

Weeks 33-34: Budgeting & Pricing

How to price print shop products and services

Our goal is always to sell enough products to keep the business healthy and sustainable. To make sure you're earning more than you're spending, it's important to run a few calculations when setting your sale prices. Because paper prices change frequently, your pricing should adjust with those fluctuations.

In our shop, we start by calculating the cost of supplies and then adding a small amount to account for labor. We take that total and multiply it by 200% to determine the final sale price.

Here is a Price Estimator [spreadsheet](#) to use to do that calculation for you. Each sheet in the spreadsheet is dedicated to a specific type of paper, making it easy to calculate the appropriate charge based on the length of material needed for a project.

Operating a Student-Led Business Within a School District

Establishing a business within a school district can present unique challenges; however, with close collaboration with the district's business office, it is possible to create a fully functional, student-led enterprise.

In most school environments, such a business should be structured as a school sponsored activity or club. Begin by consulting your building administration to understand how financial matters for clubs are managed. Determine whether there is an existing checking account used for club funds, such as dues or fundraising revenue. This account will be essential for handling income and purchasing supplies for your print shop. Designating the print shop as a "club" may provide access to this account. It is critical to ensure that no funds pass through personal accounts and that the business is not linked to an individual's name or Social Security number. The print shop must remain a school sponsored activity, with the district assuming liability—not the teacher or students.

Additionally, the business should operate under the school district's Tax Identification Number (EIN). Utilizing the district EIN enables the purchase of supplies without incurring sales tax, which is an important step in maintaining compliance and reducing costs.

Taxes for a student-run business

Getting a Tax Identification Number (EIN)

The district business office should follow the following process to get your print shop an EIN:

Complete IRS Form SS-4

Use Form SS-4, Application for Employer Identification Number. The district will need to provide:

Entity type – select “governmental entity” or equivalent.

Responsible party – the individual legally in charge, such as a superintendent or district financial officer, including their SSN or ITIN.

Entity name and address – the district’s official legal name and main office location. Reason for applying – specify that it’s for tax-exempt operations under a government-mandated structure.

The district business office will submit the completed application. Once processed, the IRS will send back an EIN confirmation letter. You will need that number for:

Purchasing supplies to vendors

Setting up online payments

Establishing an Amazon Business Account

*** A resource that we used as we worked through this process was **SCORE** (<https://www.score.org/>). SCORE will provide a mentor who will partner with you one-on-one, SCORE by providing experienced advice, consulting on best practices, and educating you on small business topics.***

Grant Funding:

Through this process, we discovered that several organizations in our region offer grant funding to support our print shop. In some cases, securing that funding required nothing more than sending a brief email outlining the concept behind the shop. We identified many of these opportunities with the help of our SCORE mentor and by reaching out to local Chambers of Commerce. Additionally, if your community has limited financial resources, there are often grant programs specifically aimed at supporting revitalization efforts. These opportunities vary by region but reach out to your local Chamber of Commerce or SCORE mentor and ask; you may be surprised by the funding sources that are out there.