



How to
CREATE
a profitable
T-SHIRT
BUSINESS

**The exact system I've been using
to sell thousands of t-shirts per month,
over the last 10 years.**

ownatshirtstore.com

Fernando Silva

The exact system I've been using to sell thousands of t-shirts per month, over the last 10 years.

1 – My Story

My business adventure with t-shirts started about 10 years ago.

If I said it was a well planned project, I would be lying. In fact, I ended selling t-shirts after trying other products. Selling t-shirts was plan D or E.

They say if you keep trying, one day you'll find a good business. In my case, it was true.

I opened a store, selling shirts and pants. It didn't work.
Then, I opened a store selling shirts and ties. It didn't work either.
Then, a clothing store for teens. And guess what? It didn't go well.

But, in this teen store there was a product that sold quiet well. It was: t-shirts.

And so, I got rid of all the other products and started selling t-shirts. Only t-shirts, and nothing more.

And this time, luck was on my side.

People really liked my t-shirts. They were simple t-shirts with funny quotes or designs.

I couldn't believe how many t-shirts I could sell in a month. My wife thought it was another one of my “big ideas”. I remember when she asked me if I was sure I was really making money.

But I was.

She couldn't believe, and I couldn't either. Because I was not making some money. I was making a lot of money.

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People would come to my store and buy 2, 3, 4, or even more t-shirts. They would buy t-shirts like they were buying hot cakes.

I thought it wouldn't last forever. T-shirts with words and designs wouldn't be fashionable for a long time.

But years passed, and I was selling even more t-shirts.

Then came the great recession, and guess what?

I was still making money. Even more money.

My prices were competitive. So, people would still have money to buy t-shirts.

And as I was buying cheap, my margins were high.

That's what I call a great business:

- Customers want to buy what you sell – you just have to show them the product.
- Prices are low – they can afford to buy.
- Margins are high – you can make money.

So, I finally had to believe – this was going to be a business for life.

Of course, most of the designs and sentences I use now, are different from when I started.

Some designs that I used were so rude and offensive that I am ashamed of showing them. But don't blame me. That's what customers wanted.

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"Smile. It's the second best thing you can do your lips". One of my first designs. A bit offensive, I guess. But customers loved it.

Now, in reality, the secret was not only selling t-shirts – it was important – but the secret was the system I was using to buy and print t-shirts.

I'm sure that if I didn't use this system, I would never had success.

But don't worry, I'll tell you the exact system I use to buy and print t-shirts. I won't hide anything from you.

I promise that in the end of this book, you'll have the same knowledge that took me several years to learn by trial and error.

The internet

Meanwhile, we started to sell online (of course), and our success was the

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same. In fact, I don't think there is such a difference in selling online or in a physical store. It's just a different channel, but the principles are the same.

The great advantage of selling online is how easy it is to start a business. And it's also cheaper.

We're going to see where to sell in the last part of this book.

But first, let's start with the basic of the system – the t-shirt itself.

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2 – The T-shirts

One of the problems of anyone starting a t-shirt business is finding t-shirts. Most people start by searching for t-shirts manufacturers.

And that's where I started too.

Besides, I was already buying clothes from factories, including t-shirts. And there are also a lot of clothing manufacturers in my country (Portugal). So I ordered t-shirts.

But the problem was the minimum order. No one wanted to produce less than 200 t-shirts per color and model. And even with an order of 200 t-shirts, the price was quite high – about 4€ (that's \$5).

And as you can imagine, for having a collection, you need at least 2 models (man and woman) and 6 colors. A total of 2400 t-shirts. Or, an investment of 9,600€.

That's a lot of money.

And if customers didn't like the models? Or the colors?

What I really needed was a supplier of t-shirts:

- with stock t-shirts in different models, colors and sizes;
- that I could order any quantity (no minimum orders);
- and with more reasonable prices.

Luckily there was this kind of suppliers. And after lots of research, I found.

And that's the first part of my system: buying t-shirts from suppliers of t-

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shirts for the promotional market.

T-shirts for the promotional market are those t-shirts that brands give away for promoting their brands. You probably have a few promotional t-shirts from a brand of beer, or a bank.

Some are crappy t-shirts.

But others have quality, and can perfectly be sold in any store. In fact, the t-shirts that I buy are much better (in quality) than those you find in stores like Forever21, H&M, and Zara.

In the last years, those promotional t-shirts companies started to stock t-shirts of better quality and different models.

Today, you can find basic t-shirts, but also fashionable models.

And they stock more than t-shirts. They stock polo-shirts, sweat-shirts, hoodies (hooded sweat-shirts), shirts, aprons, etc.

This is also important, because selling t-shirts is a seasonal business.

Unfortunately, customers buy more t-shirts in Spring and Summer. And less in Fall and Winter.

If it was the reverse, you could make money on Winter and spend it at the beach in Summer. But that's not the case.

What I found is if you also sell hoodies, you can keep a steady income all year. That's because customers still buy t-shirts in Winter, and adding the sales of hoodies, you can do almost the same profit as in Summer. Pretty cool.

Now, let's see some more practical details on where to find t-shirts.

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As I said, with my system, you buy t-shirts from promotional t-shirt companies.

But where to find those companies?

I'll give you a list with several companies. Then you search on Google for those companies and see if there's a distributor in your country.

So, here's the list:

- Gildan
- Anvil
- B&C
- Fruit of the Loom
- Jerzees
- JHK
- Kariban
- Bella+canvas
- Starworld
- Hanes

When you start searching for a distributor in your country, you'll notice that some distributors sell several different brands. So, if you find a distributor with several brands and low prices, you don't need to have more than one supplier.

Until now, you've learn how to find suppliers that have stock ready t-shirts (and hoodies); low prices; low minimum orders (or even no minimums)

Now, we have the t-shirts. But there's something important missing – the print. And that's what we're gonna see right away.

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3 – The Print

A t-shirt without a print, is like a garden without flowers.

If your t-shirts don't have a print on it, you're competing with most clothing stores, and there's not really any reason for customers to buy from you.

So you do need prints.

I've seen literally every kind of prints on t-shirts. Designs, words, drawings, and on, and on.

When I started selling t-shirts, I opted for funny t-shirts. Funny t-shirts are t-shirts with funny designs or sentences.

Of course, the type of sentences and designs have changed in the last 10 years, but they still sell very well. In fact, they are still the number one type of designs that I sell.

Today, I also have other kind of prints, namely: motivational quotes, graphic design, etc.

It's important to have designs that you know customers want to buy and search for.

I see many graphic designers trying to sell t-shirts with their own designs, but with no luck. And the problem is not on their design. Some are very good designs.

But they aren't the designs customers are searching for.

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So, you must have designs that people want to buy.

When people want to buy our t-shirts, we can say we have a business.

But when people like our designs, but don't buy them, we have a hobby, not a business.

Where to print

The second problem that I had, was where to print my t-shirts.

It was the same problem as with t-shirts. Screen printers were demanding minimum orders. And if I wanted to have dozens of different designs, I would have to print thousands of t-shirts.

There are some companies that print few t-shirts. It's even possible to print one t-shirt. But the technique they use is bad. They don't have the look of a screen printed t-shirt.

And besides, the prices are stupidly high. How can you make a profit buying t-shirts at 10 to 12 Euros (that's 12 to 14 dollars) and make a profit?

You would have to sell them at more than 25€. But at those prices, customers prefer to buy from famous brands.

That's why I bought a screen printing equipment and started to print my own t-shirts.

This is not a thing I advice you to do. Learning to screen print is not an easy thing that you can learn in a couple of months. And besides, it's a mess. There are inks, chemical products, machinery, etc.

But after months of trial and error I learned to screen print.

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Unfortunately my problems didn't stop here. I could screen print. But it was still not profitable to print a dozen of t-shirts.

In order to be profitable I needed to print at least 50 t-shirts. But 50 t-shirts per design is a lot.

So, once again, I searched for a solution.

And the solution was: screen printed heat transfers.

That's the second part of my system, and one of my biggest secrets of success.

So, anyway, what are screen printed heat transfers?

Basically, instead of printing directly on the t-shirt, you print on a special paper (with a special ink and a special powder). Then you dry the ink.

Now you have a screen printed heat transfer that you can stock for as long as you wish. You can stack them. So, you don't need much space – it's a sheet of paper with a print.

Here comes the magic part. When you need to print a design, you pick a t-shirt, a heat transfer and you transfer the print onto the t-shirt. How? Using a heat press.

A heat press is a simple and inexpensive equipment.

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This is a basic heat press.

You can buy one for less than 200€ (that's \$240). And they are extremely easy to use.

When I say they are extremely easy to use, it's only when using the kind of heat transfer that I use. So, be careful about the type of heat transfer you use.

Screen printed heat transfer (that I simply call “heat transfers”) are completely different from digital transfers.

Digital transfers are made in a common printer with common inks. But they have two problems:

- They are not easy to apply
- They are not resistant to washing.

On the other hand, screen printed heat transfers are:

- Easy to apply (as long as you use the same type of paper, ink, and powder that we use)

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- Extremely resistant to washing. You can wash the t-shirts dozens of times and I assure you the print won't disappear.
- Soft-hand (our heat transfers have a soft-hand touch).

So, let's summarize what we've learned so far.

1. How to find t-shirts (the right model at the right price)
2. How to print the t-shirts – using heat transfers.

But remember, only use heat transfers that:

- are screen printed
- easy to apply and have a soft-touch
- have designs that people want to buy.

That's why we are very careful with our offer of heat transfers.

See for yourself:

[Screen printed heat transfers from ownatshirtstore.com](http://ownatshirtstore.com)

Now, we have printed t-shirts, but we need to sell them. Let's find out how and where we can sell our amazing t-shirts.

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3 – Where And How To Sell Your T-shirts

The difficult part is choosing where to sell t-shirts. And that's because there are plenty of places to sell t-shirts.

Let's divide into two parts:

- A) Online
- B) and offline

This doesn't mean you should just sell online or offline. You can do both. I myself, started offline (with physical stores) and then added online sales.

A) Online

1 – Website

Opening an e-store has never been so easy.

If you want to take the time, you can create an e-store using free software like Wordpress and Woocommerce. You just need a domain name (costs about 12€ / year), and an internet server provider (starting at 10€/ month)

Or you can hire someone to create your store.

Another alternative is using services like Shopify or Wix, that makes it easy to create an e-store in few time.

2 – Facebook, Pinterest, and other social networks

It's possible to sell through social networks.

Facebook, for example, let's you create a store where you can show your products. It's like a web-store, but more basic.

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But even in other social networks like Pinterest or Instagram ,you can sell t-shirts. You can't do it directly, but with the help of another website (a “selling platform”) , it's easy.

Let me explain how it works:

1. You post an image of a t-shirt on a social network.
2. You add text to explain some details, and a link to the “selling platform”.
3. When the customer clicks on the link, he or she are sent to the sales page page of the “selling platform”.
4. There, the customer can pay, and give details about shipping address.
5. You get an email with those details.
6. You send the order.
7. After a few days, this “selling platform” pays you the money. This “selling platform” keeps a small commission.

I know a good “selling platform” that offers this kind of service. It's called Gumroad. So, let's see how it works.

3 – Gumroad

Gumroad is a website that lets you create a store with digital products or physical products.

It's like Ebay, Amazon, or Etsy, but there's an advantage. And the advantage is that Gumroad doesn't show other products (from the competition) to your customers.

This is a huge problem, specially with Amazon. When customers see a product, Amazon suggests alternatives from your competitors. That's bad and unjust.

Gumroad has another advantage. You don't pay anything upfront. You only pay a commission when you sell a product.

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4 – Etsy

I like Etsy. It's a great place to sell t-shirts.

Etsy has millions of users searching for products. And t-shirts are one of the best categories to sell.

You pay \$0.20, and offer your product for 3 months.

5 – Ebay

Ebay is another great place to sell t-shirts. Everybody knows how it works, so I'm not going to explain you.

These are just a few places to sell online. But there are much more.

B) Offline

Now, let's see the possibilities to sell offline.

1 – Your own Physical store

This is how I started – having my own store.

Usually you have to invest a lot of money to open a clothing store. But with my system, you can open a physical store (also called brick and mortar) with a very low investment.

And that's because:

- You don't need a huge stock of products.
- The decoration of a t-shirt store is inexpensive.

In physical stores, and using my system, you can have two types of offer.

You can display all your t-shirts already printed. This way customers pick t-shirts and buy them immediately.

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Or you can have a board with the designs you sell. And then, customers choose the t-shirt (or other garment), and the design of the print, and then you press the t-shirt.

As it takes less than a minute to press a t-shirt, customers don't mind to wait.

2 – Other stores

If you don't want to open a store (for now), you can still sell offline – you can sell to other stores.

You go to other clothing stores and ask if they want to sell your t-shirts. If they accept, you deliver the t-shirts.

As you can easily print more t-shirts, you can replace t-shirts when they are sold. This is a huge advantage for the store owner: less stock, but never out of stock.

3 – Kiosks on malls

Have you seen those small stands at walkways in shopping centers?

Those stands are called kiosks, and they are one of the best kept secrets in retail.

It's almost impossible to ignore those kiosks. Right in front of customers. And customers don't need to enter a store too see the products. Products are right there. Customers can see them. And they can even touch and grab those products.

Another advantage of kiosks is that you don't have to sign a long term lease with shopping centers. These leases are short term. Usually one month. But you can negotiate other terms.

T-shirts are great products to sell on kiosks. In fact, I think they are the only clothes suitable for selling in kiosks. And these are the reasons why:

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- Almost no one tries on t-shirts. Everyone knows which size they wear. And it's easy to look at a t-shirt and decide what size is the right size.
- T-shirts don't need much space for display. You can display dozens of t-shirts in a kiosk. With my system, you can even display a board with designs, and press t-shirts when customer orders.

4 – Temporary stores

Market, fairs and outdoor exhibitions are another great way to sell t-shirts. Every town or city have several markets, fairs or exhibitions per year. And if you live in a big city, there are always several per week.

And people love to shop on those little stand stores.

But there are other events where you can sell t-shirts - music festivals, trade events, sport events, and many others.

All of these events bring thousands of people. And many of these events take place on weekends. It's perfect for someone who has a full time job, and wants to make money on a part time business.

How to choose place

There are plenty of alternatives. What I advise you is that you start with the best alternative for you, and then, you can add more places to sell. Don't try to sell everywhere at beginning. There's a learning curve. It's not difficult. But still, you have to learn

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4 – How To Promote The Business

Depending on where you choose to sell, and your market, you may need to promote your business.

Sometimes it's not necessary because customers find you. And when this happens, it's great. You just have to sit and wait for them.

But other times you have to search for customers.

Here are 3 forms of promoting the business.

1 – Influencers

An influencer is someone who has the power to affect the buying decisions of others.

Usually, influencers use their followers on social media to suggest products.

For example, the Kardashians have millions of followers.

I don't advise you to contact these influencers with millions of followers, because they want money to promote your business.

On the other hand, influencers with thousands of followers will be happy if you give them a t-shirt, in exchange of a post or video showing your t-shirt.

2 – Social networks

You can use social networks to promote your business for free.

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The results won't be immediate (unless you pay for advertising). But if you continuously keep adding posts, videos, or images, it will pay off.

I'm not going to explain exactly how to use social media to promote your business. There are so many social networks, and each has its own way of promoting. Besides, you probably already use a couple of them.

3 – Advertising

Advertising usually costs money. So, you have to do the math. When something is free, we just do it. When we have to pay, we must consider the benefits (gross margins) and the costs. Advertising is an investment.

I myself, have made advertising several times. And benefits were higher than costs.

Of course it wasn't always. Sometimes my ads didn't pay off. So what did I do?

I stopped or changed them.

The beauty of digital advertising is that:

- it's easy to start
- it's easy to stop
- you can start with a small amount (say \$10 a week) and see how it goes.

And there's another advantage that most people don't realize. The important thing is not only the profit you make the first time a customer buys your t-shirts. Some (or many) customers will buy from you more than once. So even if you don't make a big profit on the first order, you can make money the next ones.

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5 – Final Tips

That's it. We covered everything you should know about a t-shirt business using my system.

I didn't hide anything from you. Now, you know my main secrets.

As you saw, the most important parts of my system are: the t-shirts, and the heat transfers.

About the t-shirts, you have plenty of choice.

Regarding heat transfers, the choice is not so big. But there are some options out there.

As I told you, we sell heat transfers on our website: www.ownatshirtstore.com

I'm not saying you must buy from us – although our heat transfers are great ;)

You should see for yourself other websites that also sell heat transfers.

Only have this in mind:

1 – Not all heat transfers are easy to apply.

If you search for reviews about heat transfers (for example in t-shirtsforum) you'll find people complaining about some companies that sell heat transfers.

What they say is that sometimes their heat transfers are easy to apply, but sometimes they don't “stick” to the t-shirt, no matter what they do.

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The problem with those heat transfers is that they didn't use the right combination of paper / ink / powder. Sometimes they don't even use powder (which is the expensive and difficult part).

Our heat transfers are easy to apply.

Imagine having to print a t-shirt for a customer and the heat transfer didn't adhere to the t-shirt.

Or worse, imagine it adheres only a part of the design (and that's what usually happens). You lose the heat transfer and the t-shirt.

Or even worse, imagine it was a hoodie (that costs a lot more than a t-shirt)

Or even worse, imagine you print the t-shirt and it looks good. But when the customer washes it, the print goes away. You lose the customer, and probably get a bad review.

Our heat transfers are just a little bit expensive than most of our competitors. And I'm talking about a few cents more expensive, not dollars or euros. But in the end, they are cheaper because you don't screw up t-shirts (and customers).

2 – The design of the print is important

Probably it's the most important thing.

Our designs are the kind of designs that you can find in any store. These are the designs that customers are searching for, and buying.

Take a look at them:

<https://www.ownatshirtstore.com/shop>

These are modern designs, not designs that were hot 20 years ago. We are always adding new designs. That's the only way to keep our customers businesses flourishing, and helping them to make big money.

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We are super confident in our heat transfers. If you want to test yourself their quality, just send me an e-mail, and ask for samples.

Here's my email address:

fernandosilva@ownatshirtstore.com

I'll send you free samples by mail (and you don't even have to pay for shipping).

Thank you for reading this book.

Yours,

Fernando Silva
(Own a T-shirt Store)

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