

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

As international trade becomes more interdependent, Canadians are able to extend their markets and employ new methods of exporting their products. One of the most successful and fastest growing means of selling your goods is through the United States mail order catalogue industry. The geographic proximity of the U.S. to Canada makes a catalogue marketing venture a great opportunity for growth for small Canadian firms. With direct shipments to the catalogue house's warehouse, the manufacturer's product has access to the U.S. market of more than 250 million consumers.

The North American lifestyles of the 1990s have become more hurried, leaving in many cases less time for leisure activities. For today's consumer, having the ability to contemplate purchases without leaving the home is no longer a luxury; for the Canadian manufacturer it is an opportunity not to be missed. The Canadian manufacturer or supplier can seize this opportunity and fit into virtually any niche within the U.S. marketplace. Selling your product through a U.S. mail order catalogue provides many benefits, such as having a "professional" market your product, and eliminating the need of a U.S. site of operations.

In 1990, American consumers bought about \$65 billion (US) worth of goods through mail order catalogues. In business-to-business mail order sales, U.S. business personnel bought more than \$75 billion (US) worth of goods. With this purchasing power, the opportunities presented by exporting through the U.S. mail order catalogue industry are well worth investigating.

As with all new ventures, you need to take time to introduce yourself and your product to potential buyers. In the case of the mail order industry, the catalogue houses are, in effect, your consumers. The process of locating and establishing the mail order catalogue most suited to your product is unlike the traditional method of promoting your product. This guide has been created to help Canadian manufacturers to introduce their products to the highly dynamic U.S. mail order catalogue industry. If you have the ability to export, selling through mail order catalogues can enhance your exporting endeavours.