

# WHAT REALLY MAKES MONEY

*An Independent Review of Business Opportunities & Money-Making Enterprises*

## Cash-in on the Paper Renaissance! Making and Selling Greetings Cards and Other Personal Stationery

Imagine, if you will, life a couple of decades ago. Say you wanted to send someone a birthday or other greetings card.

Here's what you had to do: Go out to a shop and buy a card. Yes, an actual physical, paper greetings card. Go to a post office and buy a stamp... and maybe have to stand in a queue to buy it. Write it... and think carefully about what you wanted to say – and write an envelope too. Then actually walk to a big red box called, oddly enough, a pillar box and post it.

Then, fingers crossed, a few days later it would be delivered to the person you sent it to. And let's be honest that was usually, embarrassingly, a few days after their birthday... if only for the reason you forgot to post it in time.

So it was pretty amazing when, in the digital world, e-cards and later digital greetings cards came along. And you could send someone a greetings card in minutes from your PC without leaving home... even if you'd forgotten it was their birthday until the day before.

Except that it isn't that amazing! Sending digital greetings cards just isn't the same as sending real, handwritten greetings cards. And let's be honest now – it hasn't really taken off.

That's probably why, in recent years there's been a rise in sending good old-fashioned cards. And in using good old-fashioned paper stationery for that matter. According to the Greeting Card Association, £1.7 billion is spent on greetings cards every year. And 864 million individual cards are sent... that's 13 for every single person.

So, just as paper cards and stationery seemed to be going the way of the typewriter and cassette player (remember them?) there's actually been a renaissance in them.

This kind of opportunity will be absolutely perfect for you if you're creative and like crafting. But you don't have to be – I'll tell you about some easy shortcuts for ways you can make some really smart handmade cards and stationery. Also, this is an opportunity that can be a small, home-based sideline. Or it could potentially be something much bigger too.

### Why Paper Cards and Stationery Are Back in Fashion

- » **People much prefer receiving them.** A handwritten personal note is always better than a printed one. They make an occasion more of an occasion.
- » **Receiving nice things in the post is still nice.** And now, as it happens rarely, it's even more special.
- » **They're much nicer to send.** The experience of choosing, writing and sending a real card is much more rewarding for the sender.
- » **The range of designs and materials is much wider.** So they are a much better way of expressing your thoughts, feelings and personality.
- » **They're not necessarily any more expensive than digital cards, and can even be cheaper.**
- » **For some people they never went out of fashion!** For many the idea of digital cards just hasn't caught on.

### Types of Greetings Cards You Can Make

The greetings cards market is absolutely massive, so there are lots of different opportunities. So before you get started it's a good idea to choose some to focus on.

The market divides into types of cards that are major opportunities – and which you pretty much must have

*please turn over...*

in your range – and cards that are niche opportunities, that are fairly small volume sellers or seasonal, and which can be considered optional.

## Major Opportunities in Greetings Cards

### Birthday Cards

Birthday cards are certainly the single biggest individual market, and they're the one type of card you will pretty much have to have. In fact you could make an entire business based on birthday cards alone.

Birthday cards can be either ageless – which most cards are – or age related, eg. 18, 21, 40, 60.

Children's birthday cards are a huge area of the birthday card market too. Research shows that people are twice as likely to send cards to children than they are to adults. And they are a great opportunity to be really creative and do something different.

There are two opportunities here: Cards that are specific to age and non-age-specific cards. Age-specific cards usually run from age 1-13 with cards generally being non age-specific after that. Bear in mind that designs and greetings need to be specific to that age – a card suitable for a three year old is obviously not the same as that for 13 year olds – although you can have a design that spans a narrow age band. Cards for younger children need to be made with safety in mind too.

### Christmas Cards

Christmas cards are perhaps the biggest single area of opportunity after birthday cards. The market is absolutely massive. The Greeting Card Association say 100 million individual cards are sold every year, plus 900 million boxed cards.

Mass-produced cards tend to be very samey, so the potential for individual and handmade cards is good. Although you can go traditional, with crisp snowy scenes and religious-themed cards, if you want to this is also a good place to try different and quirky design ideas.

Of course, the main snag with Christmas cards is that it is a seasonal market. So plan ahead. Christmas cards are unlikely to sell before late September at the earliest and the market runs through to mid-December. Plan

your design and making so that you can direct your efforts to other types of cards outside this period.

**Tip:** Don't forget cards for religious festivals of other faiths too.

### Blank Greetings Cards

Although most cards are occasion-focussed I don't think you should underestimate the potential of producing blank cards. Today people want to send cards for a whole host of reasons that don't conveniently fit the conventional pigeon holes. Offering blank cards allows you to serve this market.

When making blank cards go for designs that are fairly flexible and will suit as many different occasions as possible. Also, blank cards don't need a greeting.

**Tip:** You don't have to cater for every single type of card. You can also create some stock blank designs and then personalise them for any niche market. For example, with some thought a carefully chosen blank design could just as easily be a 'New Home' card as a 'New Job' card by adding a different title.

### Niche Opportunities in Greetings Cards

- » **Anniversary cards.** These can be for an undated or for milestone anniversaries, eg. 50 years, often with a year-appropriate theme.
- » **Congratulations cards.** Cards to send congratulations for a specific event or achievement. For example, exam passes or driving test passes.
- » **Engagement cards.**
- » **Father's Day cards.** Seasonal opportunity and, for some reason, there don't seem to be as many cards on the market as for Mothers Day.
- » **Friendship cards.**
- » **Get well cards.**
- » **Mother's Day cards.** Probably one of the best seasonal opportunities other than Christmas.
- » **New baby cards.**
- » **New home cards.**
- » **New job cards.**
- » **Sorry cards.**
- » **Sympathy cards.**
- » **Thank you cards.**

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- » **Valentines Day cards.** Huge seasonal opportunity. But remember the selling season is very short.
- » **Wedding cards.** More information on this coming up.

## Useful

Take a look at this article which has some great ideas and inspiration for unique greetings cards:  
[Bit.ly/2KGCR40](http://Bit.ly/2KGCR40)

## Choosing the Best Themes for Greetings Cards

Most greetings cards tend to comply with a particular popular theme or genre. There's no reason why you have to stick to these... and lots of reasons not to, to make your cards different. But as these themes are so popular they tend to sell, so are a safe place to get started.

**Humour.** Take a look and you will see that a substantial number of greetings cards – in fact maybe a slight majority – use humour.

Obviously humour is quite a subjective matter. You'll need to carefully understand your selected audience and their humour to come up with cards that will appeal to their humour and, just as importantly, avoid offending them.

For inspiration here's a company that specialises only in humorous cards: [ComedyCard.co.uk](http://ComedyCard.co.uk)

**Floral.** This is a kind of odd one but so many greetings cards are illustrated with flowers. Not just to appeal to flower lovers, but maybe because they are a simple way to make an attractive card.

**Romantic.** Romance is a great theme for cards as they are highly suitable for all occasions, not just Valentine's Day but also anniversaries, birthdays and more.

**Animals.** Another area that greetings cards seem to feature regularly is animals. Notice how many cards feature dogs, cats – particularly cute puppies and kittens – and horses in particular. Birds and wildlife are also popular subjects. These kinds of cards appeal to animal lovers but also a wider market too.

**Sports themed.** Sports are another major theme for cards, so look at how you can lock into that market. These might be for followers of a particular sport, or supporters of a particular team. They are also a popular subject for children's sporty cards too.

As well as highly popular sports – producing cards for supporters of Premier League teams is one of the biggest individual areas – look for niche sports that

aren't well catered for by big manufacturers.

**Transport themed.** Transport is another big-theme area for cards. Trains, planes, boats, bikes and cars often feature on greetings cards. These might be on cards aimed at enthusiasts of that particular form of transport, e.g. steam trains or cyclists.

**Fandom themed.** Fandom-themed cards are something which I think has loads of potential!

Fandom is something which has been created by followers of a particular interest who feel an especially strong bond with their fellow fans. Followers of fandoms are devoted to the point that they want to live and breathe their interest and share it with others... and a greetings card is a great way to do this.

For example, *Dr. Who*, *Stars Wars* and *Harry Potter* have huge fandoms, as do music stars like Ariana Grande and TV shows like *Coronation Street* or *Game of Thrones*. Gaming has huge fandoms, e.g. Call of Duty. YouTube and Instagram have fandoms as well.

More information. [Fandom.com](http://Fandom.com) is a useful site about fandoms.

**Tip:** When creating a fandom card just check that the fandom is large enough. Also, that the design of your card doesn't infringe any brand names, branded characters and so on.

**Adult themed.** Again, look in any greetings card shops and you'll find that a substantial minority are what might be called adult-themed cards. These vary from slightly saucy to quite smutty. Without going into the ethics of some of these cards there's obviously a demand for them that big companies can't really cater for. Maybe it could be for you?

**Locally themed.** Cards that are connected to a specific local area or even place could be a great niche to consider for a small business. It is something that the large card publishers can never hope to compete with. With locally-themed cards you can pick an area or an actual place. It can be your own local area if you want it to be, but it doesn't have to be. For example, take a pic of your local town in the snow and make a unique greetings card. Produce a card based on a local tourist attraction and sell it in local gift shops.

Bear in mind the likely size of the market. Obviously a greetings card featuring Buckingham Palace will have a wider market (but more competition) than a card featuring a small village in the Cotswolds. Then again, some locally-themed cards have a much wider appeal than the location might suggest. For example, a card





stamps to give you some ideas: [StampingAllDay.co.uk](http://StampingAllDay.co.uk)

**Embossed cards.** To make these you'll need to buy an embossing machine and embossing dies in a range of designs. You can then emboss borders, backgrounds, text and images on to your cards.

**Foil printing.** To make these you'll need to buy a hot foil printing machine and embossing dies in a range of designs. These can then be used to print designs and phrases in gold, silver or other colours of foil... or even real gold leaf for really exclusive cards.

Here's a supplier of hot foil printing machines: [HotFoilStampingMachines.com](http://HotFoilStampingMachines.com). If you don't have the budget for a new machine you can sometimes find used machines on eBay.

**Calligraphy.** Calligraphy is the art of decorative handwriting produced using a calligraphy pen or brush. You can create cards using calligraphy alone or use it together with other methods for phrases or greetings. Calligraphy is great for giving a smart, high-quality finish to your cards.

Your calligraphy cards can either be individually hand-written or your calligraphy can be scanned and printed over and over again.

If you're interested in producing calligraphy yourself it's possible to do a course or you could try to source a craftworker to do this for you.

Here's a useful basic introduction to calligraphy: [Bit.ly/2wOoMtC](http://Bit.ly/2wOoMtC)

## Other Useful Techniques, to Add Interest and Value to Your Cards

Create a raised effect, by mounting part of the card on double-sided adhesive foam. Use cut-outs, by cutting windows into the card using a special die. Add an insert – a separate piece of paper inserted and glued into the card and usually carrying the greeting.

## Sourcing Greetings for Greetings Cards

An essential element of many greetings cards is the greeting or verse they contain.

The greeting in a card needs to be relevant to the card of course. It also needs to be something that will send an appropriate message to the recipient. But also, very importantly, one that will strike a chord with the sender.

If you have a knack for writing then you can write your own verse. Or you could use a freelancer to write them for you – look for one on a freelancing site.

If not, there's an easy way to source your verse – use public domain material as I suggested earlier. That opens up access to a vast library of books, articles, poetry, verse and letters that you can lift and use in your greetings. So – if you fancy including something from Shakespeare or Burns in your greetings cards then you can do so, and all for free! With this method, you can either use the public domain material as is, take extracts, or even modify it to suit your own cards.

[Gutenberg.org](http://Gutenberg.org) is a good general library of public domain material. This site lists public domain poetry – which is perfect for greetings cards: [Public-Domain-Poetry.com](http://Public-Domain-Poetry.com)

## Producing Personalised Cards

Personalised cards are a good opportunity for handmade card makers. They are something that mass-produced card manufacturers can't really compete with. But this is interesting – the online and digital card manufacturers offer a lot of personalised cards, which suggests it could be a really good area to be involved in.

Here's why personalised cards are worth considering: In a world of mass-produced, all-the-same consumer products, consumers like them as a way to stand out from the crowd. Sending a personalised card shows that the sender has made that bit more effort for the recipient.

And this is important: Personalised items usually sell for significantly more than the cost of a similar, non-personalised item plus the cost of personalisation. This makes it a good value-added opportunity. People perceive personalised cards to be worth more and so will happily pay more for them.

Being able to personalise cards is a way of making your products stand out, even if they are otherwise identical to other companies' products. It can be a great USP or unique sales proposition for your business.

Personalised products are a good way of encouraging customer loyalty. If someone buys a personalised card and likes it, chances are they will come back next time for another personalised card.

One snag with personalised cards is that they are individually made to each customer's order, so you can't build up a stock.

Here are two ways of producing personalised cards:

- » **Design a whole card from scratch.** Create a truly unique and personalised card for the customer to their own design preference. These types of cards

are really high end and can sell for £10-£20 a time. They are especially suitable for Christmas and special events like weddings.

- » **Take a standard design and then add a name or photograph.** This is a much simpler way of producing personalised cards.

Create a range of standard designs. Then simply add the recipient's name. Or ask the customer to send you a photo by email, paste it into the card and print it out.

**More information.** Take a look at what Papier do for ideas and inspiration. Papier offers an upmarket personalised stationery service. Here is an article on them: [Bit.ly/2ItSUA6](http://Bit.ly/2ItSUA6). And here's their website: [Papier.com](http://Papier.com)

## Formats to Use for Your Cards

You can make handmade cards to any size or design you like. But it's often an advantage to make them in the same sizes as other mass-produced cards. This makes them easier to make since materials tend to be produced in standard sizes, easier to handle and easier to post – more information coming up.

Here are the most common formats for cards. (You can have cards in both landscape and portrait orientation.)

Card Size	Flat Size	Folded Size
A6	210 x 148 mm	105 x 148 mm
A6 short edge fold	296 x 105 mm	148 x 105 mm
5" x 7"	254 x 177.8 mm	127 x 177.8 mm
5" x 7" short edge fold	355.6 x 127 mm	177.8 x 127 mm
A5	297 x 210 mm	148.5 x 210 mm
A5 short edge fold	420 x 148 mm	210 x 148 mm
DL	198 x 210 mm	99 x 210 mm
DL short edge fold	420 x 99 mm	210 x 99 mm
100 mm square	200 x 100 mm	100 x 100 mm
125 mm square	250 x 125 mm	125 x 125 mm
145 mm square	290 x 145 mm	145 x 145 mm
150 mm square	300 x 150 mm	150 x 150 mm

## Unusual Card Formats to Consider

Good reasons for producing unusual formats are that they are more attractive to buyers and also they can sell at a premium. Here are some ideas:

- » **Pop-up cards.** Standard-shaped cards that contain a folding element that pops up when opened.
- » **Garland cards.** Usually made up of a number of identically-sized cards strung together with string or ribbon and designed to be hung up by the recipient. Each card can have the same or different design.

- » **Circular cards.** Two circles cut from a piece of square card, joined at the top and flat at the bottom so it can stand up.

- » **Triangular cards.** Two triangles cut from a piece of square card, joined at the top.

- » **Shaped cards.** Individually cut from a piece of card into any shape, e.g. a face, figure or object.

## Standard Posting Sizes

When you're designing a card, make sure that it fits within Royal Mail's posting price bands. There are two reasons. Firstly it will impact on your cost to send it to the customer. Secondly it will impact on the customer's cost to send it to the recipient. Slipping over each size and weight band could make your card a lot more expensive to send, and reduce its sales potential.

- » To be posted as a Letter your card needs to be no more than 24cm long x 16.5cm wide by 0.5cm thick and weigh no more than 100g.
- » To be posted as a Large Letter your card needs to be no more than 35.3cm long x 25cm wide x 2.5cm thick.

There are weight steps at 100g, 250g, 500g and 750g (maximum). Ideally, keep under the 100g step if you can.

More information here: [RoyalMail.com/price-finder](http://RoyalMail.com/price-finder)

## Pricing Strategies for Your Products

Now I'm sure you're aware that it's possible to buy greetings cards very cheaply indeed. Pound shops and the ubiquitous Card Factory which seems to have a shop on every high street sell cards from around 50p each.

This isn't the market you'll be targeting with your handmade stationery. For one thing, you'll struggle to make money from it. But the main reason is that customers won't be impressed by your cards. Buyers of handmade cards generally want good quality, individualised cards, and are willing to pay for them.

I'd recommend you take a look around at the handmade stationery market and charge similar amounts. For example, most handmade cards cost a minimum of £2.50 and are often priced in the £4-£5 region. Really exclusive and individually made cards can cost even more.

Once you have a selling price in mind work back to find the manufacturing cost of the card. Add up the cost of materials and an allowance for the cost of labour. This will show you the profit margin on each card you sell.

## More Useful Tips and Techniques for Greetings Cards

» **Embrace and exploit the concept of handmade.**

That is, the individuality, ethics and authenticity that handmade products offer. That's something that big retailers can't do no matter how much they try. If you're making cards you really love making, and if your cards are not entirely perfect, put that out in your marketing. It's a positive not a negative.

» **Create your own brand.** Rather than selling handmade cards as unbranded products it can make sense to create your own brand. Create a brand name (which could be your own name or a business name), create a logo and also have a house style for packaging and so on.

People see a higher value in brands and are usually prepared to pay more for them. It also encourages customer loyalty. If people buy once and like your brand they are more likely to remember your name and buy again from you in future.

» **Give your products a twist where possible.** This will help your products stand out above others. For example, you can produce ethical cards, sustainably-made cards or use recycled products. For ideas, this company sell ethical cards and other stationery and gifts: [GreenTulip.co.uk](http://GreenTulip.co.uk)

» **Include a complementary – and contrasting – envelope.** This is important – the envelope should be in keeping with the quality of the card. So a better quality card should have a better quality envelope.

In most cases it's OK to source a standard envelope from a stationery supplier. However, really high-end, hand-made cards sometimes include a matching handmade envelope so this could be worth considering as a way of adding value.

**Tip:** Notice how mass-produced cards often include an envelope in a contrasting colour to help show off the card on a display... a handy sales tip you can copy.

» **Sell cards in boxes.** A simple but good technique to consider is to produce cards in box sets. This is very suitable for some types of cards such as Christmas cards and blank cards which people buy in quantity, though it is less suitable for others such as birthday cards which are usually bought as one-offs.

When you sell cards in boxes you'll normally have to sell each card at a discount compared to selling

singly. However, the advantage is that the selling price per unit is much higher. For example, a handmade card might sell individually for £4, but a box of six might sell for £19.00.

When selling handmade cards in boxes use a good quality box in keeping with the quality of the cards. You could also decorate this in the same style as the cards.

## Three Card-Making Techniques to Use

There are several different ways of making greetings cards. Which you choose depends on what sort of business you want, as well as what sorts of cards you are making.

### Do It Yourself

If you like crafting – though many card projects don't involve crafting as such – you can make your cards yourself. This is the easiest and cheapest option. One drawback is that there will be a limit to how many cards you can make as well as sell, which will limit your income.

To make cards, you'll need a few basic tools and equipment. Suggested: Craft knives. Craft scalpel. Steel ruler. Small guillotine/trimmer. Glue gun.

There are plenty of websites offering free information on card-making methods. This one is useful: [Card-Making-Magic.com/card-toppers.html](http://Card-Making-Magic.com/card-toppers.html)

### Use Outworkers/Homeworkers

This could be a perfect way of farming out the actual card making – so good if you are not that crafty yourself – while also maintaining that individual hand made look for your cards.

Place some small ads locally. This could be in newspaper or advertising boards, or on local social media. Advertise for people who are interested in making cards for you and who have some crafting skills. Also try crafting clubs and crafting cafes to find people. College art and craft students might also be interested.

When you use outworkers or homeworkers you'll usually provide them with all the materials, basic training and instructions for the cards you want to make.

Outworkers and homeworkers can either be paid an hourly rate or be paid for each card that they produce. This will work better for most as they can work as and when they like.

For more great money-making ideas, reviews and blueprints go to [www.WhatReallyMakesMoney.co.uk](http://www.WhatReallyMakesMoney.co.uk)

## Using Printers and Print-on-Demand Services

Have your designs printed by a local or an online printing service. You'll need to order, usually, at least 100 copies (ideally more) to make printing cost effective.

Print-on-demand sites are also useful, and are a way of producing small volumes of cards more effectively.

Print-on-demand or POD sites are digital manufacturing services that are able to make greetings cards and other products individually to order. You can even personalise them in many cases, e.g. with a photo, illustration or slogan. You order your product on their website. The POD site then manufactures your product immediately and ships it, to you or your customer, normally within a few days.

The pros of using a site like this are that you don't need any equipment, any stock, nor really any design skills of your own. It's a bit like having your own ready-made design studio and print shop. You can also sell your products to customers direct from their sites. The slight drawback is that it probably isn't the cheapest way of sourcing your cards.

Useful contacts:

[ArtOfWhere.com](http://ArtOfWhere.com)

[CafePress.co.uk](http://CafePress.co.uk)

[DeviantArt.com](http://DeviantArt.com)

[Lulu.com](http://Lulu.com)

[Moo.com/uk/products/greeting-cards](http://Moo.com/uk/products/greeting-cards)

[Photo.Jessops.com](http://Photo.Jessops.com)

[RedBubble.co.uk](http://RedBubble.co.uk)

[SmartPhoto.co.uk](http://SmartPhoto.co.uk)

[SnapFish.co.uk](http://SnapFish.co.uk)

[VistaPrint.co.uk](http://VistaPrint.co.uk)

[Zazzle.co.uk](http://Zazzle.co.uk)

## Other Personal Stationery Products You Can Make and Sell

Although greetings cards are the largest part of this market there are lots of other products you can get involved in too. Many of these can be designed in the same ways and sold into the same markets. So, it is well worth looking at what products you can add.

**Tip:** Where possible, produce other stationery products that co-ordinate with your cards. This way, once you've found buyers for your cards they will also most likely be buyers for your other stationery.

**Ideas.** Take a look at this site for some great ideas for upmarket personal stationery: [Bbit.ly/2F197fc](http://Bbit.ly/2F197fc)

## Gift Accessories: Tags, Bows and Wrapping Paper

Mass-produced gift wrap, tags and bows are cheap enough to buy. But individual, handmade gift accessories mark out a gift as really special. Gift tags are simple to make using the same techniques as cards but in a smaller format. Bows are simple handcrafted items. Pinterest is a great place to find ideas. Here's just one profile with lots: See: [Bit.ly/2wVaTu5](http://Bit.ly/2wVaTu5)

Stylish handmade gift wrap can be made using hand stamping, embossing or screen printing techniques. This site shows how to make hand-printed gift wrap: [Bit.ly/31mAiuy](http://Bit.ly/31mAiuy)

## Personal Stationery

Maybe most people don't write many letters by hand these days. But there is still a loyal group of those do. And those people appreciate top-notch stationery to write it on. Take a look and you'll find it's quite hard to find notepaper and envelopes in all but the most specialist shops, so an opportunity has opened up for the small handcrafting business.

Products to include in your personal stationery range include: Notepaper. Notelets. Correspondence cards. Visiting cards. At home cards. Change of address cards. Thank you cards.

Quality personal stationery shuns inkjet and laser printing and uses traditional printing techniques. You'll need a printing press to print personal stationery. But small hand-printing presses can be bought from less than £300. For example: [Bit.ly/2K7d327](http://Bit.ly/2K7d327). Also see eBay for used presses.

Handmade personal stationery should use the highest quality paper and card. You could even look at offering high quality handmade paper.

## Diaries, Journals and Notebooks

Keeping a diary is another one-time common practice that's diminished with the advent of phones and online planners. But, again, people who keep one are likely to be enthusiastic about having a good quality diary. Moleskin notebooks are a long established classic. See: [gb.moleskine.com/notebooks](http://gb.moleskine.com/notebooks)

There are several different product opportunities here. Diaries are dated for the upcoming year, so are a seasonal product. Journals and notebooks aren't dated so can be used and sold all year round. If you were around in the 1980s you might remember the Filofax loose-leaf personal organiser was a big, big hit. Well, Filofax and a

whole host of lookalike products are back.

So how about an easy way to exploit this product area?

Buy simple but good quality hardcover notebooks.

Hand decorate them. Or cover them with a high quality textile like linen, silk or cotton, or even fine leather.

Resell under your own brand. Montblanc notebooks are iconic and sell for £65-£200 or more: [Bit.ly/2R2ED10](https://bit.ly/2R2ED10)

Think how you could create something similar at a lower price point.

## Scrapbooks

Scrapbooking is something that goes back to the 1500s or earlier. Today it still has a loyal following. In times when emails, texts and digital photos vanish into the ether often in minutes there are people who like to keep letters, pics, cuttings, tickets and other keepsakes in a scrapbook, and who'll be interested in buying unique, handmade scrapbooks.

Here's an introductory guide to scrapbooking: [WIKIHOW.COM/Start-a-Scrapbook](https://www.wikihow.com/Start-a-Scrapbook)

## Invitations

If you're organising an event, sending a real paper invitation is a way to give real gravitas to your event – much better than sending a text or email or just using word of mouth.

Here are just some of the events you can create invitations for: Parties. Dinner parties. Christenings. Birthday parties. There's also a niche here for invitations for upmarket children's parties. Anniversary celebrations. Housewarming. Informal 'at home' gatherings. You can also create invitations for upmarket corporate and promotional events.

Calligraphy is a really great technique to use for invitations. Also look at using small volume hand printing, embossing or foil blocking

## Wedding Stationery

Wedding stationery is a whole mini biz opp. in itself. People are willing to splash out for weddings for something unique and really special. Individual handmade stationery is a great product to offer to this market.

Wedding stationery items you can offer include: Save the date cards. Bridesmaid invitations. The all-important invitations – often separate invitations for the ceremony and an evening reception. Order of service sheets. Seating cards. Place cards. Thank you cards, for sending after the event.

Another opportunity to consider is producing handmade wedding scrapbooks including photos and other mementoes from the day.

**Tip:** Remember that weddings usually have a theme, even if only a colour palette, that runs through the entire occasion. So work with the parties involved, or the wedding planner if there is one, so that your stationery fits the theme perfectly.

There are thousands of style ideas and tips for wedding stationery on Pinterest. Here's just one profile with hundreds to choose from: [Pinterest.co.uk/magnetstreetwed/wedding-invitation-ideas](https://www.pinterest.co.uk/magnetstreetwed/wedding-invitation-ideas)

## Christening Stationery

If you're producing wedding stationery it's a simple jump to make to christening stationery.

## Funeral Stationery

Although funeral stationery is traditionally thought of as a being of a more sombre style, this isn't always the case today. Some people now prefer funeral stationery that is more upbeat and celebratory.

The range of items you can offer for funerals include: Orders of service. Acknowledgement cards. Prayer cards. Memory books.

## Postcards

If you're making cards then it's a relatively simple move to put your designs onto postcards. While some people buy postcards to use, others buy them as an inexpensive collectable. There's a huge market for postcards on eBay.

## Places to Sell Your Cards and Stationery

In this section I'll look at the different places you can sell your handmade cards and other personal stationery products. Although these are similar to those for many other businesses I'll look at some dedicated tips and techniques for cards and stationery.

## Amazon and eBay

If you want to sell online, Amazon and eBay are difficult to ignore. You can sell almost anything there and handmade cards are no exception. Both have lots of listings for these products. (Which means that even if you don't sell there they are great for finding ideas.)

An important thing to bear in mind with Amazon and eBay is that there is a lot of competition. So pricing is quite competitive, and sometimes lower than what the

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same card could be sold for in other places. Also, the selling fees are quite high and could amount to around 20% of your selling price.

So, here's a smart way to use Amazon and eBay for card selling: Use them as lead generators. Offer your most popular and lowest priced cards and other products on eBay and Amazon. Whenever you make a sale this way send out a small brochure or leaflet with your other, more higher-priced designs so that customers can order direct. This way, hopefully, you'll make more sales from customers found this way but without having to pay Amazon and eBay commission on every sale.

To sell on both Amazon and eBay you'll need to create a listing with a description and photos of your cards. (Unlike with other products on Amazon, since your products are unique, there won't be a ready-made listing to use.)

## Handmade by Amazon

If you're a crafter, even just a hobby crafter – or are interested in becoming one – then Amazon has a platform called Handmade which is specifically for selling handmade products.

Handmade benefits from special seller's terms, free listings and a simpler fee structure on sales. The listings are, I think, clearer and better than the mainstream site. You can also use Handmade as your online shop and link to it from other places.

All products must be made entirely by hand, be hand-altered, or hand-assembled. They can be made by you or by someone who has made them for you, you just can't buy them in wholesale.

More information on Handmade here:  
[Amzn.to/2wIwKEK](http://Amzn.to/2wIwKEK)

## Specialist Sites for Selling Cards and Stationery

There are quite a few specialist websites now, that are available to sell handmade and craft products on. These aren't exclusively for cards but they have anything from a few to many card listings.

The advantage of using these sites is that they target the people who are interested in and keen to buy handmade products specifically. Pricing tends to be higher than Amazon and eBay where there is a lot of competition.

- » **Folksy.com and Etsy.com** are big marketplaces for crafts, of which cards and stationery are a part. You can also use them to set up your own online shop.

- » **NotOnTheHighStreet.com** is a great marketplace for handmade. It's especially good for personalised products and gifts.
- » **Other sites.** As well as for selling these are good for ideas: [MadeByHandOnline.com](http://MadeByHandOnline.com). [Misi.co.uk](http://Misi.co.uk). [TheCraftersBarn.co.uk](http://TheCraftersBarn.co.uk). [WowThankYou.co.uk](http://WowThankYou.co.uk)
- » **Apps.** These allow you to sell online but you do it through a phone app rather than a website. [Depop.com](http://Depop.com) is good for craft and gift products including cards and stationery. You can pretty much list anything on [Shpock.com](http://Shpock.com) and [LetGo.com](http://LetGo.com)

## Party Plan

Party plan has been around for a long time. You've probably heard of Tupperware. Party plan could be very suitable for selling individual, handmade cards.

The best way to get into party plan, rather than organising the whole thing yourself, would be to get in touch with existing party plan companies or organisers and ask if they'd be interested in selling your cards alongside their existing product range.

One way to operate might be to make up a sample package to give to your agents. They can then use these to take orders which you then make up and send out.

When selling party plan consider the type of customer you are likely to be selling to and tailor your range to suit. For example, party plan tends to focus on a female audience, so birthday cards – especially aimed at children and other family members – would be a good opportunity.

## Selling to Retailers

Once you are in a position to upscale your production you could look at becoming a manufacturer/wholesaler and supplying your cards to retailers.

The advantages of this are that you'll be able to sell many more cards and increase your sales and profits. Individual orders will also be larger in size, i.e. possibly several hundreds of pounds rather than a fiver at a time. Also, you won't have to spend so much time on selling direct to individual customers, releasing more time for designing and manufacturing.

The main disadvantage is that you'll have to give retailers a trade discount. But, by attracting the right retailers, there should still be plenty of margin remaining.

**Overall strategy.** Target high-end, specialist retailers. Places where unique cards and stationery are appreciated. Don't look to sell to convenience shops

and discount retailers.

**Selling process.** Contact the owners and managers of suitable retailers. Tell them about your products. Be sure to emphasise the unique, handmade nature of them.

**Tip:** Offer to supply a small range of products on a sale-or-return basis originally. But – ask in return that they showcase your products in a good location within their shop.

Types of retailers you can sell to.

- » Craft shops.
- » Gift shops.
- » Independent stationers.
- » Shops located at tourist attractions, such as historic houses.
- » Museums and galleries.

**Two ways of working with retailers.** When selling to retailers there are two ways of working. You can either offer them cards from your range. Or – and I think this could work really well – create custom cards for them. Ask them what they think their customers would really like to buy and create a card that meets that interest. Create unique-to-them cards using custom illustration, designs and greetings.

## Your Own Online Shop

You don't have to have an online shop for this business but it will maximise your sales opportunities if you do. As well as selling products direct from your shop you can link it up to all your other marketing methods.

An easier way to set up an online shop than doing it all from scratch is to use an online shop package such as [Shopify.co.uk](http://Shopify.co.uk) or [EKM.com](http://EKM.com). These packages provide you with an online shop template or theme which you can customise to suit your requirements and then upload your product listings. Both have a simple user interface, so no design or programming skills are needed. Shopify and EKM can also process your sales and payments for you.

Online shop packages work on a monthly subscription basis with cost depending on the services you choose, plus a commission on the payments they process for you.

## Social Media Marketing

You can use social media to generally promote your business as well as making direct sales by linking your posts to your online shop, Etsy, Folksy and Handmade.

But the most useful social media for cards and personal stationery – by far – is Pinterest and it will be well worth setting up your own Pinterest profile for your business.

**Technique.** Create different Pinterest boards for different themes. This will work better if rather than making boards for 'Birthday cards' and 'Invitations' and so on you create boards based on the subject or image involved. For example, 'Birds' or 'Romantic' or 'Christmas'. This is much less salesy and so your posts are much more likely to be pinned and shared.

**Tip:** Try creating some cards that are quirky/whacky, even if just for social media. These are much more likely to be shared and even go viral.

## Useful Contacts... Good for Ideas, Supplies and Finding Markets

### Crafts Directory – Crafts Council

Allows you to search for craft products and makers, and also showcases ideas.

[CraftsCouncil.org.uk/directory](http://CraftsCouncil.org.uk/directory)

### Craftseekers

Useful commercial directory with links to suppliers in a range of different crafts.

[CraftSeekers.com](http://CraftSeekers.com)

### Greeting Card Association

[GreetingCardAssociation.org.uk](http://GreetingCardAssociation.org.uk)

### Handmade Business

Online and offline magazine for the handmade business (US).

[Handmade-business.com](http://Handmade-business.com)

### Handmade In Britain

Interesting site which showcases designer-makers.

[HandmadeInBritain.co.uk](http://HandmadeInBritain.co.uk)

### London Stationery Show

Held each April but the site is good for news and trends and also industry contacts.

[StationeryShowLondon.co.uk](http://StationeryShowLondon.co.uk)

### National Art & Craft Directory

You can search for products and producers are also showcased. [NationalArtAndCraft.com](http://NationalArtAndCraft.com)

### UK Handmade

This is a directory of makers and also of shops that sell handmade products – good for finding ideas.

[UKHandmade.co.uk/directory](http://UKHandmade.co.uk/directory)

### Unique Handmade

Small business directory for handmade artisans.

[Unique-Handmade-Gifts-Arts-Crafts.co.uk](http://Unique-Handmade-Gifts-Arts-Crafts.co.uk)