

The background features a light green grid with various business and technology icons. These include a dollar sign, a handshake, a smartphone, an envelope, a paperclip, a lightbulb, a gear, a hand pointing at a screen, a laptop with a download arrow, a laptop with an upload arrow, a person icon, a calendar, and a hand pointing at a gear. The icons are arranged in a pattern that suggests a workflow or business process.

YOUR FIRST PRODUCT UNLEASHED

SELLER

BUYER

A Five Minute Guide to Creating Your First Product

Ever wanted to make a product? To create something tangible that people can actually hold in their hands and use? As an entrepreneur, there is perhaps no thrill quite as exciting as creating a physical product – especially if that product is something you’re very proud of, something that you think could really make a difference to people.

What’s more, is that making physical products is *still* the best way to make money. Unlike a service, a physical product is completely scalable meaning there’s no limit to the potential revenue you can generate. Unlike a *digital* product, a physical product is something that anyone can appreciate and something that can sell to a huge audience.

To demonstrate the difference here, try and sell an ebook to your Grandma and see how you get on. Now try and sell an ebook to 10 of your friends. Chances are, unless they are very tech savvy *and* interested in internet marketing, most people you know aren’t going to be interested in buying digital products that they can’t actually *hold*. MOST people don’t read ebooks and MOST people don’t even understand why they would pay for something they would be able to get online for free (essentially). A digital product on the other hand has very clear inherent value, it’s easy to explain and it *feels* like a good value proposition. And if they still don’t get it, you can actually show it to them.

For your own sense of satisfaction and for the understanding of your audience, there is nothing quite like making a real actual *thing* that has a clear function and a clear material value. When you start adding physical products to your site, you’ll find that it immediately elevates your business and that people start taking you more seriously. Only ‘real’ businesses sell real products!

So with all that in mind, why aren’t more people creating their own physical products? Why are there a million ebooks on how to make money from a blog, an ebook affiliate sales and so few on how to create and sell a real, genuine product?

The answer comes down to perception. And specifically, the perception that creating physical products must be hard and probably out of your capabilities.

But the reality is actually quite different from the perception in this case. That is to say, that creating physical products doesn't have to be hard. In fact, thanks to the tools afforded us by the web, it can actually now be rather *easy*. In fact, you don't actually have to do much of it yourself – you can outsource a vast amount of the process and you don't even need to invest any of your own cash! Read on and we'll see how this can be possible...



What You'll Need

To create your own new product from scratch, you're going to need a few things. Firstly, you need your idea. From there, you then need a *plan* to put that idea into effect. This plan should essentially include a 3D CAD file (computer aided design), functional specifications, bill of materials and a minimum order of quantity. You'll also need a prototype.

From here, you then need to find yourself a manufacturer and order X number of products so you can start selling them at a profit. This will require a big upfront payment/investment.

Okay, so admittedly that all sounds a little complicated. But it's not. Not in today's digital age anyway! And in this guide, you're going to learn everything you need in brief. Then, if you want to deliver further, you can read the full eBook (*Your First Product*) to learn all the shortcuts, trade secrets and alternative options to help you get there even faster!

In short, by the end of this document, you'll have all the knowledge you need to go ahead and start building your product!



The Idea

The first thing you need is an idea. You can't very well make a product, physical or otherwise, if you don't know what you want to make! To come up with this idea, you're going to have to think creatively *and* a bit logically.

To come up with the idea, it pays to first think about the audience you want to target/the niche and then to try and come up with an idea in that area. This will be easier if you are already a blogger, or a YouTuber or otherwise have your own audience of some sort. So if you have a fitness YouTube channel with 10,000 subscribers, you might want to consider making a fitness product. If you often blog about DIY, then creating a DIY tool can help.

Now look for 'pain points'. What are the most frustrating aspects of that thing you love to do? What could be made quicker? Easier? More fun? This is called 'scratching your own itch'.

Another idea I like to apply is something I call the 'step back technique'. This is basically a thought experiment that involves coming up with an idea that is purposefully too ambitious and then 'stepping it back'. For example, you might decide you want to create a suite of Iron Man armor. Realistically, that's not going to happen. So instead, think about what the *closest* thing is to that that you could realistically build. Likewise, think about what it is about that idea that gets you excited. For instance, if you decided you wanted to make something that could make you fly, then you might have been the inventor of the wing suit that was recently on the news. If you decided you wanted to make something that made you travel fast, you might have designed something like an electric skateboard.

Then, you need to make sure that your idea is actually likely to be profitable. Is there an audience out there for what you're proposing? It's no good to invest a lot of time and energy into an idea, only to later learn that there's no-one out there who actually wants to buy it! SO do your market research, ask your audience if they like the idea and look at the competition.

Finally, think about the actual *design* of your product. This is called 'design engineering' and what it basically means, is that the look and feel of your product should be intimately connected to its function. You design what your product looks like and *how* it works *around* the intended objective.

So if you invented the hammer, then you might have come up with the idea that you should build something that would make nails easier to drive into wood or walls. But that's not a product. Rather than, it's the way you *design* a tool to give that function that becomes the product. This means creating the handle, making it ergonomic and deciding on the shape and material you're going to use for the hammerhead.

This stage is also where you need to start thinking about resilience, safety and cost. What materials will you use? Could it be made either bigger or smaller in order to save money, or to make it more resilient? How *thick* should the product be?

This leads us nicely into the next stage of the process...



Creating a 3D File

So you have your idea and a rough concept of how it's going to work. The next thing you need to do is to take that idea and turn it into a set of clear instructions that a machine can potentially understand. This means you need to create a 3D model, which is a file that works very much like the 3D graphics in computer games or in films. The only difference is that it needs to be a 3D model that accurately reflects how the end product is going to look.

You can create your 3D model yourself by downloading CAD (computer aided design) software. A free example of such a tool is Blender, though there are many other programs that do the same thing such as Rhinoceros 3D. This is easier than you would expect to use and you can find instructions online.

If you want to add a circuit board to your product though, then you're going to need to also create a gerber file. You can do this using more 3D software such as Cadsoft Eagle.

Getting daunted? That's where the first example of the internet 'being wonderful' comes in. That's because it's actually possible to outsource this whole process to other people – and remarkably cheaply. Sites like CrowdSpring, CAD Crowd or Idea Bounty will allow you to crowdsource this step in the process. All you do is explain your idea, perhaps add a sketch and then pay the person who comes up with the solution you like. You can get some great designs for as little as \$7 on some of these sites and they're regularly used by big companies. Of course you can subsequently tweak the files as much as you like to get it just right. There is a full run down of these resources in the ebook.

Something else to consider is that you can create products using circuit boards that are ready made. For example, the Raspberry Pi can be used to create a wide range of products and you don't need to pay any license or fee in order to use it in a commercial project! Don't you love open source?



Making a Prototype

Now comes the fun bit... making your prototype!

What you're doing here is creating a basic version of your product that might still be a little rough around the edges. But it's going to serve as a 'proof of concept' for you to check over, as well as something you can show to your manufacturers as an example. It can also be used when trying to drum up funding and support on sites like Kickstarter, which we will come to in a moment.

So how do you make your prototype? Well there are plenty of options. One obvious option is just to DIY it. This might mean hammering together some wood or building something from card. Really though, you'll be better off with something with a similar look and material to the intended finished article. That's why you'll want to use '3D printing' which is a tool that

basically 'prints' a 3D model in a chosen material and with no need for up-front investment. Essentially, 3D printing lets you create as many units of your product as you want and you'll only pay for the cost of the material plus a small fee for the company handling the printing. Of course you can also buy your *own* 3D printer but these are expensive depending on the type of objects you need.

A great example of a site that handles 3D printing is Shapeways. This site will let you send off a 3D STL file and will return your object in the post, made from your chosen material. You could create a plastic action figure for example of yourself and it would only cost whatever the plastic, metal or china cost. Assuming you're using a plastic resin and the model is a few inches tall, it probably won't cost much more than \$5-\$30.

The great thing about 3D printing is that it's so easy and accessible. As long as you have the requisite file, you can build anything you like. This means that in theory, you could actually sell basic products this way. Say you want to build a phone case, all you'd have to do is design the 3D model (making sure to get the measurements right) and then order a bulk of that item for you to sell on to others.

In fact, if you want to make your own smartphone or some other 'smart' product, then it could be a simple matter of 3D printing the casing and then filling it with a Raspberry Pi or another circuit board. Again, you could buy each part in bulk, assemble them yourself and then send them out to your buyers!

There are some limitations to this option though. For starters, the overheads will be higher than if you were to create your product through a factory, thus damaging your margins. At the same time, this option would make it *much* harder to get your product into stores and would require much more work on your part. And you likely wouldn't have the resources to assemble anything that complex.

So for now, use 3D printing and the other methods available to you to create your prototype. We'll then look at how to go about manufacturing that and getting the funding you need.



Finding a Manufacturer

Now you have your idea, your design files and your prototype you have mostly everything you'll need to send to your manufacturer. But not quite!

Next, you're going to need to create some more documents for the manufacturer. One example is a **BOM** or 'Bill of Materials'. This is basically a list of all the different materials you're going to need. You may need an '**electrical BOM**' as well if you're going to be making anything with electronic components. This will list things like capacitors, resistors, motors, LEDs etc. that will be needed for your product.

You can also include **functional specifications** if you are interested. This is basically a document that details things like how you want your product to perform, what you want it to look like, how long the battery should last, how big it should be etc. If you have provided detailed enough instructions, then you won't actually need this element. Rather, this is for anyone who wants a little more guidance from the manufacturer and perhaps hasn't settled on the type of battery they want or other aspects. You can opt to include it anyway though if you want to be absolutely clear about the aim of your product.

Finally, you'll want to include an **MOQ** or 'Minimum Order of Quantity'. This basically tells your manufacturer how many units you want made and how you're going to sell them. It's very important to include this so that you can get an accurate quote but also so that the manufacturers know which processes will be best for your order. That's because some techniques are better at producing large quantities and others are better/most cost effective for shorter runs.

We'll talk about the quantities in a moment because of course it will be tied very closely to your budget. Make an estimate of what you want though and that way you can get a quote so you

know what your goal should be. Finally, you need to actually locate the company you want to use for this service. To do that, you can try using a site that lists manufacturers. These include Alibaba and the excellent Makers' Row. Unfortunately, Makers' Row charges a fee but it is very useful in that it provides a community, support and more to help you get your projects off the ground.



Funding

Before you can put in an order for 5,000 units though, you're first going to need the money to invest. You can obviously choose to fund this yourself, in which case you will probably use a business loan (PayPal is good), savings, or money from another arm of your business.

However, this is always going to involve something of a risk as you may not manage to sell all your products. This is why it's a better idea to try and get free backing from a crowdfunding site like Kickstarter. All you need to do is to create a project page, set a timeline and set a target amount (based on your quote from the manufacturer). Explain in a video what your product will do and why people should care, show off your prototype to build trust and try not to be too greedy with the amount you ask for. From there, it's then a matter of promoting your page and marketing yourself as much as possible to get the maximum exposure. You'd be surprised how generous people are if they're excited about your vision! This is how Oculus got its start, Pebble and many more tech companies that are now changing the world.

Finally, you always have the option of finding an investor the old fashioned way. This might mean going to a site like AngelList or Seedrs - but it's important to note here that you're going to be giving a way a portion of your business and a portion of your profits.

Closing Comments

There are actually many more ways you can design, build and fund a product – and some of them are much quicker and simpler depending on what you want to build. Read the full book and you'll learn how to turn your digital ebook into a physical ebook with no risk, how to license a product in order to make money from it without having to do *any* of the leg work yourself or how to create custom merchandise that you can create in less than an hour.

From there, it's just a matter of creating a store to sell it from on your site or, better yet, trying to get your product into highstreet stores and big box stores. Once again, all that is explained in great detail in the full ebook so if you want to get all of the most advanced tips, tricks and secrets make sure to head over there and check it out.

Otherwise, why not start on your product today? Once you know what it's going to be