PROFIT SOURCERY

**Handling and Shipping an Order for
'Merchant Fulfilment'**

Congratulations, a customer has placed an order for one of your products! That's great news! Now, if you aren't using FBA, it's up to you to fulfil the order to keep your customer and Amazon happy.

If you've got a bit of Amazon experience then you'll already know how to fulfil an order. If however you're new to Amazon and want some tips for handling an order, we'll take you through the process.

We'll outline how to view your orders on Seller Central, how to package and ship your products and give you some tips to streamline the process.

You always need to be thinking about your customer metrics which means shipping orders on time and packaging them securely to avoid damage.

If you are using FBA to fulfil your orders this guide will not apply to you, please see our guide to "Uploading & Shipping Your Products to FBA" for information about shipping products to the Amazon warehouse.

An Order Has Been Made, You've Got a Sale!

When you make a sale Amazon will notify you. You'll receive an email with the subject "Sold, dispatch now" followed by the product you've sold. You'll receive the email once the order is verified and the customer's payment has been successful.

Within the email, you will find all the information relating to the order. You'll see:

- The Order ID (which is unique to the order)

- The shipping method the customer has paid for

- The item the customer has ordered (along with the quantity)

- The price the customer has paid

- The Amazon fees you have been charged for the sale

- The amount you will receive in your account

Once an order has been placed by a customer you will need to dispatch your item within two business days of receiving the order email from Amazon and confirm the dispatch to Amazon. If you receive an order on Friday night this must be dispatched by Sunday night, you cannot wait until Monday). To find the customer's delivery address as well as any other information about the order you can head to "Manage Orders" within Seller Central.

After you dispatch an order you **must** confirm that you have sent out the order or you will be penalised by Amazon for a late dispatch regardless of whether you physically posted the item on time or not.

Note: the two days to post your order is a default amount of time set by Amazon, if on your seller profile you advertise that you dispatch all orders within one day you will need to honour this to keep your customers happy.

The "Manage Orders" Page

It's important to get familiar with the "Manage Orders" page, any information you need about the orders your customers place can be found there. Using the advanced search you can also change the time period you wish to see orders from. Through the advanced search you are able to see the status of each order and finally in the action column you will see what steps you need to take for any incomplete orders, such as downloading packing slips or confirming dispatch.

In cases where the customer's payment has not gone through the orders will appear as "Pending" on your orders page, for these orders you will not be able to see any customer information, you do not need to take any action, Amazon will notify you when the order is verified.

Packaging Your Orders Correctly

Before you package the item make sure you remove any retail labels, price stickers, promotion stickers etc. Your customers don't need to know where you sourced your product from or at what price.

When packing your order you need to consider what packaging you should use and how the item should be presented. Amazon send out orders in brand new, well presented packaging and you should follow their example. It is not acceptable to recycle used cardboard boxes or bubble bags.

Put yourself in your customer's shoes and imagine receiving an order from a website in a damaged cardboard box, you probably wouldn't be very impressed and neither will your customers be. If putting yourself in your customer's shoes isn't enough then think about the potential damage of negative seller feedback to your business.

Make sure your parcels are sealed tightly and that the items inside are suitably packed so that they won't rattle or move about potentially breaking or piercing the packaging. You should assume that the package will be tipped upside down, on its side or even be dropped in transit. If you don't think your package can withstand that sort of treatment then it probably isn't packed well enough. If the product is particularly fragile you should use a fragile sticker on the outside of the packaging to encourage careful handling.

The packaging you use will depend on the type of product you are shipping but here are some general rules:

- Any products you sell that have packaging (e.g. its own box or case) should be placed into a shipping box with some filling material to stop it from moving around, paper, bubble wrap or polystyrene are fine.
- Any smaller media items (DVDs, CDs, books, etc), should be put into an envelope with internal bubble wrap or put into a cardboard envelope to ensure protection of product during shipment.
- Fragile products need to be protected with bubble wrap, 'air pillows/cushions' or protective sleeving and then placed tightly within a protective cardboard box.

Remember to include a return address on the back of your package in case it becomes lost or cannot be delivered for some reason. This needs to be written neatly and clearly. As your orders increase you might find it useful to get some address stickers printed to use on each parcel. This can also be an opportunity to add some branding to your packages by putting your logo on the stickers. Amazon state that you should write "Your Amazon.co.uk Marketplace Order" on the outside of each package. Again you might wish to have stickers printed with this message.

Amazon states that you cannot include any marketing material for your own website; you cannot try to draw your customer away from Amazon. For a full list of what you can and cannot do see the following link. What you can do is include a personalised thank you message, let customers know you appreciate their order, a little goes a long way and it may encourage customers to leave you feedback.

One thing you do need to include is the packing slip. If you locate the order through the "Manage Orders" page in Seller Central you will see a link in the "Action" column to "Print Packing Slip", remember to print and include this unless the customer has specifically asked you not to (if the item is a gift they may not want the price included). This packing slip will allow the customer to see what they have ordered and their order number and will make any complaints or issues easier to deal with.

Staying Organised

When starting out you may find it easy to package and dispatch orders as and when you receive confirmation emails but as your sales increase you will need to be more organised to make sure you don't miss any orders or dispatch your products late.

Set aside time each day where you will prepare all orders for the last 24-48 hours and take them to the post office or order a collection depending on your dispatch method. If you stay organised and stick to a schedule you can make sure you don't miss any orders.

Dispatching Your Product

If you would prefer to pay for your postage through your Amazon account you can do so through the "Manage Orders" page. In the Action column you will see a yellow button through which you can "Buy delivery".

You will be required to input the dimensions and weight of your package.

After pressing continue you will be given a list of postage options to choose from including Royal Mail and Collect +. The Collect + service allows you to pay for your delivery and drop off your package at your closest Collect + location, for more information see the Collect + website.

Finally you will need to confirm your delivery and print your label to complete your delivery. This will automatically confirm your dispatch and all that's left for you is drop off your parcel for delivery.

Confirming Dispatch

If you choose to pay for your delivery outside of your Amazon account, once you have sent out an order you need to confirm the dispatch through Seller Central. Locate the order through the "Manage Orders" page on Seller Central.
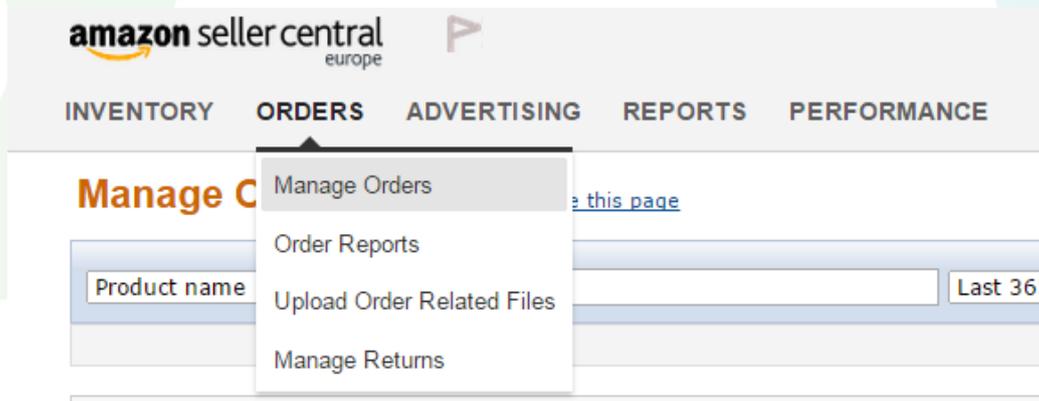
In the Action column beside the order you will see a yellow "Confirm Dispatch" button, click here to confirm you have sent the package.

You will be asked to input the postal method and any tracking information associated with the delivery. This information will be passed on to the customer so that they are able to track their order.

Dispatch Date:	Wednesday, 28 January 2015 ▼	
Delivery Method:	Carrier: Royal Mail ▼	Delivery Service: First Class
Tracking ID:		

Confirm dispatch