



Diamond
Comic Distributors, Inc.

SUBMISSION GUIDE FOR NEW PUBLISHERS

(Version November 2022)

This guide is designed for **publishers of printed material (comic books, graphic novels, art books, etc.)** and is not intended for manufacturers of games, toys, movies, novelties, etc.

If you are a manufacturer for these types of merchandise, please contact our New Merchandise Vendor Team at newvend@diamondcomics.com

To submit print projects for distribution consideration or if you have any questions, please contact submissions@diamondcomics.com

PLEASE READ THIS GUIDE THOROUGHLY BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR PRODUCTS FOR CONSIDERATION.

IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE TIMELY REVIEW OF YOUR SUBMISSIONS PACKAGE, PLEASE MAKE SURE TO INCLUDE ALL OF THE REQUESTED INFORMATION.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR SUBMISSIONS PACKAGE

When submitting to Diamond, please include all the following materials outlined below:

These allow our team to not only learn more about the product that you are looking to distribute, but also learn a bit more about your company and your plans for growth!

- A cover letter introducing yourself and your company.
- Completed digital copies of all the books that you are looking to distribute.
- Completed Product Information Sheets for each of these books (a sample sheet is included at the end of this guide).
- A 6-to-12-month production schedule or outline. If you do not have this definitively mapped out, just do your best! We are interested in learning how frequently you plan to solicit product in PREVIEWS as well as understand your overall plans for growth.
- A detailed marketing plan—specifically how you plan to drive consumers to comic shops to preorder your listed product from PREVIEWS. You will find some marketing ideas in this guide.
- Any other relevant information regarding your company or your future endeavors.

WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

When submitting through Diamond, you are entering into a business relationship as a formal publishing company. As such, you will be responsible for not only the creative aspect of producing comics, but also the operational, logistical, and financial aspects of running a publishing company.

That said, below is a brief list of things that Diamond is looking for in order to help your company grow and maximize sales of the titles that you solicit:

- Publishers offering multiple titles to the direct market on a regular basis.
- Publishers with a robust marketing plan and outreach program to drive consumer and retailer interest in your PREVIEWS listings as well as preorders.
- Publishers with an established relationship with a printer.
- Publishers with an understanding of the basics of publishing.
- Publishers with experience selling their product direct or to retail.
- Publishers with the financial resources to support a product line for 1 to 2 years.

WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

Diamond Comic Distributors (DCD) is the primary distributor of English language comic books, graphic novels and other pop culture merchandise for comic shops and specialty stores. We service around 3,500 retail accounts and offer the most varied list of product all in one convenient place!

Diamond does not publish comic books or graphic novels. We work with publishers to solicit and distribute their finished and printed product to retailers in the direct market.

Diamond produces a monthly catalog called **PREVIEWS** which is distributed to our retailer accounts. The content within the **PREVIEWS** catalog is also accessible to consumers via PREVIEWSworld.com.

Retailers and consumers use **PREVIEWS** to place preorders on comics, graphic novels, and other merchandise. These preorders determine how many units of a product that Diamond will purchase from a publisher. Once the publisher has shipped the requested product to Diamond's two warehouses, Diamond fulfills those retailer preorders on behalf of the publisher.

THE INDUSTRY WE SERVICE & WHAT TO EXPECT

Comic book publishing is a unique part of the general print publishing industry. Unlike traditional book publishing, comic shops (the direct market) purchase product on a **non-returnable** basis. As such, because they do not have the opportunity to return unsold product, comic shops are more diligent about the product that they choose to order.

As a publisher soliciting product to this market, it is critical to not only have strong editorial that will appeal to comics' retailers and consumers, but you must also invest in and maintain a strong marketing and promotional program to ensure that your book stands out.

Even then, it should be noted that it takes time to build up a strong presence in the direct market. On any given month, the largest publishers (Marvel, DC, Image, IDW, BOOM! Studios, Dynamite Entertainment, and Dark Horse) make up approximately 80% of the comic books sold in the direct market. New publishers can expect their initial listings to collect between 500-1,000 orders for standard sized/priced comics and between 50-200 orders for standard sized/priced collections. Varying factors can impact these order totals.

As you build your presence in **PREVIEWS** and the market though, if you have a robust business and marketing plan, ideally you would see your orders grow!

BEFORE YOU SUBMIT

Before you submit your projects to Diamond, we strongly recommend that you research the current marketplace to determine where your company will best thrive.

Speaking to comic shop staff, attending conventions and trade shows, browsing comics news and review sites, and reviewing the pages of a current issue of *PREVIEWS* are great ways to do the following: see what product is currently being made available, solicit feedback about how your product might do, identify what sales and marketing strategies you might be able to implement to position your product in the strongest way.

If you haven't done so already, establishing your company's "brand" through a website, social media, or even at a convention prior to seeking solicitation through Diamond are also recommended best practices. Building a publisher's presence in the market takes time. Taking the time to do that prior to pursuing mass distribution can help make the solicitation and marketing process once listed easier and more successful!

THE SUBMISSIONS & REVIEW PROCESS

Once you have put together your Submission Package (see [WHAT TO INCLUDE](#) for detailed instructions) and have sent a digital copy to submissions@diamondcomics.com, those materials will be circulated and reviewed by the Print Purchasing Team.

Along with what you have submitted, as part of the review process, our staff considers many variables when making their decision to distribute a product—including how competitive your product is in the current marketplace.

Regarding editorial, we look at price, format, quality, and overall potential in the current comics market. For your publication schedules as well as marketing plans, we are looking at how robust your intended product line is as well as how you will reach retailers and consumers if solicited in *PREVIEWS*.

Due to the volumes of Submissions Packages that we receive, the review process can take up to six weeks to complete but we aim to complete our review in under four. Thank you greatly in advance for your patience with this process. We want to ensure that all projects receive as comprehensive a review as possible!

If you do not send in a complete Submissions Package, someone will reach out to you to request the additional materials and you will be added to the end of the queue once those are received.

MARKETING YOUR PRODUCT

Inclusion in the *PREVIEWS* catalog is a great way to increase your product's reach in the comic market! There are several marketing opportunities that you can take advantage of to strengthen your presence in the print catalog.

That said, *PREVIEWS* is only one way to reach as many retailers and comic readers as possible. Here are some other suggestions to consider in order to create a dynamic marketing plan:

- Explore web marketing opportunities through the Diamond Retailer site and PREVIEWSworld.
- Work with comics news and review sites to either run ads or have reviews done of your books during key order periods.
- Implement a robust social media marketing strategy with links to your product on PREVIEWSworld or the [Comic Shop Locator Service](#) in order to drive preorder activity.
- If your product has a unique pitch or would appeal to a specific group of people, consider advertising directly to those groups.
- Ask your creative teams to echo and signal boost messaging about their titles.
- Find similar titles to your own and research how those products were marketed.

ARE YOU READY TO SUBMIT?

We know that this guide has a lot to go through, so we have put together some quick questions that you can ask yourself to best determine if you are ready to submit your project for mass distribution consideration.

- Have I visited multiple comic shops or spoken with shop owners to research what is being sold in the market? Is my product of competitive quality?
- Do I have an established social media presence to learn how the public responds to my product?
- Can I identify the major “hook” of my project that makes it intriguing to consumers and retailers before they’ve even seen the book or read a review?
- Does my total marketing budget for this project meet or exceed a minimum of \$2,500?
- Can my publishing company afford to produce the entire series of this comic (or the first graphic novel) no matter how high or low the sales results may be?
- Does my company have a long-term publishing plan for content over the next 1 to 2 years?
- Have I calculated the cost involved in maintaining my publishing schedule, including printing, shipping, and marketing?
- Do I have barcodes for all of the product that I am looking to solicit?
- Have I reviewed an issue of the *PREVIEWS* in order to see what my listing may look like and where it will be located if I’m accepted?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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

A. Diamond Comic Distributors offers a wide variety of pop-culture and/or comic book related products for the direct market. We consider all genres and formats of comic books and material related to sequential art. Some categories are not as strongly supported by the market. For example, prose or niche, non-sequential print product is often less supported by comic shops. That said, feel free to submit your product. We are more than happy to review even the most niche of items!

Q. Does Diamond Comics require a minimum order quantity in order to solicit?

A. No. If Diamond Comics has accepted your product for listing in *PREVIEWS*, we require that you fulfill all orders for your product regardless of quantity. That said, you should evaluate what your financial threshold may be. Failure to deliver ordered product could result in lower retailer support for future listings and could impact if Diamond chooses to solicit product from your company in the future.

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

A. Diamond does not solicit print product to the direct market in minimum order quantities. Likewise, per the Purchase Order terms that you will sign, you agree to fulfill all orders that are collected regardless of quantity.

Q. How formal should my submission package be?

A. We don't require anything above and beyond the items outlined at the beginning of this document. An elaborately packaged submission, or submission containing "swag" (t-shirts, buttons, stickers, etc.) will not affect the review committee's decision.

Q. How much should I discount my product?

A. The discount percentage (located on the Product Information Sheet at the end of this guide) is the percentage OFF the retail price. This is the price that Diamond will pay you per unit once preorders have been collected. The discount for all print product is 60% off of the SRP. As Diamond sells product to our retailers generally at 45-50% off of the retail price, the remaining amount that we keep from the 60% that we pay you goes towards the administrative and operational costs associated with soliciting and distributing your product.

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. These would be books that would be suitable for any reader to pick up—they are not overly violent, and do not contain any sexual situations. A "mature" title typically contains full or partial nudity and/or profanity that wouldn't be permitted on network television. An "adult" title would be more extreme than "mature" and typically means graphic sexual situations that would be considered pornographic.

It is the responsibility of publishers to rate their own titles, but you may ask Diamond's opinion if you are unsure how to proceed.

Q. Does Diamond sell my product to retailers like Amazon and Barnes & Nobles (book market accounts)?

A. While Diamond Comic Distributors (DCD) does not sell to these retail accounts, Diamond's sister company, Diamond Book Distributors (DBD), does. These are what are considered book market accounts and they purchase print product under separate terms. Distribution to these channels is far more complex, and there are additional business considerations beyond the non-returnable terms of the direct market. If you are interested in learning more about the book market and DBD, feel free to make that inquiry once your product has been accepted by Diamond Comics (DCD).

Q. What are some marketing ideas that I should avoid?

- Sending promotional posters, postcards, flyers, etc. to retailers. These unsolicited items are easily misplaced if not accompanied by a form of direct outreach.
- For-sale merchandise like t-shirts, posters, etc. are good, complimentary items for your book when "direct-selling" at convention/event appearances but do not do as well in *PREVIEWS* unless tied to a strong selling and established brand or book.
- Contests are a good way to build fans for social media, but they will not appeal to retailers ordering from *PREVIEWS*.
- Variant and/or signed covers are a common practice with larger, established publishers with recognized creators and brands but the major draw of these books are there increased resale value. A retailer can generate more revenue from a rare or signed copy of a popular comic title, but most comic shop consumers will not pay extra for a book signed by a creator or from a publisher that they are not familiar with.

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

A. Feel free to email submissions@diamondcomics.com with your further questions! We are more than happy to do our best guiding you through this process.

Thank you, again, for your interest in Diamond Comic Distributors. We look forward to learning more about your company and projects and wish you the best with the Submissions Process!

PRODUCT INFO SHEET FOR SUBMISSION

This form provides Diamond Comic Distributors with all of the major metadata points for considering your project as well as listing it in *PREVIEWS* if accepted.

Some data points like price or format can influence our decision to distribute a project so please be prepared to discuss those points further should those need to be adjusted in order to better fit with the current market.

All of the below information is required in order to submit and solicit through Diamond Comics.

Company Name:

Address:

Email Address:

Phone:

PRODUCT TITLE:

-Issue number:

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

-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:

-Barcode (ISBN for collections; UPC for comics):

-Country of Origin (printer location not publisher):

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

Writer(s):

Artist Name(s):

Cover Artist(s):

Synopsis: *no more than 150 words*

Other special notes to consider about the project:

At least 2 comparable titles: These should be products that are currently on-sale and that you believe are thematically or editorially similar to your book.

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