Create your product.
Build your business.
This holiday season, find more reasons to celebrate—starting with more sales!
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You don’t just sell products. You create them. Use this guide to make sure you have what you need so your customers can get what they want just in time for the winter holidays.

This guide is designed to help you:
1. PREPARE.
2. SELL.
3. DELIVER.

Plus, we’ve developed these essential PLANNING RESOURCES to help keep you on track:

1. HOLIDAY CALENDAR: Use this Shapeways calendar featuring key dates for material cut-off times around the holidays. Print yours to create your own custom timeline.

2. MATERIALS MATRIX: Compare all of the materials offered at Shapeways by their lead times, uses, advantages, and more!

3. HOLIDAY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: Find more answers on how to handle your holidays in these special FAQs. Still have questions or need more advice? Our team is here and standing by to offer extra help to our Holiday Business Bundle customers!
01 PREPARE

When running a custom or made-to-order business, it’s critical to start planning early to ensure a successful holiday season.

START NOW

Design a holiday printing schedule for both standard and custom orders.

- Where can you build in extra time?
- What can you do to save costs or expedite time?

Test print any new products or materials now to get a jump on holiday orders. This will help you make sure that your products are printable and fit to meet your quality standards before the holiday rush.

NEW PRODUCTS & FIRST TO TRY:

If you’re ordering a new, untested (previously unprinted) design, it’s always advised to build extra days into your schedule to ensure a smooth process for 3D printing. This also includes products marked “First to Try,” meaning the product is still in the early stages of development and previously unprinted. This will give us time to reprint your 3D design if there are any problems with your model.
Decimal is making waves in the lighting industry. Based out of Vancouver and Mexico City, Decimal develops and manufactures state-of-the-art 3D printed light fixtures. Decimal’s products engineer LED modules and pair them with customizable high-grade 3D printed shades.
Review your sales records for both past holiday seasons and the last three months. Consider how to revise your estimates for the coming season:

- **What are you promoting this year?**
  Consider any “seasonal” items.
- **What are your most popular products?**
  Be sure to promote these in your ads and online campaigns to keep the momentum going.
- **Which materials are your most popular or most used?** When will you need to order these by?

Forecasting sales will help you in preparing to fulfill orders during the holiday season, which is likely the busiest time of year for your business. That’s why it’s important to start planning early.

Create your own holiday timeline that includes promotions, printing, receiving, packaging, and shipping. Take deadlines into account and use the calendar tool you received with this guide to take all materials and lead times into account.
If you are releasing new products and are unsure what materials work best for your design, take the time to test a variety of materials in advance. This will ensure your product prints exactly how you imagined before selling to customers.

Print our Shapeways Holiday Calendar as a guide and start filling in your most important dates now.
Your products can be tested and sold in a variety of different materials using 3D printing. Each material has their own advantages and disadvantages, some may work for your products and others may be better suited for a different function.

We have created a material matrix comparing all of the materials offered at Shapeways to compare, lead times, uses, advantages, and more.

Consider your product and the needs it may have. Could you offer a new material for a faster lead time? Does your product need a stronger material? Or higher detail? Can you substitute one material for another at lower cost and still maintain the desired result?

These are all questions you should consider when preparing to sell during the holiday season.

NEED HELP CHOOSING MATERIALS?
Our Holiday Business Bundle gives you VIP treatment with dedicated on-call service throughout every step of the production process.
MAKE YOUR PROCESS MORE EFFICIENT.

When the holiday traffic starts rolling in, sometimes it can be hard to keep up with demand. Consider ways to automate your business in ways that can help you handle order processing and fulfillment.

Shopify ERP Integration is a great way to start! This is seamless integration with e-commerce platform Shopify for on-demand fulfillment just in time for the holidays. To learn more check out the Holiday Business Bundle, a solution crafted specifically for sellers to grow their business and sell more this holiday season.

An alternative to building your own site is creating a shop on the Shapeways marketplace. When someone places an order from your shop, the file will be sent directly to our factory to be manufactured and shipped directly to them. This is site hosting, fulfillment, and dropshipping all in one.
MAKE YOUR PROCESS MORE EFFICIENT.

TIPS BY PRODUCT TYPE

**Finished Product** – If your product is complete and customer-ready right at the moment it leaves the Shapeways factory, consider having the product shipped directly to the customer to save time. It’s also one smart way to automate your processes and give you one less thing to handle personally.

**Custom Product** – For custom products, you may have tons of files to track and maintain. Use special naming devices for your files so that you can keep track of all of your customers’ orders from start to finish.

**Assembled Product** – If your product has lots of parts, it can be extremely useful to have a product ID marked on each part. This could be a small number, letter, or serial number located on a hidden part of your piece.
Good tracking starts now – not after the season is over. Have systems in place that record traffic, demographics, and conversion. Make sure your site is prepared to record and map this behavior. If you have your own site hosted on Shopify, this is built right in. If you are selling directly on the Shapeways Marketplace, make sure your shop is set up with Google Analytics.

Having these metrics and statistics in real time will allow you to understand how users navigate your site and what draws them in. This will help you to hone in on your most successful products, messaging, and photography.
Provide Excellent Customer Service.

Customer service is incredibly important during this time of year when you have the most customers coming to your site and writing in. There will be plenty of other tasks taking your time, but it is important to respond as quickly as possible to your customers.

Create pre-written emails answering some of the most common questions you receive to save time. Here are a few questions you should be ready to answer:

“When will my order ship?”
“When will I receive my order?”
“What is your return policy?”
“Can I rush my order?”

On the off chance something goes awry with a customer order, be prepared with an apology email. For standardized parts or products, it’s good to have a few extra on hand just to be safe.
Leka

Leka develops robots for children and adults with special needs in learning. Using relaxing colors, vibrations and sounds, the robot helps to encourage social interaction, along with games to develop gross and fine motor skills.
PRICE TO SELL (AND TO PROFIT).

Customers will form their first impression of your product based on a few different factors. One of those factors is your price. Price helps determine the value of your product. By setting the right price, you can make your products more compelling and attractive to customers.

The first part is the base price, which is the price you would pay to purchase the product for yourself. Second is the markup, which is the amount of money you want to make from each sale of your product. Add these two together, and you have your final price, which is what your customers will see.

SW BASE PRICE + MARKUP = TOTAL PRICE TO CUSTOMER *

* Excludes shipping. EUR prices are displayed with VAT.

OK, you’re ready for the rush! Now it’s time to start selling.
PRICE TO SELL
(AND TO PROFIT).

What should you consider in your markup?

1. **Product Category**: How much do other people charge for similar types of products?
2. **Material Pricing**: Are you charging the appropriate amount for the material you are using?
3. **Design Costs**: How long did it take you to design your work? You should consider the time and prototyping costs you invested in this product.
4. **Value**: The pricing you set should represent this value proposition: If priced too low, customers may question the worth of your product. If priced too high, customer may find your product unaffordable.
ATTRACTION ATTENTION.

You’ve got products, you’ve got prices. Now you need to promote them.

Plan ahead your marketing strategy for the upcoming holiday season. And make sure it aligns with your visual merchandising planning:

- Choose the advertising channels that resonate with your current and potential customer base (including specific social channels, search, etc.).
- Plan your advertising budget.
- Help your customers find their perfect present with a holiday gift guide.
- Create ads that express your value proposition and that target those who are most likely to convert. Keep your ads looking clean and clear of clutter. Feature sharp imagery that sets expectations and represents your product well.
- Prioritize your most popular items in your advertising and customer outreach during peak selling season.
- Consider special, timely promotions reflecting the holiday season for your brand.
ATTRACT ATTENTION.

• Push your best content to acquire new customers and create awareness to your holiday planning. Make use of SEO (search engine optimization) to drive users to your shop with optimal search terms, e.g. “custom batwing earrings”.
• Hone your social presence. These are your biggest fans, give them quality, relevant, and consistent content leading up and during the holiday season.
• Know your numbers and keep ahead of expectations. Be prepared to measure in real time and shift/update advertising assets based on real time sales.

Ready to expand your reach?
Our Holiday Business Bundle offers a variety of platforms to help you reach new audiences and find new customers, including featured placement on our website and magazine, in an email blast to our subscribers, and on our social media channels.
Quantum-Systems GmbH

Quantum-Systems GmbH develops automatic transition aircrafts for civilian use. Based out of Germany, these aircrafts are pushing the technology in efficiency with the capability to take off and land without additional equipment. Quantum uses 3D printing to prototype and create finished parts for their aircrafts.
One of the biggest perks of 3D printing is that each item is produced on demand and inventory does not need to be considered. The holidays, especially Black Friday and CyberMonday, are a time you might want to consider having some inventory of your most popular models on hand, as well as some items that may take a long time to manufacture or are at higher risk of damage during delivery.

Are your products made to order or can you stock up? To handle peak sales periods, consider a combination of made-to-order plus custom, on-demand production to meet sales goals.

**TIP:** Plan manufacturing timelines around “cut-off” dates and pay careful attention to these dates as your orders come in. Cut-off dates define the times you can guarantee your customer will receive their order by a specific day. Custom, made-to-order products will have earlier cut-off dates. You can track those dates in our Holiday Calendar.
Remember, any products you have not ordered previously should run a “test print” to ensure printability and avoid reprints.

What goes into a single order?

Since each material has a different lead time, you must consider that some materials will ship faster than others. If your order contains more than one item, your package will ship once all items are ready.

NOTE: Identify the material in your order with the longest production time and use this to determine your deadlines.

Are you placing a large order?

During the holiday season, we want to ensure you get your products when you need them. For large orders with many parts or large items, we recommend reaching out to our customer service team at support@shapeways.com and let our Supply Chain know to expect your order.

TIP: The best time to order your designs is early in the day. (But don’t wait until the next day – place your order ASAP!)
Using our Shapeways Holiday Calendar, check for material cut-off dates to make sure you will get your products in time for the holiday. You can download your calendar here:

DOWNLOAD HOLIDAY CALENDAR

Want help with order preparation?

Our Holiday Business Bundle gives you VIP treatment with dedicated on-call service throughout every step of the production process.
**SHIPPING.**

**Shipping internationally?**
Check VAT taxes before the deadline to ensure the order is approved and ready for production.

**Paying by bank transfer?**
Please note that payment must be complete by your order date. Bank transfers can take up to 4 to 5 days to complete, so give yourself a buffer.

**It’s the holidays, make it speedy.**
When ordering near the holidays we recommend ordering with express shipping. Don’t take chances with shipping times, especially around the holidays.

**Can you ship straight from the source?**
Consider shipping directly from your Shapeways to your customer to avoid the extra time to receive and reship.
LRBaggs

L.R. Baggs is revolutionizing the way people listen to acoustic instruments. From their patented TRU•MIC technology, engineered to provide studio mic’ed performance for the stage to their pedals specifically crafted for the acoustic player. L.R. Baggs uses 3D printing to prototype and test new hardware for their line.
HOLIDAY PRODUCTION CALENDAR

A must for setting timelines for peak production season! Use this printable, downloadable tool to figure out when you should order your products to ensure delivery in time for the holidays. Reference important milestones, such as material cut-off dates, that you can incorporate into your Google calendar.

DOWNLOAD HOLIDAY CALENDAR

MATERIALS MATRIX

Not all materials are created equal! Use this valuable resource to compare material qualities and determine lead times and cut-off dates.

DOWNLOAD MATERIAL MATRIX
**HOLIDAY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**When will my order ship?**

The shipping dates in your cart will tell you if we can ship your order in time for holiday delivery. (Find out your estimated ship date by going to the order tracking page at [www.shapeways.com/orders](http://www.shapeways.com/orders) and select the “View Items” button.)

**Can you rush my order?**

We currently offer rush manufacturing options exclusively for small prints in Versatile Plastic. You can learn more about this here: [www.shapeways.com/pilots/rush](http://www.shapeways.com/pilots/rush)

Please note that the rush option must be selected before placing your order.

Typically we are able to complete and ship orders ahead of the estimated ship date provided. Due to the nature of 3D printing this is not always possible and there may be times when an order takes longer than expected.

You can find all of the material lead times in the material matrix.
**HOLIDAY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**How do I get in touch with a designer? (for marketplace models, not DWS)**

You can contact a designer by going to any of their models and scrolling down to the designer’s info (under model description). Here you can see the “Send message” button and get in touch with them.

Please note that you need to be logged in to send private messages.

**How long does it take to print in x material?**

The time to print depends on the material you will be printing in. You can find all material lead times on the material matrix or on the individual material pages.
PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

04
PLANNING RESOURCES

Ready to expand your reach? Integrate with our API? Get VIP treatment with dedicated on-call customer service throughout every step of your production process?

Our Holiday Business Bundle makes it easy.

To order your Holiday Business Bundle contact the Shapeways Managed Account team at business@shapeways.com. Learn more about how we can make this holiday shopping season your strongest ever.