



## Northwest Power Building through Revenue Generation

**Mobilize Your Mass Base through Rev Gen Part 2:**

*Using Merch & E-Commerce to advance your mission and generate funds*

Progressive  
**Multiplier**

July 28, 2023



# Meet the PM Team.



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We help organizations build  
**a progressive movement of, by and for everyday people.**

We do this by organizing and leveraging funding to  
create onramps for progressive organizations to  
**start, strengthen or scale  
individual giving and earned revenue programs.**

Through both an online community of practice and  
our grantmaking and support program, we build the  
progressive sector's revenue generation knowledge  
and skills so that it can  
**amplify a people-powered movement.**





NORTHWEST HEALTH  
FOUNDATION



meyer  
MEMORIAL TRUST



GRAY  
FAMILY  
FOUNDATION



YARG  
FOUNDATION



RWVN  
FOUNDATION

Oregon

Community

Foundation

WHAT WE PROVIDE

# Our Partnership

- Provided 4 **Revenue Generation Project Grants** that include Strategic Assistance
- Provided 2 **Staffing Strategic Assistance Grants** that includes rev gen strategic planning and developing a sustainable staffing model with training
- Develop a **Revenue Generation Resource Library** that includes 15 tools
- Develop 6 2-hour **Training Sessions**
- Provide 5-hour **Capstone Sessions** for 8 funder partner groups





RESPONDING TO WHAT WE HEARD FROM YOU

# Upcoming Sessions

- Aug 25: Monetize Your Existing Program & Other Earned Income Strategies**
- Sept 29: Surges & Cliffs: Navigating the Changing Landscape**

Watch Previous Trainings

<https://bit.ly/Northwest-Training>

An Intro to Selling Stuff

Merchandising for Nonprofits

Setting Up Shop:  
Live & E-Commerce

Getting Out the Word

Test for Success



**Before we dive in...**

**Does your organization  
already have a merch shop?**

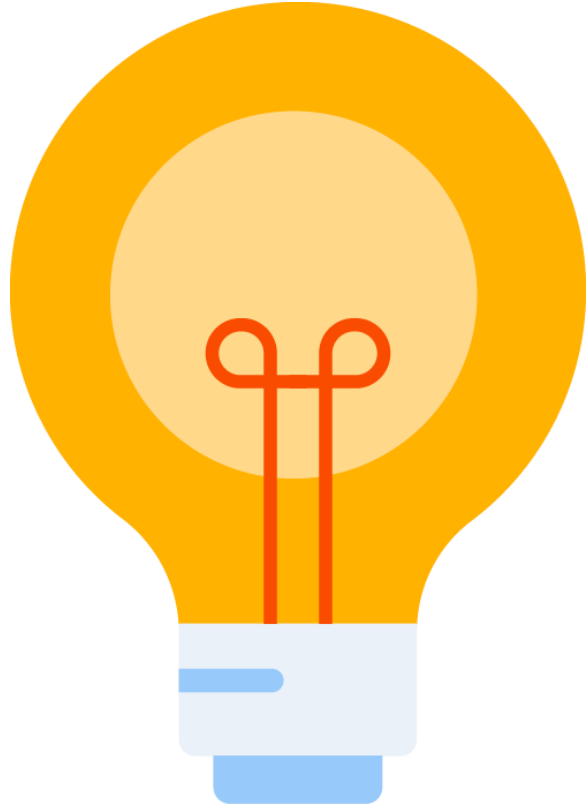
**Why do you want to learn  
more e-commerce?**



# An Intro to Selling Stuff







**Getting reliable income through sales involves a lot more than simply slapping your logo on a t-shirt and putting it on your website.**

**Like everything else revenue generation, it takes careful planning, thoughtful consideration, endless creativity, data, analysis, and rigor.**

**Enjoy.**

# Financial Pros & Cons to Selling Merch



## It's an Under-Utilized Revenue Stream

- Selling merchandise can be a great way to raise money for your organization
- An online shop can bring in income year-round.

## Not all Revenue is Created Equal

- If the products you sell are not directly related to your mission (not substantially related to your charitable purpose), you may be subject to Unrelated Income Tax.
- You may need to charge sales tax.
- You may need to register and/or get a license or permit.

# Visibility Benefits to Merch & E-Commerce

## Promoting Missions & Values:

- Through the selling of merch, you can provide products that support your organizational ethos.

## Great for Branding:

- Merch with your logo is a great way of increasing your brand visibility, especially for local organizations.
  - Do you have enough brand awareness and loyalty to drive sales?

**Ask members wear your t-shirt at actions to show the strength of your organizing and make your presence known.**





# Relational Benefits to Merch & E-Commerce

## Engage Supporters:

- Products and merchandise create additional ways of engaging with your organization.
- Sales can be a gateway for the curious since buying can be impulse driven. Donations are deliberate.
  - Products will grab them. Your work will keep them.

## Building Community:

- Wearing your merch can help your supporters feel close to and part of your work.
  - Seeing others wear your message can make people feel less alone.



**Before we move on...**

**Which benefit seems the  
most useful?**

**What would it allow you  
to do?**



# Merchandising for Nonprofits





# A Matter of Choice: Useful or Meaningful



## Useful Items

- T-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, buttons, stickers
- Mugs, flasks, tumblers
- Shopping bags, backpacks
- Journals, notepads, pens

## Meaningful Items

- One of a kind artwork created by people you serve
- A regional cookbook or an edible gardening eBook
- Album/Playlist of music by local talent
- Culturally-specific Holiday Cards
- A downloadable walking tour

# RAMADAN KAREEM!



This Eid, send your loved ones a heartfelt message while supporting Georgia Muslim Voter Project's critical work registering voters and getting Georgia Muslims civically engaged.

**GET YOUR EID CARDS AT  
GAMVP.ORG/EID**



## Georgia Muslim Voter Project

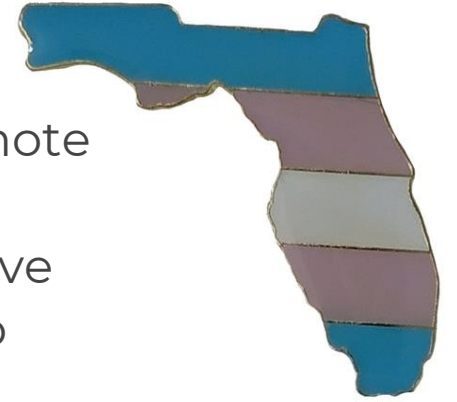
- GAMVP addressed the need for a holiday card celebrating Eid while connecting to more Muslim people in GA and raising unrestricted funds.





## Equality Florida

- EQFL is using their merch to promote visibility, buck the system, send a message to Ron DeSantis – and give the community and allies a way to *fabulously* support their work.







*Regal's Color* by Harold T.M. Smith III

## Initiate Justice

- IJ partnered with inside artists to bring their work and their voice to the public through their ART Gallery. Proceeds supported both the artists and IJ's work to end incarceration.



*Extract from Pain* by Paul Ahumada

# Making Merch

## Why & What

- Why do you want to start selling? Is it all about the income? Is it about branding? Is it about a tie-in to your programmatic work? Is it all or a combination of things?
- What do you want to sell?

## Who are you Designing For?

- Knowing your organization's audience will help you determine what you should create and sell.
  - The items you choose should be useful and/or meaningful.
  - Too many choices can be bad.

## Effective Pricing & Accessibility

- Determine a price your audience can afford.
- Identify your profit margin and begin to build your budget.



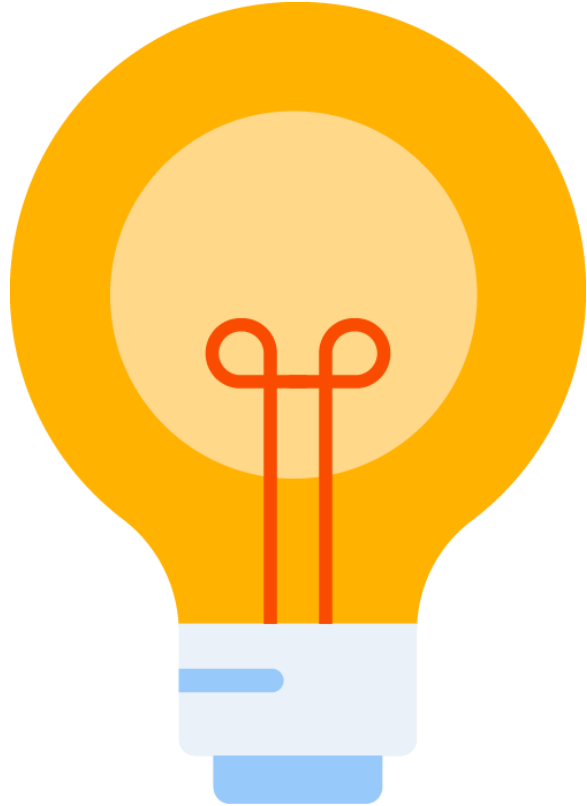
# Consider the Source

**Center your values in everything you do -- including when you create, produce, and disseminate merchandise.**

## Questions to Consider:

- Can your merch be more than branding – can it directly serve your mission and programs?
- Who will design the product? Will they be paid?
- Will you use a Union shop? A small business? A BIPOC owned business? Etc.
- Will you use environmentally sound/neutral production?

**These answers will directly impact your budget.**





**Before we move on...**

**What merch would appeal  
to your base?**

**Would you solicit input  
from your base?**



# Setting Up Shop: Live & E-commerce



# Taking the Show on the Road

## Selling Merch IRL – Things to Consider

- Set up: Will you have a table? How will you lay it out?
- Signage: You'll need to identify your org, show off the products, and list the prices.
- Info: You'll also need info about your org, and the folks selling will need to be able to answer basic questions.
- Inventory: How much will you bring? How many different items? Will there be options (sizes, colors)?
- Payment Options: Will you accept cash and checks? How will you process credit cards?

# Virtually Selling

**Some of the same considerations are at play with an online store as there are when selling live:**

- Inventory: How many different items will you sell? Will there be options (sizes, colors)? Will you have inventory in advance or only after sales?
- Signage & Set up: How will it be branded? How will you lay out the various products? How will pricing be displayed? Is the easy to navigate?
- Payment Options: How many methods of payment will you accept?
- Info: Can the visitor go from your store to the rest of your website and back with ease?
- Fulfillment: How will people get what they purchased?



# Decision Points

## **Fulfillment First**

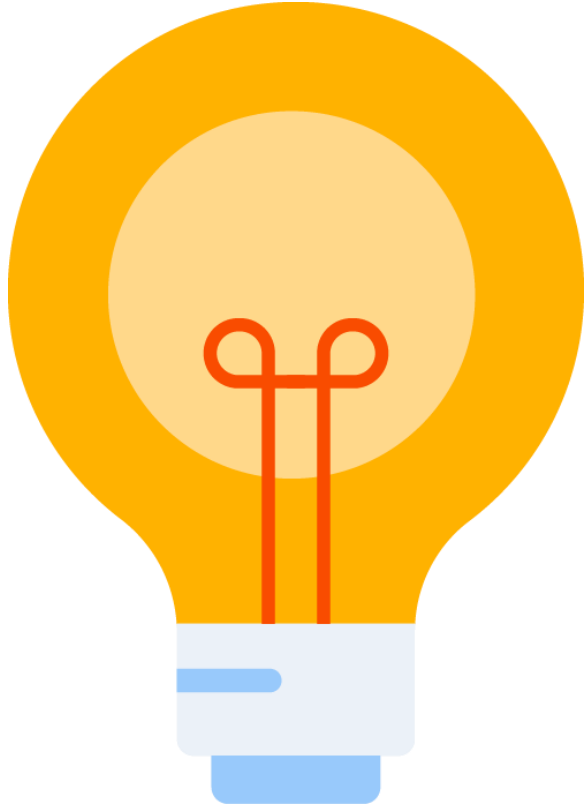
- Making the decision about how you will get people their items should be the first thing you tackle.

## **Fulfilling Orders by Hand for Live & Online Orders**

- There is an up-front cost for inventory and a need for inventory and cash controls.
- Staff time is needed at the point of sale at live events and to pack and ship online orders.
- You will need to factor in packing and shipping costs.

## **Using an On-Demand Platform**

- There is a loss of some control and not much of an opportunity for a personal touch –like adding a thank you note.
- There is a significantly lower profit margin.





# Plan Ahead

**Think about what you want in a platform and then start your research.**

- Your online store should look and feel like your organization – the branding, colors, font, and vibe.
- It should have all of the features you need:
  - Do you want static or rotating inventory?
  - Do you want it to have customer support?
  - Does it support customizable pricing and allow shoppers to add a donation?
- It should work well with your current CRM – either by integration or a user-friendly down/upload option.
- It's costs to you should be transparent and reasonable—not only for the customer but for you.



# Choosing a Platform

- **Sensible Back-End:** Consider who will be running the shop and make sure that it's easy for them to use and that it provides the adequate support.
- **Cost:** Are there up-front costs? Are the fees similar to other similar platforms? Are there different fees for different transactions? All of this should be backed into your budget.
- **Customizability:**
  - If you are using a print on-demand platform, how many choices does it provide?
  - If you are selling your own inventory, how easy is it to make changes?
- **Data Management:** Does it collect all the information you need it to? Is it easy to pull transaction data? Does it have marketing features and/or can it integrate to your CRM?



# Oh, So Many Options

## A few Popular Platforms

- **Shopify:** A platform known for its simplicity and ease of use for small to medium-sized organizations.
- **WooCommerce:** A plugin that turns a WordPress site into an e-commerce store. It's highly customizable and ideal for those who already have a WordPress site.
- **Magento:** A feature-rich, customizable platform that may require a steeper learning curve and more technical expertise.
- **Squarespace:** Known for easy-to-use interface for creatives and small organizations.
- **Bonfire:** A custom t-shirt platform that offers free online stores.

**Before we move on...**

**What are the barriers to  
your organization starting  
an online store?**



# Getting out the Word





# Building Your Store

**Paint A Pretty Picture:** Have high quality imagery to entice people to purchase your merchandise.

**Strong Language:** Use language that moves people to buy in both your ads and your product descriptions.

**Your Store and Website Should Relate:** Your store shouldn't look better (or worse) than your website. Synergy creates trust and makes your store look legitimate, instilling confidence.

**Be Easily Found:** Advertise your store on social media often. Use photos of items liberally. Focus on search engine optimization (SEO) so your site pops up in searches.

**Phone Forward:** Most people use their phone more than their computer when shopping online. Make sure your site is optimized for the mobile user!



# Getting Customers

## Create Your Marketing Materials & Plan

- Identify your launch date – with enough time to plan!
- Pick the right social media sites to target
- Create attractive and engaging visuals with varying content to keep things fresh
- Develop your pitches for email, newsletters, social media, and your website
- Identify your segments, audience, and lookalikes
- Plan regular campaigns focusing on dates that align with your mission, and those that are ripe for a sale.
  - Remember to change-up your content
- Create a homepage carousel and pop-up ads



# Get Social

**Email:** Use your newsletter and send emails to direct people to your store – and use lots of images!

**Social Media:** Promote your store through social media ads and posts. Align posts with your email campaigns.

**Tap into Influencers:** Look for local influencers and friends with extensive connections and ask them to post about and promote your store.

**Build Participation:** Get your followers to help you promote your shop by showing off the things they bought – and maybe try to get a hashtag going!



**Before we move on...**

**What are some other  
promotion strategies that  
you would want to try?**





# Test for Success

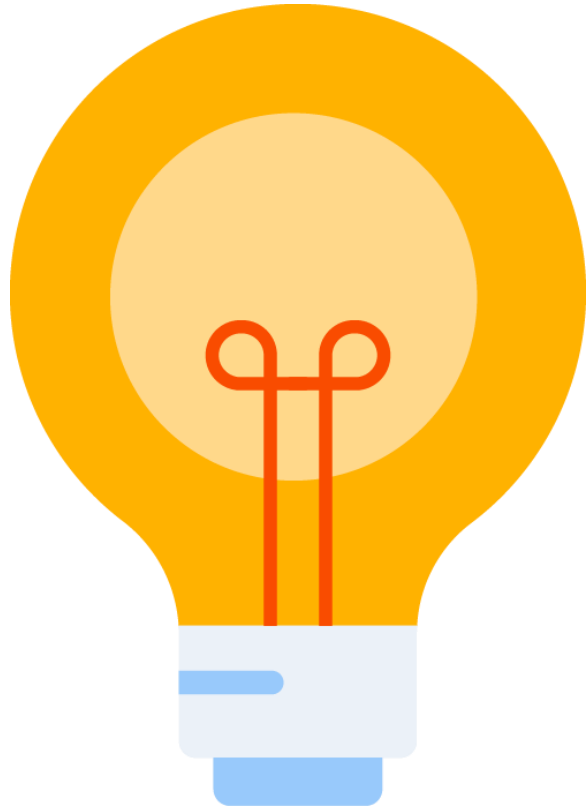


# How Do You Know It's Working?

## Start by Defining what Success Looks Like

- What is our goal? How much do we need to sell to reach it?
  - Did we hit our target goals for monthly sales/income?
  - Can we identify which products and/or designs did best?
- Are we going for Useful or Meaningful? Did the products we selected get us there?
- Did we reach the audience we wanted to reach?
- Was it easy to implement? Was it easy for the shoppers?
- Did we follow our marketing plan?

**Metrics matter. Set your goals and track your activity.**



# Don't (Only) Trust Your Gut



**Google Analytics:** Use Google Analytics to understand the data behind your store. Trackable information includes:

- Site Visits
- Conversion Rate
- Order Size by Item
- Order Size by Dollar

**Test, Test, Test:** Gather anecdotal data from your users on:

- Shop organization and flow
- Item selection and appeal
- Navigation and check-out ease
- Pricing

**Take what you've learned and "Wash. Rinse. Repeat."**

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?

Thoughts?

Questions?

Comments?





**We look forward to  
seeing you at the  
next session!**

**Questions?**

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