



Guidelines for Submitting Product Samples to Small Retailers.

Most retailers get hundreds of product samples every year. Do your marketing homework before you start to approach stores. Why should the store stock your product? Why is your product different than what they already carry? Remember, stores don't just have empty space on shelves, they will be discontinuing another product in order to stock yours. Why is your product worth stocking? If you would like a store to consider adding your product to their shelves, there is certain information they need in order to make an informed decision.

With your product sample(s) include:

Company Name

Company Information (contact person, phone, address, email address)

Product line description (Jams, mustards, cookies, etc.)

Individual product list, including size, pack size and ingredients in each

Cost per unit

Minimum order

Shelf Life of product and special instructions (must be refrigerated, etc.)

Order and delivery process (order Thurs. by 3 for Monday delivery, order when out, etc.)

What other stores are carrying your products? What do they charge per unit?

Payment Terms (NOTE: most stores **do not** accept products that require COD)

Many stores evaluate products on the following criteria:

Taste, Appearance, Healthiness of ingredients, Uniqueness, Ease of ordering and displaying, Cost-value ratio

Diferent aspects of your product to think about:

Packaging:

Does your packaging do your product any favors on the shelf?

If you have a few skus, do the different labels look different enough that it is easy for customers and stockers to tell the difference in a quick glance?

Does the packaging stand out?

Does the packaging represent your brand well?

How does your packaging compare to your competition? (Is the type of packaging similar or different than yours? How does your price point and size of package compare?)

Marketing:

Website: Have a good website and keep it updated. Have your website link on your packaging so customers can find you, and retailers can easily find your contact information.

Shelf talkers: Create (small) shelf-talkers to go with your products to help them sell. Remember to leave a space for the retailer to write in a price. See our [Shelf-Talker 101 resource](#) to learn more.

Demos: Be prepared to do in-store demos. If you are doing an active demo, make sure to bring everything you need with you, including signage, vinyl gloves, disposable tasting spoons, etc. Be prepared to stop people as they are walking by, and don't sit down or talk on your phone!! If you are an introvert and really won't be able to do it well, find an extroverted friend /partner/ employee to do the demo for you. Remember though, that you are going to do the best job selling your product, because you believe in it. You can't afford to do lack luster demos that don't get people excited about your product. If you can, tie in your product with other items the store is selling (cheese with your crackers, salad with your dressing, chicken with your marinade). Include recipe cards if appropriate.