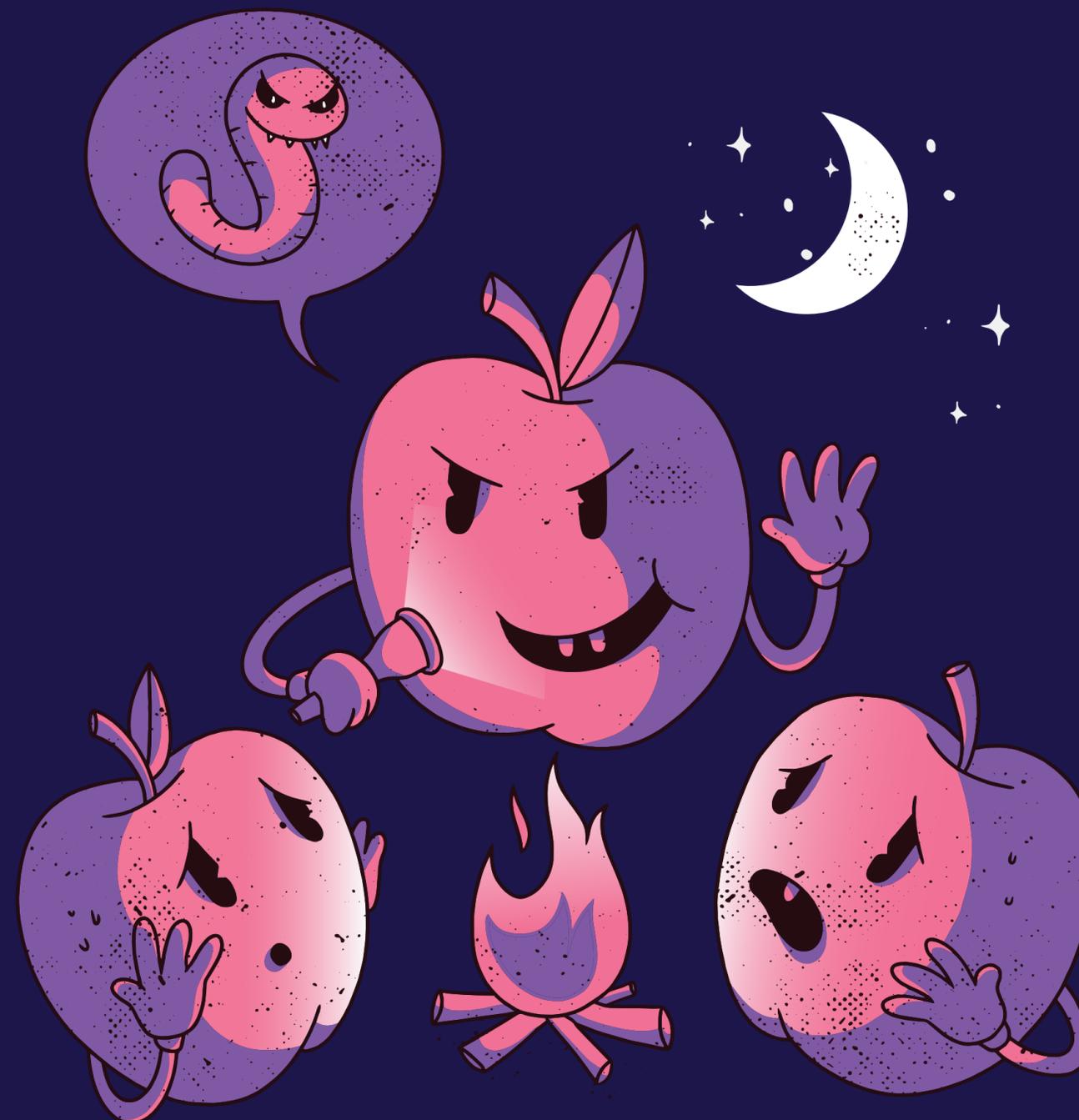


Vexels Merch Digest #26

The month of fall and Halloween marks the beginning of the shopping season, and in this Digest we'll take a look at hot designs and niches to tackle (and to avoid).

Also, we feature a priceless, exclusive interview with one of the very top players in the Merch game.

Let's go!



Merch Advice for Q4: **Keep Hammering**

In the 2-and-counting years we've been working for and with Merchers all over the world we have seen a couple trends:

People asking for Christmas designs

This is one we don't recommend, but we won't stop you if you feel the Christmas spirit strong within you. We've seen time and time again people asking for Christmas designs but ultimately these fall off right after the season ends. If you still want to go ahead with Christmas products make sure that the design is very relatable and personal, like someone who's birthday is on Christmas Day or similar.

Gift T-shirts

A great source of inspiration is to think what kind of gift you'd like to give or receive. This is generally where the "Birthday t-shirts" niche kicks in, but contrary to popular belief, you can ditch the "Legends are born" or any reference to year and age and opt for a more savvy approach, going for specific cross-niche designs and targeting highly relatable and emotional hobbies and occupations like **nursing, teaching, animal care, plant care, fitness, food, and lifestyle.**

And specifically for 2020, we can suggest two trains of thought:

Get out & Stay in

Quite obvious, but with so much potential for funny and hobby-related designs, the desire to be released back into the wild is a strong theme of this year, and it can be used to emphasize the passion for the outdoors as a super popular hobby that can host a variety of other hobbies. Think cycling, hiking, running, you name it.

On the other hand, being in quarantine and locked up is also where others relish and enjoy themselves with indoor hobbies, like crafting, gaming, cooking, and knitting, just to name a few. For either case, we suggest you take a look at yourself first and consider what you enjoy the most; what would you like to get as a gift? If you could do that for someone else, then you're making progress.

Goals 2021

This year definitely bummed out lots of plans for lots of people, and 2021 feels like the year of reckoning. We expect many Goal-oriented designs to come up in the next few weeks, with **health and nutrition** being among the hottest mega-niches to dive into.

IF ONLY
SARCASM
BURNT CALORIES

Vexels Digest Interview: Mr. Addie

This month we're joined by **Adnan Maghribi**, more digitally known as **Master Addie P.** He's been doing Merch for nearly **3 years** and he runs a couple of great **Youtube channels** ([Mr Addie](#) in English and [Mr Adnan](#) in Arabic) where he shares his insights, strategies, and tools that made him a success in the Merch business.

We reached out to him to give us some **expert advice on how to tackle Q4**, especially this year considering how the pandemic has affected customer behavior.

Hi Adnan, let's start with a question everyone wants to know: what's the best advice to break through the first sale and keep on selling steadily?

That's the million-dollar question, isn't it? Merch is a numbers game, so tiering up quickly improves your competitive edge because you're able to have more visibility with more designs. In all honesty, by far the best and easiest way to make the first sale is to buy your own designs at the cheapest price possible and consider it as an investment towards a higher tier. A great strategy is to make a holiday-based design for a holiday that is due in the next 3 months, upload it, price it at the cheapest price possible, and either purchase it yourself or get friends or family members to do it for you. Make 10 separate purchases to increase sales velocity and trick the algorithm to think that this design was purchased by 10 different people, which will make it recommend your design and put it in the featured section.

There are many strategies you can follow:

- You can ask your friends and family to buy your designs or make designs specifically for what they want at a cheap price. Your goal in the beginning is to tier up not to make a profit.
- Make sure you have a good quality design in a high demand niche with op-

timised keywords and listings as well as competitive pricing for the niche. Go for the cheapest price in the beginning, and you can always raise your price if your design starts selling.

- Focus on trends and holidays because they have a huge amount of traffic and if you rank your t-shirt you can make a crazy amount of sales.
- Find T-Shirt buyers on social media especially on Facebook and Twitter, and offer your services. Type "where can I buy this T-Shirt" and you'll be surprised by the number of people looking to buy certain designs".
- You can make designs for Facebook groups that focus on particular niches.
- Look on Facebook for people organizing events and offer to design for them.
- Market your designs on social media including Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest.
- Collaborate with social media influencers.
- Focus entirely on pop sockets and phone cases initially because they are really good sellers and there are a lot of opportunities to be unique and stand out from the crowd through color combinations, patterns, and design concepts.

The list goes on, and this is something I cover extensively in my Ultimate Merch By Amazon Course that I will be launching on the 10th of October 2020.

Find out more here www.mraddieacademy.com

We know you from your success with Merch by Amazon, is that the only platform you sell your designs to?

One of the key things to do in POD and in business in general is to not put all your eggs in one basket. So you should diversify into other platforms in order to maintain good cash flow regardless of what happens to any particular platform. Whilst I am successful in Merch By Amazon, I do have brands with a great presence on a few other platforms like Etsy, Redbubble, Teepublic, Spreadshirt, Zazzle, Society6, FineArtAmerica, KDP and a few others.

You've been selling for years now, which is the main advice you'd give yourself if you were just getting started?

Be convinced that there definitely is great money to be made in POD and claim your own piece of the pie. Really invest in developing yourself and focus on learning and mastering your craft. Start with one platform and make it your obsession to be successful at it. You'll be surprised at how much your subconscious brain leads you to make decisions or take actions that contribute to your success when you focus on one thing and put all your energy into it. Make sure you have goals and figure out what motivates you (living a comfortable life, getting out of your 9-5 dead-end job, or whatever your goal is...), then use it to stay driven and overcome any obstacle in your way. There will be times when you would doubt yourself, or when you would feel very low because things are not working out, yes you will fall time and time again, but in order to be successful, you need to always find it in you to get up when you fall, and each time you get up stronger than ever before. Know my friends that there is always that light at the end of the tunnel. You'll be surprised at how easy things will become when you go through the learning curve and you'll look back at this experience and feel an immense sense of pride and gratitude.

Which would you say is the main reason why Merchers fall off from their T-shirt business and how can they counter that?

I would say that the main reason is lack of focus, lack of confidence in themselves and their abilities, lack of evidence that they can actually make great money doing it, not taking Merch as a serious business, and crucially lack of guidance and feeling lost. Personally, I started off strong in the POD business, I had the right attitude and work ethic, but I was still learning. So naturally, I wasn't successful right off the bat. But I knew I could make it work. My persistence really paid off and I made a few initial sales which boosted my confidence. I was then convinced that I could make it even bigger. I worked

a lot harder and kept learning and finetuning my processes until I found my success formula, and the rest is history. In a nutshell, in order for Merchers who are feeling discouraged to stay in the game, they need to remain focused, achieve little things that will boost their confidence like learning a new design concept or making a couple of sales from original idea quotes or designs or anything of this sort. This will help them an evidence-based conviction and wrap their head around the fact that they can actually make a great deal of money if they stay focused, keep developing themselves, and work hard. They need to take it as a serious business and this includes investing in tools to make their work easier and more enjoyable and investing in developing their work processes, skills, and competencies.

Which is the best Merch advice you've been given?

Focusing on tiering it up in the beginning rather than making a profit because Merch is a numbers game. This was a huge breakthrough especially at the beginning of my Merch career because it forced me to think long term instead of short term. I changed all my prices to make 0 profit, which led to a few designs to rank well in some high competition niches. Then the reviews came through, further improving their competitiveness. As the sales became more consistent, I was then able to raise my prices without affecting sales volume. Following this strategy has allowed me to tier up fast, rank designs quickly, get reviews, and build a sustainable long-term business.

Which is the best advice you've figured out for yourself?

In my first year in Merch, I was obsessed with research and really trying to figure out a formula for bringing new ideas that could go viral. I was trying to identify patterns of successful designs that I could apply to my designs for them to sell, then I suddenly had a lightbulb moment. One of the things I identified is the fact that viral designs are almost always based on trends. These trends could have a short or long life span. I then said to myself, what

if I could use some elements from long life span trends and intersect them or cross-niche them with regular niches or holiday niches and celebrations. For example, if I identify that dinosaur designs sell well in The "100th Day Of School" niche, this means that kids and teachers really love these kinds of designs. Then I would make dinosaur designs for the "Last Day Of School" and "First Day Of School" niches, which will have a high probability of selling because they follow the same principle of designs that sold before. This works like a charm, I'm telling you! Now during the pandemic, we can add the word virtual or face mask graphic elements to any niche and they would sell like hotcakes. The moral of the story is, make new trends out of past trends.

Design-wise, what would you recommend to up-and-coming merchers, and what would you recommend for veterans who want to step it up?

For up-and-coming merchers, I would strongly advise them to learn how to design instead of always relying on designers. This way you acquire the designer eye and you know what a good design looks like. You can be quick in getting a ready-made design into the market rather than waiting for your designer to make you one, and by the time it's made, the niche might be a lot more competitive. One of the best ways to learn how to design is reverse-engineer high-quality designs from what's selling well on Amazon and ready-made designs on design platforms like Vexels. This may sound corny or biased, but truth be told. I am a massive fan of Vexels due to the pro-quality ready-made designs and graphic elements they have, and the many other unrivaled features they provide. When you download a merch-ready design from Vexels, you're able to open it in Illustrator and reverse engineer how it was made, making it easy for you to learn how to design high-quality designs from the ground up. Their service also makes it easy for you to find a great merch-ready design and upload it to your preferred POD platform instantly without having to wait for a designer to make that design. But if you want a

more customised design, then their fast design request service which comes as part of all their subscription plans is perfect for this. For veterans who want to step it up, this means stepping up their design quality and scaling their business, making Vexels a no brainer service to subscribe to if they are to achieve their goals quickly.

Given the pandemic this year, how do you feel it has impacted the shoppers' behavior?

The pandemic has changed shoppers' behaviour in many ways, but one of the more obvious changes is that they are now buying more pandemic related goods like facemasks and pandemic related designs in quantities never imagined before. So if you're not already doing it, start selling custom design POD facemasks as soon as you can, which you can sell on Etsy and many other POD platforms. You can easily get some awesome patterns or ready-made designs from Vexels, put them on a facemask, and watch the sales roll in. On the same note, start making pandemic related designs for evergreen niches, holidays, and celebrations, either by including pandemic related keywords in your design quote like "virtual" or "virtually" or by pandemic related graphic elements like "facemasks" within your design. An example of some big pandemic related niches are "Teacher Can Do Virtually Anything", and "EW People" with a graphic element of a dog or a car wearing a facemask...

What would be your best advice going into this holiday season?

The best advice would be to focus on one of the main current trends which is the pandemic and find ways to cross-niche it with Halloween, Cancer Awareness, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Also don't discount evergreen niches especially designs that can be gifted to family members, sports teams, or co-workers, etc... These sell really well in the run up to Christmas.

Anything else you'd like to share with us and our Merch Community?

I wanted to add that Merch By Amazon requires a lot of time investment. Learning and figuring out a system that works well for you can take months, if not years. That's why many Merchers get discouraged and leave the POD business as they don't see any financial returns quickly. That being said, given my experience and success on Merch, I have been getting many requests from my followers to create a comprehensive Merch By Amazon course or a Blueprint if you like, to help them create a PROVEN SYSTEM to achieve similar results to what I've achieved (100k tier - \$100k royalties per year - over \$1million in sales revenue - over 70k products sold...). So I've been developing the Ultimate Merch By Amazon Course for the last 8 months to cater to this demand and I'm so excited to announce that it will be launching on the 10th of October 2020. It will have over 120 video lessons, with quizzes and action items, an Exclusive VIP community for support and sharing best practice, huge student only perks, access to myself as a mentor, live Q&A sessions and much more, all designed to accelerate your Merch By Amazon and POD success. Places will be limited, but if you add your email to our mailing list, you will get the latest updates and the generous launch discount. You can add your email to our mailing list here to reserve your place and receive the launch discount www.mraddieacademy.com



Even More
MERCH TIPS!



Check the [Vexels Blog](#) for actionable Merch tips and knowledge about the t-shirt-making business. Keep revisiting for updates!



November's Niche Opportunity Dates

Here's a list of some of the special Days in **November** where you might find a niche to exploit:

November 1st: World Vegan Day

November 3rd: Sandwich Day

November 11th: Origami Day

November 16th: Clarinet Day

November 17th: Homemade Bread Day

November 23rd: Espresso Day

November 23rd: Fibonacci Day

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