



Get your ethical products into retail stores.

As an ethical brand owner, you've made it your responsibility to produce products that don't harm humans, animals or our environment. Thank you for that!

You also want to make positive changes in your industry so that you can truly make an impact in this world.

Your conscious consumers are already helping you realize your dream, but it's not enough, so you need to make your products more accessible and become more mainstream without sacrificing your values or pinching your pennies.

This means, you'll have to increase your customer base.

It's time to think bigger!

Look at the thousands of [people who want to shop consciously](#) and would love to buy your stuff, but are basically too lazy to do the research to find you. It's a HUGE market.

If you can tap into this market, you'll start to rock your revenue and become the industry leader you deserve to be.

In this checklist, you'll find many actionable steps that you can integrate into your ethical business to [start getting your products into retail stores](#) and into the hands of your future raving fans.

Some steps are quick and easy, others will take some time to design and create.

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Ready to get your products into stores?

Let's do this!



Actionable steps you can start taking today.

Create a new customer profile.

Also known as an avatar or customer persona. Write a profile for the type of retailer you want to work with. One of the most important parts of a marketing strategy is to know your customers well. Not just the ones buying your products, but also the retailers who are promoting them.

Make a list.

Research all retailers that fit your profile above. Start with small, independent stores (on and offline) before heading to the bigger retailers.

Think of your current contacts. Do any of your connections know retailers who could introduce you?

Get to know the retail manager and physical store.

Find out who the retail manager is and as much as you can about this person before talking to him/her. Find common ground.

Also, visit the store and check out their floor layouts and product displays of similar products to make sure the store truly fits your style.

Proof your Packaging.

Retail space is expensive. If you have bulky packaging that doesn't fit well on a shelf, you may want to rethink it. As an ethical brand owner, you're already conscious of finding slim, ethically-made packaging, so that'll work in your favor.

Know your worth.

Retailers are businessmen. Learn how to negotiate because they will try to bring your profit down to the ground. Keep in mind that a real cost-per-unit breakdown includes manufacturing, shipping, packaging, UPC, and anything else that has a price tag on product production.

Understand your benefits.

Right after knowing your worth, you have to understand that there is power in numbers. You'll have to accept the fact that you need to decrease your profit margin to make your products more accessible to customers.

This is the price you'll have to pay to rent the retailer's space, so figure out how low you're able and willing to go before talking to them. Also, you can always test it out for a year to see if it's worth your while.



Protect your products.

If you have something unique, protect it with a patent/trademark before engaging with anybody.

Highlight your products, not your values.

Try to remember that your values are not what people are buying from you. They are buying your products. Sure, conscious consumers make sure your values align with theirs, but if your products don't match their style, they will not become your customers. Products first, values second.

During your conversation with the retail manager and on your homepage, try not to overshadow your products with your ethical values. Instead showcase your products and place your values and sustainable/ethical language on the side, e.g. on separate pages on your website: About, How our Products are Made, Mission statement, etc.

Retailers are interested in products that produce **high margins, a fast turnover and a small footprint**. This is the language that retailers speak. Learn to speak it.

Be transparent.

Describe 'confusing' terms on product descriptions on a separate page, e.g. place an anchor link on the term 'Ethically-sourced Bamboo from China' in your product description to direct people to that definition on your Q&A or 'How our Products are Made' page.

Be human and pick up the phone.

Once you know the retail manager as best you can, instead of sending an eMail, pick up the phone and ask to speak to the retail manager.

If you're lucky, you'll get transferred to the right person right away. Try not to babble, just get straight to the point. Tell the manager how your products will increase sales for their store.

Find out how often he/she brings in new products and if there's a protocol to follow. Ask if they offer vendor days.

If he/she shows interest, schedule an appointment to meet in person.

Perfect your pitch.

If you suck at sales pitching and negotiating, you may want to consider hiring someone who has the talent and contacts in this field. If that's not in the cards for you, then learn how to do this effectively through proper training or at least online research and practice with friends.



Design your Pitch Package.

Present the following items in a personalized designed presentation for each retailer:

- Cover letter
- Product samples
- Sales data
- Pricing and ordering information
- Patents
- Press kit
- Customer feedback
- Website and social media analytics
- Contact information

Guarantee success.

Retailers don't have anything to lose by carrying your brand. For one, your products rock and secondly, all they're giving you is space which doesn't cause any 'suffering' on their part.

Don't give up.

A solid relationship takes time to nurture. It may take months or even years before a retailer is willing to take you on. Be patient, kindly follow up and don't give up.

Get a lawyer.

When you're successful, you'll have to sign a contract. If you don't understand the terms and conditions, get a professional to look it over before signing anything. The official language of Judicial is difficult, so don't mess with it if you don't have the expertise.

Celebrate.

After signing the contract, invite the manager for a glass of wine – or whatever he/she fancies – at a nice place convenient for him/her. If this has all been done virtually, send a personalized thank you card via snail mail.

Once you get home, continue to celebrate with your loved ones!