



## MONDAY STRATEGY GUIDE



**Merch  
Informer**

## Contents

This Week In Merch .....	3
Merch Radar: Seasonal / Viral Merch Watch .....	6
Keyword and Niche Leads .....	10
Tshirts .....	15
Hoodies .....	15
Sweatshirts .....	16
Long Sleeve Tshirts .....	17
Fighting Freezer Burn: Rainy Day POD Design Leads .....	19
<b>Conquering Q4 and Beyond .....</b>	<b>23</b>
Disclaimer .....	26

## This Week In Merch

Hello, Merch Informer community! If we haven't met before, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Michael Essany and I've been selling on Merch since October 2015. I run the Merch Momentum FB group and write a weekly newsletter for MBA sellers.

My strategy with Merch, and one I espouse in the weekly guide, has helped me to sell tens of thousands of shirts across hundreds of vastly different niches. The strategy I employ is what's called *scaling*.

### MICHAEL ESSANY'S 5 BEST SELLING NICHEs FOR THE PAST WEEK

1. Thin Blue Line Family
2. Science Puns/Humor Tshirt
3. American Flag Apparel
4. Video Gaming Tshirts
5. Red Fridays Tshirts

In its simplest definition, scaling is when you make ONE tshirt design template and modify it slightly into multiple different versions to reach an expanded audience. Case in point: you can have a foodie-themed tshirt that says “I Can't Survive Without Italian Food” but then scale that design for Mexican Food, French Cuisine, and scores of other ethnic specialty foods or beverages.

Since my earliest days on Merch, I've been on the lookout for the best tools and resources available in the POD community to help me scale into niches both competitive and ignored. My search ended when Merch Informer was released, as all the information I could ever need to scale my account full of unique designs was now at my disposal.

As I've always said, whether you scale or not, MI is a completely indispensable resource for Merchers. In fact, it was because of Neil Lassen and MI that I now more fully understand the critical importance of leveraging data in the hunt for niches, the creation of designs, and the composition of listings.

Apart from building the leading tool for Merchers, Neil is also a super guy who has been tremendously supportive of me and my strategy guide. That said, I jumped at the opportunity to create a special MI edition of the guide for all of you.

If you're not familiar with what the weekly strategy guide offers, this will be an abridged version of the newsletter designed to help spark creative thinking and direct you to niche opportunities other Merchers have overlooked or ignored.

## Merch Radar: Seasonal / Viral Merch Watch

With Grandparents Day fast approaching and the holidays right around the corner (occasions that should give all



designers reason to be bullish on t-shirts and apparel made for or in recognition of grandparents), it's time to put grandma and grandpa on our t-shirt priority list for the weeks ahead.

To be clear, Amazon.com is not without an adequate supply of t-shirts in the grandparents niche. But the excesses of this niche all pertain to generalized grandparents t-shirts -- e.g., "World's

Best Grandpa," "I Love my Grandma," "Proud Grandpa," etc.

To capitalized on renewed marketplace interest in the grandparents category of clothing, we have to *niche down* and find a new angle and under-served audience to target. Specifically, what the grandparents niche needs is nuance.

I'll give you an example. Most grandparents tshirts refer to grandchildren in general terms -- almost always "grandchildren." Some tees may reference "grandson" or "granddaughter." What you can't find much of are tshirts that speak to a phenomenon known to thousands of grandparents the world over: grandchildren gender dominance.

My grandparents, on my father's side, had 11 consecutive male grandchildren. For 15 years, they had only boys to call their grandkids (a later female cousin of mine broke that streak). But in families all over the map, there are grandparents who only have grandsons or granddaughters -- and these grandparents are usually inclined to reference this reality when speaking of the pride they have.

Most items in the novelty grandparents apparel -- for birthdays, holidays, and special occasions -- have overlooked the surprisingly commonplace experience of gender exclusivity in grandchildren. And there is a clear and compelling market void that I would advise Merchers to explore when it comes to repurposing or creating new designs in the



grandparents niche. The types of tees I envision would read something to the effect of:

- You Can Never Have Too Many Granddaughters
- The Proud Patriarch of America's Leading Producer of Boys
- I Love My Grandsons With All My Heart... Just Don't Ask Me to Name All of Them

All told, there is plenty of opportunity for messaging that is sweet, celebratory, or downright silly. And there's certainly a big enough potential market out there to warrant making a few designs to see what can possibly serve this market's unmet needs.

## Keyword and Niche Leads

The Monday strategy guide features 100+ new keyword/niche leads every week separated by tshirts, hoodies, sweatshirts, and



long sleeves. These leads are culled from dozens of hours of weekly research, leveraging a head spinning number of tools and resources.

If you haven't before used the strategy guide, let's discuss some suggestions for using these leads before diving into them.

A keyword lead is meant to be used in the title and at least one bullet (ideally, the brand as well if possible).

Here's an example of a keyword lead from a recent guide: "Golf player equipment tshirt." If you have a tshirt listed that features golf clubs or someone using golf equipment, this would be a great keyword to revise your listing with and use in your bullets (and, preferably, your title as well). If you don't have any golf shirts but wish to make one, "Golf player equipment tshirt" would be your lead AND your keyword strategy. So you would go on to make a shirt featuring someone golfing or using golf equipment, perhaps add a message about golf (serious or funny) and then write your listing with "Golf player equipment tshirt" as your primary (or perhaps lone) keyword strategy. This will help people find your shirt fast when looking for this term in the future. If the term is in my guide, that

means people have looked for it or still are looking for it on Amazon.com (in the future, I plan to add research for UK/DE markets).

Let's take it another step further with another example I often share with readers. Let's say that "Kitchen Dinner Plate" is a keyword phrase suggested on my list. The first thing that you should do with a lead like this (one open to wild interpretation from a design standpoint) is ask yourself: "Who uses a dinner plate?" The most obvious answer: Someone who eats! Well, someone who eats requires someone who cooks. And cooking-related shirts tend to drive more sales (particularly in Q4) than eating-related shirts. So let's go the cooking route.

From there, I would make a shirt with a depiction of a clean plate on it that reads something cheesy like: "A Plate Licked Clean Means I'm The Best Italian Chef on The Scene." Naturally, you can spin that concept a thousand ways BUT the "kitchen dinner plate" should be the title of the shirt in some way and also featured prominently throughout the listing. You do NOT have to use the keyword IN the shirt design or messaging. The keywords only help you in the listing composition.

For niches and leads without an obvious audience, don't worry too much about it. Focus instead on the idea at hand and a message about it. If a lead is "Sharp Knife Tshirt," you can simply put a knife on a shirt and say "I'm Not Cut Out for This Shirt" or something silly like that. "Sharp Knife Tshirt" will

bring the buyers (knife collectors perhaps) to your shirt even when you don't know who they are.

As for the breakdown between forms of apparel, based on what my research turns up, some keywords appear to have a better chance of standing out if paired with "hoodie" vs. "tshirt."

There are some red hot keywords that have 1,000 shirts using them but only 10 hoodies. In such instances, needless to say, I would suggest using this keyword on hoodies. It doesn't mean you can't use the keyword lead across all products (changing the name of the clothing product accordingly) but the guide is structured in a way as to primarily direct Merchers to the article of clothing that will likely convert to sales best using the keywords in question.

## Tshirts

- Fall autumn checklist tshirt
- Retired trouble maker tshirt
- Security clearance tshirt
- Never been arrested tshirt
- Student resource officer tshirt
- Not influenced tshirt
- Retro headband animal tshirt
- How to meditate tshirt
- Jury deliberation tshirt
- Biking couple tshirt

## Hoodies

- Bartending school hoodie
- Vlogging hoodie
- Check engine mechanic hoodie

- Sign language  
Halloween hoodie
- Roasting  
marshmallows  
hoodie
- Mom marathon  
training hoodie
- Scottish Bagpipes  
hoodie
- Archery arrows  
hoodie
- Beer salute hoodie
- Thrifting hoodie

## Sweatshirts

- It's all downhill  
skiing from here  
sweatshirt
- Undeclared major  
sweatshirt
- Ice fishing trip  
sweatshirt
- Whittling  
sweatshirt
- Hunting gear  
sweatshirt



- Good behavior sweatshirt
- Hide and seek Halloween sweatshirt
- Retired motorcycle sweatshirt
- Tap dancing teacher sweatshirt
- Model building sweatshirt

## Long Sleeve Tshirts

- Long sleeve support organic farming tshirt
- Long sleeve camp firewood t-shirt
- Long sleeve vegan blogger tshirt
- Long sleeve police appreciation tshirt
- Long sleeve audio cassette 80s tshirt

- Long sleeve love  
sea otter tshirt
- Long sleeve pizza  
emergency tshirt
- Long sleeve fall  
arrangement  
flowers tshirt
- Long sleeve quiet  
library tshirt
- Long sleeve love  
almonds tshirt

## Fighting Freezer Burn: Rainy Day POD Design Leads

I dedicate a section of every guide to creative ideas, interviews, or niche exploration to help Merchers seeking to



expand their POD reach beyond MBA. Since it's very important to not put ALL of your eggs in one basket, particularly if Amazon has another Q4 freeze, taking small steps *now* to bulk up your POD portfolio across multiple platforms will help prevent freezer burn *later*.

For this MI edition of the strategy guide, let's shift our attention to a crossover niche opportunity that yields a lot of creative wiggle room and more than

enough opportunity to meld otherwise unrelated niches into a unique offering that could find buyers anywhere.

The opportunity in question pertains to nut allergies. But it's not exactly what you may be thinking.

This highly scalable approach isn't directly about peanuts. I'm referring to classes of people or things that one might humorously chide as being crazy (a hugely bankable tactic in the sarcastic tees market). Let me demonstrate the potential of this concept by crossing over into the niches of astrology, politics, and anti-social, respectively:

- Happily Married to a Scorpio. Maybe I'm Not Allergic to Nuts After All.
- I Could Never Date a Republican/Democrat. I'm Allergic to Nuts.
- If You're Allergic to Nuts, You May Want to Avoid Me

Best of all, if you can find a way to articulate awareness of nut allergies (which is becoming increasingly popular in the apparel space) doing so with humor, sarcasm, or general playfulness will go a long way to put emphasis on an important cause while simultaneously getting laughs and diffusing a serious matter with levity.

Regardless of whether you're focusing on tshirts on MBA, novelty products on Etsy, or any products to

which you have access on a POD platform of choice, this approach can be molded and melded in multiple ways, giving you a great opportunity to amass sales consistently over time in a winning evergreen niche that continues to suffer from a lack of comedic relief.

## Conquering Q4 and Beyond

I recently began a strategy guide with a quote from Albert Szent-Györgyi, a Nobel Prize winning Hungarian biochemist,



who once said of research: "Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought."

It's my firm belief that those who will conquer MBA in Q4 and beyond will be those who not only find new niches to dominate but find ways to introduce unique messaging, imagery, and angles to already well-established and highly competitive niches.

While I never advocate mimicking a successful design, I do advocate studying the niches that inspire the most successful designs and finding totally outside-the-box ways to approach these niches.

While it's impossible to predict the future, I have a strong suspicion that many (certainly not all) but many -- if not most -- of the 100 bestselling niches on Amazon today will be same bestselling niches on Amazon going into Q4 of 2019. Put differently, the big niches aren't going anywhere any time soon. And new designs will be needed to meet these persistent demands over time. If you can find new and unorthodox ways to "think what nobody else has thought" when designing for these niches, you'll be well positioned in this market and poised for



lasting success on Merch and across the POD  
landscape.

If you have any questions or need help, please drop  
me a line on Facebook any time.

Thanks for reading and I wish you continued success  
on Merch!

# Disclaimer

## **Utilizing Merch Momentum Strategy Guide and Keyword/Niche Leads**

All information, content, and advice contained in this strategy guide is to be used at your own risk.

Merch Momentum cannot guarantee that the design themes and suggested niches/keywords are in all cases or applications compliant with Merch By Amazon policies or will never be trademarked, copyrighted, or claimed as intellectual property by another party in the future.

It is YOUR responsibility to regularly monitor all keywords, marketing and design description language, and related imagery to ensure compliance now and in the future. Resources such as the United States Patent and Trademark Office and Trademarkia can be vitally important and helpful in your ongoing research and due diligence.

While Merch Momentum makes every effort to ensure quality and compliance, you are advised to perform your own independent research and due diligence to ensure that all suggested designs and keywords comply with the policies and mandates of Merch by Amazon (or any POD services) BEFORE you utilize the advice and information contained in this guide to create and sell your tshirt designs.

The commercial use of any advice contained within this publication is at your sole risk.