need to do is come up with a nice, creative name for your brand, so that the customers can associate your product with it. It's also something to remember your product by. Once you've done that, it's time to get your logo designed. You can create your own logos at websites like www.logoyes.com, or hire a designer to do it for you. Some of the websites where you can look for freelance designers are www.odesk.com, www.elance.com, and www.fiverr.com. There are other websites, too. You can find freelancers who will do this for you at a fairly reasonable price.

The next step is to pick a box design, if needed, and get a UPC code for your product. Ideally, you should also register your trademark with the concerned authority so it can't be copied.

Once you're done with all this, contact your supplier and ask them to print your private label on all your products.

The Importance of Samples

This is an important part for you to take note of. We tell you to get sample of your product but you must be wondering why it is that important to do so. After all, you know what your product looks like; you know how it works so why do you need a sample of it?

Firstly, you may be looking at buying a product that needs a little modification to make it truly original for you. In that case, you need to see how that sample looks, how it works, indeed if it works and if it is what you are looking for.

You should try to order at least three sample of your product if you can, especially if you are making changes. If you are selling in different colors, ask for a sample in each color so you can see how they look. You want to see how the samples are packaged up into your choice of box, to make sure it is right for the product. If you order just one sample and it has just been tossed into the box without any form of padding you wouldn't know if this were a one-off or the way they normally package the goods. Ordering a number of samples will answer that question.

Costings

If you are customizing your product, the price will obviously rise and so will the cost of the samples. Let's say it cost you \$100 for each sample (these are just figures plucked out of the air so don't panic!), you ordered three and paid for shipping. The samples would cost you \$300 and shipping, for arguments sake, \$150 (these are big items – smaller one cost less, obviously). That is a total of \$450 to create and ship your three samples. Now, that might sound like a lot of money just for samples but here is why it is important.

First, you get to see the quality of the product. If you were to just go ahead and buy thousands of units without testing them out, you could find you were potentially selling a piece of poorly made rubbish. Paying the money for the samples gives you the option of seeing what they are like first. Poor products will earn you nothing more than a bunch of requests for refunds and a bad reputation. Second, you can see each variation of the product and see which ones work best and which you could potentially drop. Third, you can test out the product for yourself and that is worth all the money you can spend. At least you will know that the product works and is of quality.

How to Use Your Samples

When you order these samples, the first thing you are doing is checking out the quality but there are a few other things that you can do to get your money's worth out of them. These are the best ways to make use of your samples:

1. Use Them For The Photos For Your Amazon Listing

When your supplier sends you pictures of your product, they are not of the best quality and are certainly not a very good representation of what you are selling. People like to see good clear pictures of a product they are interested in and poor quality image are a big turn-off.

Many customers will use the images to determine if they want to buy the product or not so you need to have the best quality images you can. Using the samples, you can photograph each variation, each color and you can photograph the product from different angles as well. Use a decent quality camera or smartphone to take your photos with and get the best that you can without the need to hire a professional photographer. If you do find that you have to use a professional, you can send one of your samples away and still have a couple left.

2. Make Sure That The Packaging Looks Right

Your suppliers will send you pictures of the packaging but what you see in the picture and what the packaging actually looks like are two different things. In some cases, you may not even know what the packaging is going to look like. The packaging I am talking about here is the material that packs the product in the shipping box.

Let's say that you have ordered a case for the iPad. The case will arrive inside packaging that is inside the shipping box. A box inside a box, if you

like. You need to be aware up front that you can put your own brand and design logo on this packaging, to help build up your own brand awareness; it doesn't have to be plain. Use your samples to work out what you want and how you want them packaged and speak to the supplier about making any changes that you want. Your packaging is the first thing that people see; if it isn't right, they won't have much confidence in the actual product. You can also use that packaging to advertise your own website and generate more traffic and more sales.

3. Use Them To Get Feedback

This is one of the very best things you can do with your samples. Show them to other people your family and friends, and ask for their feedback. As a product owner you will have a certain amount of bias and it is good to get other people's opinions, a fresh set of eyes if you like. Let them have use of the sample for a couple of days and then ask for feedback – constructive not destructive.

There may be something wrong, something tiny that you may not see but an "outsider" would. Get as much of this feedback as you possibly can before you go live with your product. While you are at it, check for yourself that the product does exactly what it is meant to do. This all goes towards validating, not just your product, but also your decision to choose it.

4. Use Them In Your Marketing Strategy

Your marketing strategy is vital to the success of your business and that is just what selling private label products is – a business. Take those photographs of your sample and use them, not just in your listing but also on your website, on your social network pages, anywhere you can think of to advertise. You could even make a short video of the product being

demonstrated for use and then upload it. Use it on your social pages or upload to YouTube. Videos are excellent ways to tempt prospective customers because they can actually see the product being used and they can see how it works and that it definitely does work for the purpose it is intended.

5. Test The Durability of Your Product

Push your product as far as its limits allow you, make sure it is durable and doesn't break at first use. If you are advertising your product as being safe to go in the dishwasher, put your samples in the dishwasher a few times to check it out. If you say it is waterproof, make sure that it is with a few hard water tests. If the product is meant to be safe to wash and then put in a dryer, test it out, make sure it is.

You are almost looking to try to break your product by pushing it to its absolute limit. You have to make sure that the product works as you say it will – if you don't, you will end up with a string of bad reviews and a bad reputation.

6. Check the Specifications

Check and then double check the sample against the product specifications that supplier has given you. If the spec say that the product is 5 inches tall by 10 inches wide, and weighs 5 pounds, check that this is correct. Measure it and weigh it, make sure it the right size and weight. Check all of the specifications to make sure your product is what you – and the supplier – says it is. Your product has to match your advert; it is as simple as that.

7. Test, Test and Test Again

This really cannot be stressed enough – test your sample and test it to destruction if necessary. You need to know its durability, how far it can be pushed, how long it will last and what it can put up with. Make very sure that this product is something that you are happy to invest thousands of dollars

in; a product that you know is of the quality you say it is. When you put your very first order in, you will be taking a massive risk so make sure that it is something worth selling first.

Chapter 6: Listing Your Product on Amazon

Amazon already has product pages for tons of products, but if your product is not present in their catalogs, you can create a product page of your own. All you need to do is upload some good images of your product, write a good description for it, and a name. Hit save and your product page becomes visible in the Amazon catalog. However, this requires you to have a Pro Merchant account first. You don't need the Pro Merchant account to add your own listing for an existing product page.

Assuming you don't have a Pro Merchant subscription, here are the steps to do it.

- 1) Sign in to your Amazon Seller Central account.
- 2) Click on the Settings tab and then click on "Seller Account Information".
- 3) Click on Pro Merchant account.
- 4) Now click on the Inventory tab and select "Manage Your Inventory". Click on the "Create a Product Detail Page" button, which is only visible to subscribers of a Pro Merchant account.
- 5) You will be prompted to pick a category for your product first. Browse the available categories and select one, which you think is appropriate for your product. You can also search for a category by typing in the search box. If there are subcategories, choose the appropriate one.
- 6) Type in your product's name and enter a UPC, ESN or any other identification code for it if you know it. This will identify your product. Fill in all the fields that have an asterisk next to them. Those are mandatory and you can't proceed further without providing that information.
- 7) Now write a good description for your product and upload some high-quality photos of your product.
- 8) Once you've done that, you will be asked to enter the condition of your product, set a price for it, and enter shipping details. It's the same even if you're creating a listing for an existing product.

Most products are already available on Amazon and have a dedicated product page, so remember that and try to look for the product page first. Check under “Find it on Amazon” and if you find a page, simply click on “Sell Yours” to create your own listing for it.

Write a Captivating Sales Description

To make a sale, you first have to sell the *idea* of your product. That's right; the first thing that needs to happen is the customer getting interested in the idea of the product. There needs to be a desire in the mind of the buyer. Once it's there, you need to convince them that your product is the best there is. That's how a sale happens.

With Amazon, the best way you can do this is by writing a great product description. This is a tried and tested way to convince potential buyers that your product is what they need. It's very difficult for a potential customer to ignore your product if you have a product description that appeals to their psychology. So it's important for you to write a powerful product bio that gives your customers the right mental push and make them buy the product.

Let's take a look at some things which make the product description compelling.

Address the customer

We've already discussed that you need to pick a product that targets a niche. The thing about niche audiences is that they are easier to appeal to. You have some idea about what they like and what they don't. Knowing your primary customers is the most important thing for you.

If you want to sell toys for infants or very young kids, you will target women between the ages of 25-40. They're going to be your primary customers typically, so you have to write a product bio keeping them in mind. You need to directly address them in your product description.

To make it appealing to your demographic, you can do a few things. Try and make the description conversational, for a start. This makes your reader

feel like they're talking to you and that you're answering their questions instead of reading a monologue. Also, you should use the word "you" often in your description to address the buyer.

Mention the benefits, not the features

This is an elementary rule of selling anything. Don't concentrate on the features of your product, concentrate on the benefits. The buyer is not interested in knowing what the product can do; she only wants to know how the product will benefit her.

This is basic knowledge, and while it's important to do this, you need to be careful about *how* you do it, too. Start with writing down everything you know about the product. Try and be interesting; be creative and witty. It's okay to write anything good about your product, even things like the color, the material, special features, or ergonomic comfort. Once you've done this, pick the best ones and rewrite them, this time focusing on the user and how it will benefit her.

Technicalities

Try and use a few technical terms in your product description. As long as you don't go overboard, this will work in your favor and authenticate the legitimacy of your product. If you have any patents or copyrights, you should definitely mention them in the bio. It gives you and your product more credibility, and people become more inclined to buy from you.

People like unique and refined products, so mentioned any patents you have on your product at least twice. This ensures that the reader will come across it. This helps to impress the customer and convince him of your product's quality.

Remember never to lie about it, however. This can quickly get you into legal trouble. So don't take the customer to be a fool, and only mention real patents and copyrights.

Impressive wording

You must weave magic with your words. Word your product description impressively, writing in a way that ensnares the reader's senses and persuades them into buying the product. It's not about using big words, but about writing in an impressive manner. You want the customer to feel the need to buy.

Graphic description

With online selling, you have an undeniable drawback. Your customers can't actually hold the product in their hands and check its quality. All they have are the photos of your product, so you need to make sure the photos you upload are as impressive as possible. They should be high quality with appropriate lighting, and should also capture the product from multiple angles. Be sure to highlight every physical feature of the product with all the important angles.

Accompany this with a pictographic description, talking about the details of the product in the photos and embellishing on them.

Formatting

You must've heard how important formatting is to writing good text. It makes a great deal of difference in how the customer perceives your product, so you have to pay close attention to it. Make the description as pleasant to read as possible. Here are a few tips:

- Use professional looking fonts that have appropriate spacing and no unnecessary curves. It should look good in a sales description and shouldn't have designer elements.
- Use bullet points efficiently. Place them at multiple places in the text so the reader can digest the text in small bites and get the general overview even without reading the whole thing.
- Leave some white spaces between paragraphs. This makes them more readable and makes them seem easier to digest.

Highlighting

There are readers who carefully read the whole description and there are others who don't even read the bullet points properly. Sadly, there are a lot of latter ones, and this can hurt your sales if you don't take care of it. Once you've written your product description, take a look at it after a break. Mark the most important parts in it and then highlight them. You can do so by making them bold and bigger in size. The point is to make them stand out so they catch the customer's attention, even if she doesn't read most of the description. This is best to target readers who are impatient and tend not to read the product bio.

Proof

You need to give your customers some proof that people actually like using your product in order to make them believe that your product is reliable and worth its price. The best way to do is by showing testimonials from your past customers. Place these testimonials in the product description. If you have five star ratings and reviews, that also helps your reputation. Once the customers see all this, they feel like your product is reliable and that they're making an informed decision buying your product. So don't forget to provide the proof to the customers.

No nonsense

Don't give unnecessary information in your sales description. The customers don't need to read it, and it only contributes to adding noise to your description. Understand that people have busy lives and don't appreciate reading unnecessary details. Less is more, remember that. Revise your product description multiple times before publishing it, and take out useless information from it each time. Make sure you use impeccable grammar and spellings.

Outsourcing and supervision

If you're getting it written from an outside source, make sure you supervise it. Outsourcing work isn't a bad thing, but it's important to keep a check on the efficiency. Read the description(s) multiple times before posting them and make sure they are well written.

Chapter 7: Sending the Product for FBA

This chapter will discuss FBA in detail. Let's take a look at how you can use it to your advantage.

What is FBA?

FBA, or Fulfillment by Amazon, is an easy way to get your products delivered to your customers. You just have to send the products you list on the website to an Amazon warehouse, and they take it from there. Amazon gives your products more visibility, and it's an easy way to earn more. You don't have to deal with the trouble of packaging and shipping, and you get Amazon's name backing your product.

Amazon has various Amazon Fulfillment Centers set up at many places in the country, and all you have to do is send your inventory to these centers. You have to pay for the storage and handling of products. Whenever you receive an order, Amazon will take care of the packaging and shipping for you. When it's delivered to the customer, you'll get a notification from Amazon. Even most of the customer service is handled by Amazon if any issue arises. This helps you take your business to higher levels without putting in too much effort.

Benefits of FBA

For growing sellers, FBA is really beneficial. Here are some of the main benefits of FBA:

- 1) Items can be shipped to customers at any time with FBA. You don't have to worry about anything related to handling, shipping, and returns. Amazon does it for you, working 24-7 to make sure your products reach the customers on time and that your customers have the best experience. You don't even have to print shipping labels for your packages. All you have to do is monitor your inventory levels so you can send in more stock when it's needed.
- 2) You can make use of Amazon's world-class shipping centers if you opt for FBA. Your customers get to enjoy options like low cost shipping, free shipping, and one day shipping without any additional headache to you, thanks to Amazon.
- 3) Your losses and damages are greatly reduced. This is because you're working with the most trusted ecommerce platform. Amazon's customer satisfaction rates are the highest, and they take pride in it. When you use FBA, your goods become more than your goods. They become Amazon's property for the time being, and Amazon treats them as such. Their process of order processing and inventory tracking is very automated, so you don't need to worry about your merchandise getting lost or damaged. Amazon is very efficient.
- 4) Your customers are more satisfied because they get quick deliveries with great packaging.
- 5) You attract more buyers with FBA. This is because Amazon is a huge platform and knows well how to appeal to the customers. Amazon FBA merchants enjoy greater visibility because their products are advertised to the top buyers and the Prime buyers. The latter group gets a lot of offers from Amazon, and they have a much smoother buying experience, so they choose to spend much more than your average buyer.
- 6) Many online shoppers choose to search for relevant products directly through Amazon instead of using a search engine. This gives Amazon sellers a huge advantage over the others.
- 7) Once you decide on FBA, you will no longer be held by limitations of small scale. You won't be crippled by poor logistics. Amazon will provide you the best logistics there can be, and it will level the playing field for you. This will help you grow your business rapidly and spend more time on marketing and promotional activities.
- 8) FBA products are the ones that are mostly advertised to the Amazon Prime members. They get exclusive discounts on these products, which boosts the sales. This is very beneficial for you and your business.

How FBA Functions

Understanding FBA and its functioning is really easy. All you have to do is send your inventory to an Amazon Fulfillment Center, and from there onwards, the Amazon people take care of it. They'll handle all the back-end operations. They do everything from storing inventory to fulfilling orders to handling customer support and order returns. They're very consistent about it, which improves your reliability as a seller. It's totally up to you how much you want to store, according to your finances.

Here's how you register for FBA:

- 1) Open the following URL on your web browser: www.amazon.com/fba.
- 2) Click on "Get Started".
- 3) You don't have to register for a Seller Central account since you already have one. You just have to select "Add FBA to your account".
- 4) Then log into your Seller Central account and check the Inventory tab.
- 5) Click on the "Manage Inventory" option and choose which products you would like to list for FBA. There's a checkbox next to each product and you can mark it to list it for FBA.
- 6) Once you've selected all products you want to list, click on the Actions drop-down menu, and select "Change to Fulfilled by Amazon".
- 7) On the next page, click on "Convert".

After this, you have to ready your stock and send it to an Amazon Fulfillment Center. Here are the instructions for doing that:

- 1) Go to your account's Inventory tab.
- 2) Click on "Manage Inventory" and once again, mark the checkboxes against the items you want to go for FBA.
- 3) Then click on the Actions drop-down menu, and select "Send/Replenish Inventory".
- 4) Then you'll be asked to give a ship address. Provide the necessary details.
- 5) You will be asked how you're going to ship the products: case-packed or individual items.

Note: Before you do this, make sure to take a look at the Dangerous Units, Hazardous Materials, and EBA Prohibited Products page, just so you're sure everything is legal.

Once you've done this, the next step is to review the labeling requirements. Amazon's receiving systems are dependent on barcodes; so all units you send to them must be tagged with a scannable barcode. There are three ways to do this:

- 1) Manually print and apply labels to each unit.
- 2) Use the Label Service from FBA itself. Everything will be handled by Amazon.
- 3) If your products are eligible, sign up for the Stickerless Commingled Inventory.

Here are Amazon's recommendations for when you are preparing to print labels for your products:

- Use a laser or a thermal printer and avoid inkjet printers. This will decrease chances of fading and smearing.
- Your printer should be able to handle resolutions above 300DPI.
- Make sure you're using the right print media.
- Regularly clean and replace your printer heads.
- Test your labels periodically by scanning them yourself. See if they're legible.

You will receive a PDF file once you have entered the number of units you'll be shipping for each product. You can print these labels later. Again, there are some guidelines:

- Make sure you use white label stock with removable adhesive to print these labels. This makes them easily scannable and removable.
- Make sure only your Amazon provided product label is visible. If there are other barcodes on your product/package, hide them all properly.
- Some products require some prepping before they are shipped, which can slow down the shipping process. To avoid this, you can use FBA Prep Services. You can also send them fully prepped to the fulfillment centers.
- Each box sent to Amazon should have a unique shipping label. It's the only way to identify it at the fulfillment center.

Here are your guidelines for printing the labels:

- Don't place the labels on a place they'll be cut. Try and place them in the middle of the box if possible. Never place them on the seams or corners.
- There must be a unique shipping label on each box.
- If there are pallets, they need to have five labels on each one. One goes on the top and the others go on each side.

When all of this is done, schedule a time for the pickup of your inventory. Mark all the items you are shipping as "Shipped" in the Shipment Summary. From there on, you can track the status of your shipment in the Shipping Queue. Allow a period of at least 24 hours before checking whether the status is updated to "Delivered". After that you can contact your carrier to confirm delivery.

"Checked-In" means that some part of your shipment has reached, and they're waiting for the rest. Once the barcode scanning starts; the status again changes to "Receiving". The whole process usually takes about six days, so don't grow impatient. After this, the dimensions of all your products are recorded. Once they're stored, they can be shipped anytime.

Amazon's web-to-warehouse picking system is very advanced. It can sort through inventories in the warehouse really fast and when a customer purchases something, it will pick the right method of shipping them the product according to their preference. The order can be accurately tracked by the customer throughout the shipping process. This makes for a very pleasant experience for the customer.

How to get paid with FBA

Getting paid with FBA is super simple. You can check the status of your orders at any time by going to the “Manage Orders” page in your Amazon Seller Central account. It will show either of these two: “Payment Complete” or “Pending”. If you go to the “Reports” tab, you can check whether you have actually received the payment for the order. There will be a transaction for every order.

Chapter 8: Brand Promotion

Creating your own brand is essential for a number of reasons. If you want to become a top seller on Amazon, you have to create your own brand identity. Your product needs to have a unique identity, which the customers can relate to. This, combined with quality services, will inspire loyalty among your customers, and they'll keep coming back to buy from you. You should distinguish your product from others in the market by making small changes to it and customizing it. This also helps you get more orders and advance to become a top seller.

How you choose to brand your product depends a lot on what kind of product you are selling. For some products, it may be as easy as sticking a label on the product. For others, you might have to make more efforts, like getting a logo etched on the product during the manufacturing process itself. You can create a unique box for some. It's also an easy way to differentiate your product. There are many other ways to do it. You just have to get creative and use it to your advantage. Create a custom pack for your product, maybe. If others sell in packs of 100 ounces, you could sell in packs of 150 ounces. People might just like it.

You can also add a hand-made card in your product package. This helps in emotional bonding with the customer because of a personal touch and a sense of uniqueness.

When it comes to promotion, you can do a lot of things. Start a blog or a website for the product and divert traffic to the Amazon site. You can even embed an e-store in your website, so you can directly sell from there. You can also make people sign up to your newsletter. If it's interesting, people

will leave you their email addresses, which you can use for promotional purposes.

Here are some things to get you in the right mindset for promotion:

- Branding is not an unnecessary cost. It's an investment that helps you sell more.
- When starting out, avoid spending large amounts on promotion.
- When deciding on a brand name and a logo, consider what your customers like, not what you like. Do solid research to come up with the right name and logo.
- Make sure your logo looks polished and professionally designed. Amateurish logos send the wrong signals.
- If all your products cater to the same audience, keep them under the same brand. If they belong to different niches, it's better to brand them differently.

If you want to create a serious business, branding is very important for you. You will only notice its impact in the long term. It's okay to not brand all of your products in the beginning. Do it with one product and once you're making consistent profits, brand other products, too.

Once there's a name for your brand in the market, you should start promoting it, given you have enough profits. Start advertising your product by using PPC (Pay Per Click), SEO (Search Engine Optimization), and other techniques. Today, there are a lot of ways to advertise.

You should also consider services like "Amazon Product Ads". Amazon will create custom ads for you and target the right customers. You'll be charged on a PPC basis, just like other services. Google Adwords is also a great PPC service.

"Amazon Webstore Service" is a quick way to create a professional looking website for your products. It's linked to your Seller Central account, so you can get full integration with all the services and tools you use on Amazon.

Becoming a Top Seller

There are too many sellers in the market for almost any product. Getting customers' attention is hard because of the competition. So how do you get an edge?

For this, you have to understand Amazon's "buy box" algorithm first. This algorithm decides which seller gets the first right to sell if a customer directly clicks on "Add to card" after searching for a product. The seller who wins the buy box is called the top seller. The customers can choose to look for other sellers, but in most cases, they don't. They simply buy from the default seller.

Some sellers may be near the customer, and some may be selling more customized items. Others could be offering lower prices or shipping costs, and yet others may be providing unique value added services. Most buyers, however, don't bother looking for different sellers. So the "buy box" seller automatically sells the most.

Creating a brand identity gives you the golden opportunity to win the "buy box". You have to invest more in marketing, but it's very beneficial in the long run. Winning the buy box gives you sales a huge boost, so always go for custom branding when you can.

Here are some tips to become a top seller on Amazon.

Quality products

Always sell high-quality products. It's the best way to get a good rating for your product. Selling cheap knock-offs will never make you a top product, even if you profit in the short run. Satisfy your customer with great products and they'll give you good reviews. It will build your reputation.

Timely shipping

Once you receive an order, ship the product at the earliest. Customers loathe late deliveries; so if you want them to return, don't give them a sour experience. Always ship on time.

Fair prices

Don't mark up your products too high. You may make big profits at first, but your sales volume will suffer. To become a top seller, cut your profit margins a bit, because low prices attract customers.

Customer satisfaction

Getting good customer reviews requires effort to keep customers happy. As a seller, it's important for you to maintain good product rating, because even a single negative review will impact your sales greatly in the beginning. Always deal with your customers in a calm and pleasant manner, and use an email auto-responder to shoot quick first responses to customer emails.

High-quality photos

Always use high-quality photos for your products and make sure you capture it from a variety of angles. The customers need to get a good feel for it before they buy it. If you can't get professionally clicked photos for your product, hire a photographer yourself and get them clicked.

Product descriptions

As we have already discussed, writing compelling product descriptions is very important. It gives your potential customers a push and converts them

into actual customers. Write detailed descriptions for your products and make them customer-oriented.

Dealing with complaints

The customers at Amazon don't hesitate to file a complaint if they are unsatisfied with their experience, and Amazon is the king of customer service. So make sure you deal with all your customer complaints in a reasonable and speedy manner. Amazon always looks at the situation without any bias, so you should be in the clear. Always satisfy your customers and your ratings will stay high.

Everything you do is just a means to an end here, the end being positive customer reviews. That's the biggest factor in determining your seller rank. You might hear about people using gray-market techniques like paid reviews. I would like to strongly advise you against it. If caught, your Amazon account may be terminated and the business you built with so much hard work will collapse in seconds. Honesty on your part is of utmost importance.

Sometimes, it will be impossible to become a top seller, and that's okay. It just means that your niche is too competitive and you need to switch to a less competitive one to become a top seller.

The Importance of Building an Email List

One of the best way to advertise your products is through your own website and, providing it is a good one, you will be able to direct more traffic than you ever dreamed possible, not just to your website but on to your Amazon product page as well. This is even more important if you have more than one product for sale.

The Amazon FBA niche has got everything you want – an audience that is obsessive about buying products, social media sites at your disposal, blogs and forums that are ideal for reaching your target audience. You get to drive traffic to your website and your page by commenting on blog posts and on forums. You can set up a Facebook page or Twitter account and do the same thing, or comment on other pages that are related and influential.

You can go to other bogs for Amazon FBA and get some ideas for content on your blog, then write it much bigger, much better and much bolder to make sure you stand out. Provided you do this right, your audience will grow and so will your profits. By getting together with others in this niche and networking, you can share their content, link to their blog and watch your own website grow – and most will return the favor.

One of the most important things that you must do before you begin with your Amazon FBA product is build up an email list. These are people that you can legally target with your product and you can build up a strong rapport with them and watch them spread the word for you. This is one of the biggest parts to promoting your business and one of the most important:

How to Get Started

To begin with, you need:

- A good website. You can start with a free one or you can pay for one. Make sure that it looks professional and that your content is relevant and kept up to date – post regularly. The best type of website to start with is a blog and you can do with a free WordPress account
- A good reliable web host. The free ones offer a host but you are better off searching for one that is reliable
- A good domain name that is brandable
- A good premium WordPress or StudioPress theme
- Good images and photos – either take your own or use those that are royalty free. If you want to use those that are not royalty free, you will need either to contact the owner for permission or purchase the image.
- A good auto-responder to help you to build up your email list and to keep in contact with your customers
- A good email capture tool to help you to grow your email list very quickly

If you are deadly serious about building up your business, your biggest priority is to build up a big healthy email list. This is the one asset that you have total control over and one of the best ways to start is by having a good presence on social media. You should also be aiming for a high ranking on the search engines, particularly Google. However, both of these require you to stay up to date with the changes in algorithms that the likes of Google and Facebook are constantly bringing in. Your email list is different – that I yours and nobody can take it away from you and nobody can change it.

You must use your website and your social media pages to attract attention, to tempt people to visit your site and to follow you. You need to encourage them to fill in your opt-in form and sign up to your email list. Once they have done this, you can contact them by email, because they have given you permission to do so – do be careful not to flood their inboxes with too much though; even though they have signed up, this can still be considered spam and it can earn you a very healthy black mark against your name.

Getting Started – The Basics of Building an Email List

To get yourself on the road to building up a decent email list, one that you can use to promote your Amazon FBA products, there are several things you need to do. The following list covers the absolute basic tasks you must do to stand any chance of success:

- *Find a Good Email Marketing Service*

And sign up to it. Because we are starting right at the very beginning, I will assume that you have not yet got an email service provider. These will give you all of the tools that you need, the templates to use and the services that are vital to getting you the right subscribers, to test out your sales and marketing campaign and to manage all of the daily tasks that your list requires.

There are a lot of email service providers to choose from and each will have a different pricing model. It is important that you do your research carefully here and choose the right service for the list size you want to build and the growth that you intend to happen. Some service providers charge a flat fee every month, based on the size of your list and others will charge you for the amount of emails that are sent. One of the best free services to use when you are starting out is one called MailChimp.

- *Come Up With the Right Temptation*

Before anyone gives you their email address, they are going to want something for it. You have to come up with the right offer, something that will tempt them into signing up to your email list. This could be a free gift, an eBook, access to a hot webinar, discounts, anything that is tempting enough to reel them in. You could rewrite a couple of pieces of your content, turning them into how-to guides or resources lists. Whatever you

do, whatever offer you make, it has to be compelling and it has to be something that is seen as having a real value.

- *Create Your Opt-In Form*

No matter which email service provider you choose, it will provide you with all the tools you need to create your opt-in form to go on your website. In general, you should keep it to basics, ask for the minimum amount of information, such as first name and email address only. Your prospect is far more likely to sign up if you are not asking for reams of information. Obviously, you need their email address and just asking for their first name means that you can send personalized emails and offers to them. If you ask for more information than this, your chances of conversion will drop rapidly and you will not gain any information that could be considered valuable.

- *Insert the Opt-In Form on Your Website*

This is relatively easy to do and normally involves nothing more than copying a piece of code, provided by your service provider, and then pasting it to your website. Placement of the form is important – you want it where it can be seen but not so that it overpowers the rest of your content. Most people tend to put it in the right hand sidebar, a place that has been proven to have the highest conversion rate. However, you can place it anywhere you like and the seven best and highest converting places on your website are:

- Into a special feature box
- At the very top of the sidebar
- At the end of each piece of content or blog post
- In the footer of your website
- Placed on your About Us or Contact Us Page

- Across the top of the page in a little bar. WordPress contains plugins that can help you with this
- In a box that pops up

Each of these places will perform in a different way, depending on your audience, the niche you are in and your website. Test out lots of different locations to see what works best and what pulls in the most sign-ups.

Do make sure that you provide new subscribers to your list with easy access to the offer you are using to tempt them into signing up. If it is an eBook, a webinar or another piece of content, give them a download link on the page that they will be sent to when they have confirmed their email address to you. If it is a discount off a purchase, make sure you provide them with the relevant code or details that they need to claim the discount.

The Next Step – Getting People to Subscribe

Now that you have got yourself set up to collect your email addresses, the hard part starts. If you already get a reasonable amount of traffic to your website and you have something to offer that cannot be missed, it shouldn't be too difficult to get people to subscribe. However, most people will need to put in a bit of hard graft here and start looking outside of their existing audience to build up your list. The following are the best ways to get people to subscribe to your list:

- *Utilize Lists from Other People*

Consider offering something in return for having someone else plug your business on his or her website. It needs to be something that the other person wants, even if it is a return, i.e. you plugging them on your site. You can also approach someone and suggest a joint venture. You will not be able to plug them in your newsletter but you can use other avenues for promotion – your website if you already get god levels of traffic, your social media accounts, etc.

- *Add Your Opt-In Form to Another Form*

There is a high chance that your website already contains forms on it, such as registrations, contact, forms for requesting quotes, entries to contests, etc. If your site has any forms on it already, you can add an opt-in box into it. This is a fantastic and easy way to build up your email list because your visitors are already clearly interested in what you are offering.

- *Have a Contest or a Giveaway*

If you do this right, giveaways and contests can be an excellent way of bringing in new leads, those that are highly targeted. This will work better if you already have a good audience on your social media accounts but you can bring in entrants in other ways as well.

The best way is to offer a giveaway of something that is very valuable to your target audience. You can give away or offer up the chance to win products that are related to your niche but be careful that you are not attracting people who are only interested in the prize, not the rest of what you have to offer.

These are some of the very best ways to attract people to your site and fill in your opt-in form. Don't be disappointed if something doesn't work; find another way. There are plenty of things to try, just don't try them all at once. Low and steady really does win the race here; trying to do too much will only ensure that you crash and burn.

Chapter 9: Amazon Fees – Is the Cost Worth It?

Amazon is one of the largest online marketplaces in the world. They sell in more than 13 different countries and have more than 80 fulfillment centers across the world. Each day millions of sellers sell millions of products. If you are an online seller, the chances are you will most definitely benefit from selling on Amazon but you do need to understand the costs involved. You already know about the costs of buying your merchandise and your shipping options and costs but what about the fees that Amazon charges you?

How Much Does it Cost?

The fees that you will be charged to sell on Amazon will depend on the selling program that you opt for and the category of the product that you sell. Amazon charges all retailers a “referral” fee, and a “variable closing” fee, taken from your sale price. Be aware that the sale price they use includes the cost of shipping and gift wrapping. Below are the fees that you can expect to pay to sell your products on Amazon.com.

All sellers are charged a percentage of every sale, although listing your product is free:

Seller Fees	Individual Seller	Pro Merchant
Flat Fee	\$0.99 per item in addition to the % fee	\$39.99 per month but no \$0.99 fee per item
Sales Percentage Fee	Variable, depending on product category	Variable, depend on product category

If you have a large business and you sell 40 or more products every month then it will pay you to be enrolled in the Pro Merchant program.

Referral Fee

The referral fee is the figure that Amazon will charge you per sale and is determined by the company's CPA – Cost per Acquisition model and their inventory model. These are the fees by category:

Category	Referral Fee %	Minimum Referral Fee %
Amazon Kindle, Baby Products (Not Baby clothing), Beauty, Books, Clothing & Accessories, Health & Personal Care, Home & Garden, Kitchen, Luggage & Travel, Music, Musical Instruments, Office Products, Outdoors, Shoes, Handbags & Sunglasses, Software & Computer/ Video, games, Toys & Games, Videos & DVD, Video Games, Watches, Other	15%	\$1 Not applicable for Videos, DVDs, Kindle Books, video game or software \$2 for watches
Automotive & Power ports, Industrial & Scientific, Tools & Home Improvement	12% Not for wheels or tires	\$1

Camera & Photo, Consumer Electronics, Unlocked Cell Phones, Video game Consoles	8%	\$1 Not applicable to video game consoles
Collectible Coins, Electronic Accessories, Entertainment Collectibles, Major Appliances, Sports Collectibles	Variable	\$1
Jewelry	20%	\$2
Accessories for Kindle	25%	Not Applicable
Personal Computers	6%	\$1

Amazon will charge a buyer the cost of the product, the shipping fees and any other fees, such as for gift wrap, that are applicable to the sale. The seller is given a percentage of this amount, less any fees for referral, and seller account fees.

Amazon FBA and Selling on Amazon

You can use Amazon FBA to sell on Amazon. You will send your merchandise to Amazon and then sell them on your listing page. Under Fulfillment by Amazon, all your goods are sorted and packaged by Amazon and then shipped.

If you choose to use FBA, you can expect to pay between 8 and 15% of the sale price per item as well as your FBA fees, while Selling on Amazon sellers will be charged a referral fee. You will also be charged storage fees if you use FBA.

Fees	Sell on Amazon FBA	Sell on Amazon
CPA fees	8-15% - depends on your product category	8-15%, depending on product category
Handling the Order	Media items - \$0 Non-media items - \$1 Clothing - \$1 + weight handling*	
Pick and Pack	Media - \$1.02 Non-media - \$1.02 Clothing - \$1.42 + weight handling*	
Storage Feed	January to September – \$0.51 per cubic foot for standard sized, \$0.40 per cubic foot for oversized	

	October to December - \$0.68 per cubic foot for standard, \$0.53 per cubic foot for oversized	
Inventory Placement Service Fee	Standard – up to 2 lb. - \$0.30 - \$0.40 Between 2 lb. and 5 lb. - \$0.30 - \$0.40 plus \$0.10 per pound Oversized – 5 lb. and over - \$1.30 plus \$0.50 per pound over 5 lb.	

* Based on the outbound shipping weight and fees will vary depending on the size of the product

More details can be found on the relevant pages on Amazon.com but this should give you an idea of the fees you can expect to pay. With all of this information to hand, you can now work out if you think using Amazon or Amazon FBA is worth it in your book.

Conclusion

This concludes the book. We have covered everything you need to do to start selling with Amazon in a step-by-step manner. You know how to set up your Seller Central account, pick the right product, find the right supplier, list your product on Amazon, send your inventory to FBA, and promote your brand. It's a lot of information to digest at once, so take it easy. You might observe some slight changes in the real experience that can't be helped. But there's no need to worry; you can always contact Amazon help centers and they'll guide you through the process.

Thank you for reading this book. Now go on and start your Amazon business!