



SUBMISSION GUIDE FOR NEW PUBLISHERS (version 8-2016)

Thank you for your interest in distribution through Diamond Comic Distributors. This guide is primarily designed for publishers of printed comic material and is not intended for manufacturers of games, toys, novelties, etc. In order to be considered as a potential vendor, we require a formal **submission package by mail** that includes the following:

1. **PRODUCT SAMPLE** – A sample of each product you wish to be considered. This sample can be a fully printed book if it is available. If the product is not yet formally printed, you may print the cover and interior pages from a computer and bind them together by staples, clips, etc. Our goal is to read the product from page to page and get a sense of how the story and art may look as a finished piece.
2. **PRODUCT INFO SHEET** – A product info sheet filled out according to the product(s) you are submitting (found on page 4). You may send more than one product at a time but each separate item should have its own unique sheet included in the package.
3. **COVER LETTER** – A letter that introduces yourself, your company, and any other details about your submission that you feel our staff should understand when reviewing your package.
4. **MARKETING PLAN** – A document that gives a clear and thorough agenda on how you plan to market this book to customers and retailers in order to make it successful in the comic book market (see **MARKETING YOUR PRODUCT** for further details).

Please mail your physical submission package to our offices at:

**Diamond Comic Distributors
ATTN: Jay Spence
10150 York Rd Suite 300
Hunt Valley MD. 21030**

THE REVIEW PROCESS

Upon receipt of your submission, it is reviewed by several members of our purchasing staff. Our staff considers many variables when making their decision to distribute a product, including but not limited to; price, format, quality, and overall potential in the current comics market. The review process can take up to 4 weeks to complete but typically less. We ask for your patience in times where submission volume may be higher than usual. Once our staff has made their decision, you will receive a response from one of our staff members either by mail, email, or phone. In some cases, a brand manager may contact you in order to clarify a particular detail of your product before a final decision can be made. Please do not send any original artwork. Diamond Comics does not send any submissions back to the publisher unless otherwise requested with a self-addressed, stamped envelope included in the submission package.

MARKETING YOUR PRODUCT

Inclusion in the *Previews* catalog is a great way to increase your product's reach in the comic book direct market. Our optional marketing services will assist publishers in strengthening this reach but *Previews* is only the **first** step toward selling your product to comic shop retailers. A publisher's marketing strategy is often one of the largest factors in cultivating strong sales and this cannot be done with *Previews* alone.

You'll want to reach as many comic readers as possible and that often means connecting with online sites and social media destinations that focus on comics. In some cases, your project may also appeal to less traditional comic markets that should be considered (ex. a comic about street racing may appeal to car/racing enthusiasts).

Research as much about the current comics market as you can, taking into account the types of comics that are already being sold and by whom. Pay close attention to the visual familiarity of company brands and the visual branding of their books. Your publishing name, logo and cover designs should all be easily readable and recognizable so retailers and readers will recognize your efforts as a new publisher entering the market. We never recommend that a new publisher reproduce exactly what is being done by other publishers, but it is important to be mindful of other projects that may be similar in story, genre, style, etc.

It is absolutely essential for new publishers with a new product to thoroughly plan out a marketing strategy that can be strong enough to gain attention. Publishers who do not focus enough on marketing will see far less response from their listing in *Previews*. A marketing plan that shows a strong understanding of the industry, and your audience, is essential for Diamond Comics to see when considering a new publisher.

When creating your marketing agenda, the following questions must be answered:

1. How many social media followers (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) does your publishing company have? Publishers should have a minimum of 5000 Facebook followers and 1000 Twitter followers for social media to be an effective marketing channel.
2. What websites and print publications have you budgeted ad space for?
3. Has your product been reviewed or endorsed by industry “celebrities”, comic fan websites, comic bloggers or other recognizable media entities that give your product visibility in the comic book community? If the book has not yet been reviewed, what media entities do you have a plausible connection with to gain those reviews in the near future? (see Diamond’s media contact list located on the Diamond Comics website for ideas)
4. How many conventions and industry events has your company appeared at over the last 12 months and what conventions and events will it be appearing at in the next 12 months going forward?
5. Did you fund this project with a social crowdfunding site like Kickstarter and how do you plan to use these contacts to make NEW fans that will seek your book out at comic shops? Keep in mind that most of your crowdfunding supporters have already “purchased” your book so they do not need to support your comic shops sales.

Below is a list of additional questions you should ask yourself before attempting to submit to Diamond Comics. If you can answer “YES” to all, or nearly all, of these questions, then you are far more likely to be ready for the challenges of direct market distribution.

1. Does your total marketing budget for this project meet or exceed a minimum of \$2500?
2. Can your publishing company afford to produce the entire series of this comic (or the first graphic novel) no matter how low the sales results may be?
3. Does your company have a long-term publishing plan for content over the next 2 years?
4. Have you calculated the cost involved in maintaining your publishing schedule, including printing, shipping and marketing?

BARCODES

Your submission may not yet have a barcode attached to it at time of submission but your final product **MUST** include at least ONE of the following two barcodes when it is ready to ship to retailers. Diamond will require this number at time of listing in *Previews* and your brand manager will be able to advise you on how to acquire this barcode if necessary.

UPC – This is a 12-digit number **typically used for periodical comic books**. The same 12 digits can be used for the length of the series and will be accompanied by a 5-digit supplement at the end. (ex. 712345678901-00111) For other examples, refer to most comic books being sold now. If your comic book is a one-shot with no subsequent issues, you wouldn’t be required to include a 5-digit supplement.

ISBN/EAN – This is a 10 or 13-digit number **typically issued for graphic novels** and other types of square-bound books. The barcode typically printed on books uses the 13-digit ISBN number followed by a 5-digit supplement which indicates the retail price. If you only have the 10-digit ISBN, this number can easily be converted to 13-digits using an online converter.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What types of product is Diamond Comic Distributors looking for?

A. Diamond Comic Distributors prides itself on offering its retailers a wide variety of pop-culture and/or comic book related products for the direct market (comic shops). We consider all genres and formats of comic books and material related to sequential art.

Q. How many copies of my product can I expect to sell and does Diamond Comics require a minimum amount of orders for my product in order to sell it?

A. Once your product has been accepted by our review staff, your assigned brand manager will be able to explain how your product compares with the rest of the market and give an approximate estimate on the sales you could possibly expect. We do consider the amount of potential sales based on the previous sales history of similar titles. Our staff may choose to pass on a product if it does not show the adequate amount of potential for sales. If Diamond Comics has accepted your product for listing in *Previews*, we will seek to fulfill any and all orders for your product regardless of quantity.

Q. How formal should my submission package be?

A. We don't require anything above and beyond the four items of your submission package mentioned above. An overly fancy or elaborate packaging of your submission will not affect the review committee's decision.

Q. How much should I discount my product?

A. The discount percentage (found on the info sheet) is the percentage OFF the retail price that Diamond Comic Distributors will be paying you for each copy of your product. Standard discount is typically 60% for most comics. This discount directly affects the cost retailers will pay for your book so a better discount to Diamond means a better discount to retailers and, typically, stronger sales. Keep in mind that shipping costs for sending your product to Diamond will be the responsibility of the publisher.

Q. How should I rate the content of my product?

A. There are THREE main ratings Diamond uses when it lists comic book product. Most comics fall under an "all ages" rating and may contain some violence (within reason) and, perhaps, the lightest forms of profanity. A "mature" title typically contains full or partial nudity and/or profanity that wouldn't be permitted on television. An "adult" title would be more extreme than "mature" and typically means graphic sexual situations that would be considered pornographic.

Q. What if I require a minimum quantity of orders for my book in order to proceed with manufacturing my final product?

A. Any item Diamond offers to retailers MUST be available to retailers no matter how low the final orders may be. Therefore, Diamond Comics cannot agree to a pre-set minimum of orders.

Q. I still have further questions that are not answered in this guide, can I speak with someone?

A. Please feel free to contact Jay Spence, the Submissions Coordinator, with any questions you may have about your submission. Jay Spence can be reached at sjay@diamondcomics.com or at 443-318-8272.

PRODUCT INFO SHEET FOR SUBMISSION

(Please complete this form and include with your submission package)

This form provides Diamond Comic Distributors with all the vital details of your project so we can better understand how you envision the final product. Some details like price or format can influence our decision to distribute a project so please be prepared to discuss some details that Diamond Comic Distributors may feel need to be adjusted in order to better fit with the current market.

Company Name:

Address:

Email Address:

Phone:

PRODUCT TITLE:

-Issue number:

-Frequency (One-shot, Monthly, Bi-Monthly, etc.):

Frequency pertains to the release schedule of your product and how often you expect the following issues/volumes will be released. For a standard-sized, periodical comic, we suggest releasing on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. A single, one-time comic or graphic novel would be a "one-shot".

-Number of Issues/Volumes in Series (or ongoing/no end):

-Suggested Audience (SEE FAQ for details):

-Genre (Superhero, Sci-Fi, Fantasy, Horror, etc.):

-Format (comic book / softcover / hardcover):

-Page Count:

-Full Color, B&W, or Partial Color:

-Cover Dimensions:

-Retail Price:

-Diamond Discount % (need help? See FAQ):

-Printer name:

We understand that some publishers may be shopping around for a printer during the submission period and this isn't required to be final at time of submission.

-Country of Origin (printer location not publisher):

-Intended release month (or as soon as possible):

Writer(s):

Artist Name(s):

Cover Artist(s):

Other special notes to consider about the project:

WHEN PRINTING THIS FORM, PLEASE MAINTAIN ITS FORMAT TO ONE PAGE.