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Print-on-Demand Quick Start Checklist

Your Step-by-Step Launch Guide for Printify + Shopify/Etsy

TEN STREAMS LAB

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Contents

Phase 1 — Foundation Setup

Accounts to Create

- ■ Create Printify account at printify.com (free)
- ■ Create Shopify account (first 3 months $1/month) OR Etsy account (free + $0.20/listing)
- ■ Connect Printify to your Shopify or Etsy store in Printify dashboard
- ■ Create a PayPal or Stripe account for payouts
- ■ Set up a dedicated business email address
- ■ Create a Google Drive or Dropbox folder for all design files

Legal & Business

- ■ Decide on business name (can use your real name to start)
- ■ Register as sole proprietor or LLC (can do after first sale)
- ■ Get a free EIN from IRS.gov (takes 5 minutes online)
- ■ Open a separate business checking account (keeps taxes clean)
- ■ Research your state's sales tax nexus rules

> **Start Simple**
>
> Don't wait for everything to be perfect. Create accounts, connect Printify, and get one product live. You learn faster by doing than by planning.

Phase 2 — Niche & Product Selection

Choose Your Niche

- ■ Brainstorm 10 niches you know or care about
- ■ Search each niche on Etsy — check result counts and bestseller badges
- ■ Look for niches with passionate buyers (pets, hobbies, professions, fandoms)
- ■ Validate with Google Trends — is the niche growing or declining?
- ■ Choose 1-2 niches to start (you can expand later)

Select Your First Products

- ■ Start with 2-3 proven POD products: t-shirts, mugs, tote bags, or wall art
- ■ Check Printify's catalog for products with fast US shipping (under 5 days)
- ■ Order a sample of your first product — know your quality before selling
- ■ Note base cost and calculate pricing (see formula on last page)
- ■ Choose a print provider with 4+ stars and a US-based facility

Research Winning Designs

- ■ Search your niche on Etsy — note bestselling design styles
- ■ Identify what's selling (text-based? illustrative? minimalist? funny?)
- ■ Look for underserved sub-niches within your main niche
- ■ Do NOT copy — use for inspiration and to identify gaps

Phase 3 — Design Creation

Free Design Tools

Canva Pro — Easiest for text-based designs, massive template library

Adobe Express — Free tier with good export quality

GIMP — Free Photoshop alternative for complex work

Inkscape — Free vector tool — great for scalable print designs

Design Requirements

- Design at correct dimensions (check Printify's product template page)
- Minimum 150 DPI — ideally 300 DPI for print quality
- Transparent background (PNG format) for most products
- Colors in CMYK or sRGB — understand how they'll look printed
- Download Printify's free mockup templates to align your design
- Create at least 3-5 design variations per product

Design Sourcing (If You Don't Design)

- Creative Fabrica ($9/month — unlimited commercial-use graphics)
- Envato Elements ($16/month — fonts, graphics, templates)
- Hire on Fiverr ($20-100 per design for custom work)
- Always confirm the commercial license permits POD usage

Phase 4 — Printify Product Setup

■ Log into Printify → New Product → select product type

■ Choose your print provider (compare cost, ship time, quality rating)

■ Upload your design file to the Printify design tool

■ Position design correctly using the placement guides

■ Select all variants you want to offer (colors, sizes)

■ Remove low-demand variants to keep listing clean

■ Use Printify's mockup generator to create product photos

■ Download all mockup photos for your store listings

■ Set your retail price (use formula on last page)

■ Click Publish to push to your connected store

■ Order a sample before running any ads

Sample Order Rule

Always order a sample of new products before scaling. Printify offers sample discounts. You cannot confidently sell what you haven't seen and touched. One bad sample order could save you dozens of negative reviews.

Phase 5 — Store Setup

Shopify Store Essentials

- ■ Choose and customize a theme (Dawn is free and clean)

- ■ Add your logo and brand colors

- ■ Set up Shopify Payments (or PayPal/Stripe)

- ■ Configure shipping zones and rates

- ■ Write your About page (brief, genuine, brand story)

- ■ Add Refund, Privacy, and Terms pages (Shopify has templates)

- ■ Set up your domain (buy through Shopify or point external domain)

- ■ Install the Printify Shopify app and connect your store

- ■ Test checkout with a $1 test product before going live

Etsy Shop Essentials

- ■ Choose a shop name (searchable, memorable, brand-aligned)

- ■ Write your shop announcement (include relevant keywords)

- ■ Upload shop banner and icon

- ■ Complete the About section with your story

- ■ Set shipping profiles (Printify auto-fills costs)

- ■ Write shop policies (refunds, processing time)

- ■ Add Etsy Payments (required for most countries)

- ■ Connect Printify via Etsy integration in Printify dashboard

- ■ Enable free shipping for orders $35+ (ranking boost)

Phase 6 — Listing Optimization

- ■ Research keywords using Etsy autocomplete + eRank free tier
- ■ Write title with primary keyword in first 40 characters
- ■ Fill all 13 tag slots with multi-word phrases
- ■ Write description with emotional hook, bullet details, occasion callout
- ■ Upload 5-10 photos (thumbnail, lifestyle, detail, scale, packaging)
- ■ Write alt text for every photo
- ■ Fill in all product attributes (color, material, size, style)
- ■ Set processing time accurately (Printify takes 2-7 business days)
- ■ Add gift wrapping option if possible (increases average order value)
- ■ Review listing as a buyer before publishing

Phase 7 — Launch & First Sale

■ Publish minimum 10-20 listings before expecting sales

■ Share listings on Pinterest (10-15 pins/day for new shops)

■ Post in relevant Facebook Groups (be helpful, not spammy)

■ Tell 3 people you know about your shop — get first sale from warm network

■ Ask your first customer for a review (follow up via message)

■ Track which listings get views vs. clicks vs. sales

■ After 30 days: pause low-view listings, double down on traffic drivers

■ Turn on Etsy Ads at $1-2/day after getting 5+ organic sales

■ After first 5 reviews: apply to Etsy's Star Seller program

■ Set up weekly analytics review ritual (Shopify Analytics or Etsy Stats)

Pricing Formula Reference

The POD Pricing Formula

Retail Price = (Base Cost × 2.5) + Platform Fees + Buffer

Example: $12 base × 2.5 = $30 + $2.70 Etsy fees + $1.50 buffer = $34.20 → price at $34.99

Product	Typical Base Cost	Recommended Retail	Estimated Profit
Unisex T-Shirt	$10-14	$28-38	$10-16
Mug (11oz)	$7-10	$22-28	$8-12
Tote Bag	$9-13	$24-32	$8-13
Wall Art Print	$5-12	$20-40	$10-22
Hoodie	$22-30	$55-75	$20-32
Phone Case	$9-14	$25-35	$8-14
Pillow Cover	$15-22	$38-50	$18-26
Sticker Sheet	$4-7	$12-18	$7-12