



## Introduction

When publishers ask, “What is the most effective marketing tool to sell supplemental products to schools?” I tell them to put their money into a catalog. Why? Because catalogs continue to be the most effective return on your marketing investment.

There are several reasons for this:

1. Catalogs are often shared among many buyers, thus increasing your reach within the institution.
2. Catalogs are usually filed and used as a reference resource throughout the year, thus increasing the length of time the catalog generates revenue.
3. Catalogs generate immediate orders as well as long-term orders, thus increasing immediate revenues in addition to the orders that come during the summer months.

Over the past 16 years, I have worked with more than 40 educational companies to help them generate more revenue and profits from their marketing investment. Catalogs are one of the linchpins of a sound educational marketing strategy. Specifically, successful catalogs should accomplish the following objectives each time you mail:

- Generate higher total revenue
- Increase the average dollar order
- Attract a significant number of new customers
- Increase the total revenues from existing customers
- Stand out in an increasingly competitive environment

Creating an effective catalog involves developing an overall strategy, selecting the right mailing lists, developing copy that sells, creating a design that supports your copy, developing effective offers and pricing—and, of course, mailing at the right time.

This guide book will take you through the process of creating a successful and profitable catalog to sell your products to schools and libraries.

Always remember the old axiom of direct mail: Test, measure, test, measure, and test some more!



## **Defining Your Strategy**

From School Specialty's 2002 annual catalog of almost 1,000 pages, to Zoo Book's 8-page fall 2002 catalog, catalogs come in many shapes and sizes and serve a variety of strategic purposes in a company's overall marketing strategy.

The primary catalog is the spring catalog that publishers and distributors mail to schools right after Christmas, so that it arrives in early January. This is the catalog that reaches your customers' and prospects' hands just as they are beginning to make buying decisions for the following school year.

The primary catalog generally includes a company's entire line of published and distributed products. This catalog is often overprinted with a