



Distributing your resource

This checklist covers issues to consider when distributing a print resource. Distribution includes the storage, insurance, packaging, postage and invoicing of a product. Distribution is often done in association with promotion.

Who does distribution?

Distribution houses provide dedicated distribution services for both print and digital resources. Publishers can also be distributors, as they generally distribute products as part of their overall publishing service. They may also offer distribution as a discrete service.

Mailing houses generally do one off mail outs of large quantities of a resource. You will need to provide information on quantities and destinations and check how long they will take to complete a mail out. Mail houses can do ongoing arrangements, but this tends to be expensive unless you have very high volumes.

Print on demand services allow for printing only as needed, reducing waste and storage costs. Some print on demand services offer direct to consumer distribution.

Should we distribute our product ourselves?

Depending on your organisation's resources, it is possible to distribute print resources yourself.

However, you need to consider the following in relation to the ongoing costs and administrative demands on your organisation:

- storage space
- resources required for taking orders,
- packaging and mailing
- systems for recording where stock is going and how much is left
- your ability to process payments
- your ability to take online and/or credit card orders.

A less resource intensive alternative is to use existing channels to get your resource to people when they need it. Distributing bulk copies to agencies that your target group deals with, e.g. councils, libraries, Legal Aid NSW may help you to achieve this. However, it can be difficult to keep track of who is using your resources and requires a degree of relationship building and negotiation.

You can also put your resource online for people to print hard copies for themselves.



How to promote your resource

Questions to ask a distributor

How much will it cost?

Distribution costs vary depending on the distributor. Find out:

- if they charge a flat rate or a percentage of the net invoice cost (check if GST is included)
- what they charge for free publications
- if a postage and handling fee is additional
- whether there are discounted prices for bulk orders
- whether the fee covers storage in the distributor's warehouse and insurance
- whether it is possible to distribute some copies of the resource for free.

Are there limits on what the distributor will do?

- Will they distribute single items and bulk orders?
- Are there limits on the quantity that they will package?
- Do they distribute nationally? Internationally?
- Can you distribute copies yourself?

Do they have reporting mechanisms?

Most distributors report on how much stock has been distributed and to whom. Find out how often the distributor provides these reports and what they include, e.g. details of organisations that have been sent copies. Also find out if they alert you when stocks are getting low.

How will people order the product?

Find out if the distributor has a web site where the product is displayed. Check whether they provide online, email, or telephone facilities for ordering.

Provide ordering details on your promotional materials, directing people to the distributor as the supplier of the product.

Can the distributor provide promotional services?

Some distributors provide promotional services for an additional cost. For example, they may publish catalogues which are sent to various sectors, e.g. libraries, schools, TAFEs/universities.

What are the expected turn-around-times?

- How long does it take from placing an order to delivery?
- Will this be impacted by the quantity of the order?

