



# Scaling Your Business with the Print API



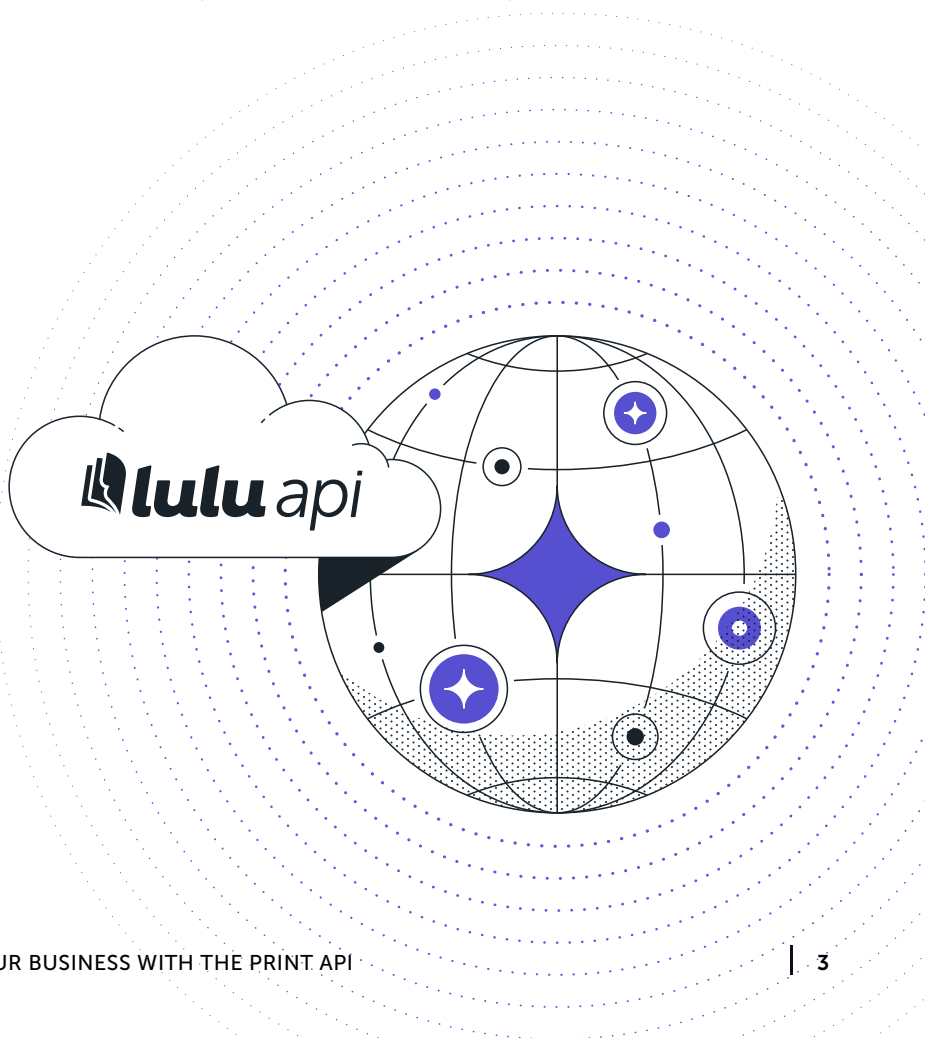
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# What to Expect From this Guide

Congratulations on implementing Lulu's Print API! You're now plugged into a global fulfillment network that prints and ships to over 220 countries and territories. We've assembled this small (but mighty) guide of tips, tactics, and best practices we've observed over the years from other successful businesses using the Print API.

There are two core sections, **Operations** and **Marketing**, addressing some of the most common issues and pain points associated with growing a book business. Treat this as your field guide, but don't forget we have an amazing team dedicated to your success should you have questions beyond the scope of this guide.



# Operational Implementation

Let's dive into the logistics of scaling your book business to ensure everything runs smoothly. The print and fulfillment is automated by us, but there are a few things to be aware of as your business and customer base grows.

## International Routing

Lulu allows you to sell to customers anywhere worldwide, but it's important to be aware of the different legal requirements for international orders.

First, take note of the locations Lulu prints from:

- United States
- Canada
- France
- Australia
- India
- United Kingdom

We route orders to the printer closest to the destination whenever possible, helping reduce transit times, emissions and keep shipping costs low. We've automated this process so that you can use our [Pricing Calculator](#) to quickly and easily see the cost to print and ship to various places.

## Packaging & Documentation for International Book Shipping

Lulu handles the packaging and shipping for you, there's no need to calculate shipping costs manually, worry about weight limits, or keep

shipping documentation on hand. For most, the only document that matters is a [commercial invoice](#), which Lulu includes with the book.

International shipping services can add customs fees or other charges based on the destination country. The cost of shipping books is difficult to calculate, but Lulu's [Pricing Calculator](#) will show you the shipping charge based on the book you want to print, the delivery options, and the destination.

Local Customs and Immigration agencies determine duties or taxes levied against packages arriving from outside the destination country. These additional fees are the responsibility of the recipient.

Ultimately, it is up to you to decide what shipping methods to offer and what rates to charge your customers. [This article](#) provides more information on setting up shipping with the Print API.

## **International Book Shipping: VAT and Shipping Fees**

You should always use Lulu's [Pricing Calculator](#) to understand international shipping costs. Our tool shows you the estimated printing, packaging, and shipping price based on the location you select.

But the shipping calculator does NOT include taxes like [VAT in Europe](#). Lulu follows all regional regulations for taxation, including for international shipments. Carefully review Lulu's tax documentation, particularly if you sell internationally.

## **Value Added Tax for Europe**

Lulu will collect Value Added Tax (VAT) in all European Union countries to charge the VAT rate of the buyer's shipping country for orders within the EU per the European Union (EU) new VAT rules.

All your international orders shipping to EU countries will be subject to VAT.

## Advanced Shipping Options

The **Shipping Options Endpoint** is also available for API users. This allows you to put Lulu's shipping methods into your checkout process. This endpoint includes Lulu's shipping cost so you can decide how much to charge for shipping. It also includes delivery estimates, which can be provided to your customers so they have greater clarity on when their order will arrive.

## Troubleshooting Common Issues

Below you will find resources for troubleshooting common issues.

- **File Validation** – before printing, you can use our [File Validation](#) to test files for any errors. If errors are identified within the file that you cannot correct on your own, reach out to [our support team](#) for assistance.
- **Print Defects** – if you receive a print product and there are defects such as damage from transit, binding issues or coloration defects reach out to [our support team](#) for assistance.
- **Lost Orders** – if an order does not arrive or is lost during shipping, contact [our support team](#) so we can replace the order.
- **Rejected Print Jobs** – print jobs can be rejected for a number of reasons. The most common are invalid URLs to your interior/cover files, issues with the interior/cover file PDFs, incorrect SKU/ Pod Package, and failure to find selected shipping options. When we reject a print job, we will list the rejection reason under the Print Jobs details page. You can find steps for correcting these errors in our [Knowledge Base](#).

# Marketing Strategy

Building your business is one thing, getting people to notice it is another. Here are some proven tactics for getting the word out about your brand and building a sustainable business.

## Building Customer Relationships

To build a sustainable business, your interactions with customers should be relationship-based rather than transactional.

Build a sustainable relationship with your customers by:

- **Creating a community** – this could be a free community like a Facebook group, or an exclusive membership community on a platform like Circle, Patreon, or Substack.
- **Share content regularly** – whether it be on your own blog, newsletter, or social media channels, create a schedule so your audience knows what to expect from you and when to show up to see your latest content.
- **Responding to comments** – as you post content on social media, be sure to engage with questions or comments left by viewers. Engaging with your peers and your followers is a good way to show the social media algorithm your interest and expertise, helping your posts show up for relevant users more often.
- **Providing good customer service** – if you are selling anything online, customer service is a part of your business. Ensure you or your team is responding to customer inquiries in a timely and respectful manner.
- **Delighting customers** – when possible, reward customers for loyalty or even ordering from you for the first time. Promo codes, freebies, and giveaways are all ways to do something special and unexpected to excite buyers.

- **Offering great products** – this may seem obvious, but consistently creating high-quality products for your audience is one of the best ways to keep them coming back.
- **Getting them to your website** – connecting with your audience on social media is a great start, but work to funnel them to your website to convert sales.

## How to Effectively Use Customer Data

One important and often overlooked benefit of selling your books on your website is the ability to see who your customers are. When you actively use that data, you can make smarter marketing decisions that drive repeat sales and long-term growth. Here are a few ways to utilize customer data to improve marketing efforts:

- **Email marketing** – every purchase will require an email address for order information, and you can also ask customers to sign up for news and updates about your brand. Email marketing is such a huge part of successfully scaling, it has its own section below.



**Pro Tip:** You don't have to make a sale to capture an email address. Encourage email sign-ups by offering a newsletter, free content, or weekly promos.

- **Segmentation and lifecycle management** – with customer insights and data, you can see who is buying your products and how frequently, allowing you to identify super fans and loyal customers, as well as new visitors that might need additional support or information to make a purchase.
- **Polls and quizzes** – successfully growing a brand means regularly asking for feedback from your customers and then implementing it. With your customer data, you can reach out to new or existing

users and ask them for feedback on your products, service, order process, or anything else that can help you better serve them.

- **Measuring the effectiveness of marketing spend** – by asking new customers how they heard about you, you can assess the value of your marketing spend. If you decide to invest in a series of Facebook ads and you see an uptick in sales and customers indicating they heard about you there, then you know that channel is working for you and is worth the investment.
- **Direct mail marketing** – email isn't the only mail that converts. Delight your customers by following up 3-6 months after a purchase with a thank-you note or additional swag to make them feel appreciated and keep them interested in your brand.
- **Planning in-person events** – if you notice a significant number of sales coming from a specific region, consider hosting an event to meet customers in person and build community.

## Social Media

Social media is a wonderful tool for discoverability, but the main goal is to get people off of social media and onto your website. Here are some best practices for building a social following that converts:

- **Pick the right platform** – you don't have to be active on every social media platform. Take time to do some audience research to find where your target audience is most active and focus your attention there.
- **Post consistently** – you don't have to post every single day, but create a schedule that you can maintain so your audience knows what to expect from you.
- **Engage with your audience** – don't just post content and then move on to the next topic. Spend time replying to comments and even commenting on other posts that are relevant to your content or brand.



**Pro-Tip:** If you see someone talking about your brand online, engage with it! This could be a potential influencer you could collaborate with. Even if the comment is negative, there might be an opportunity to correct the situation and learn from it.

- **Create a content funnel** – regularly share content that funnels followers to your website. Post about your email newsletter, snippets of your blog, or links to buy your book from your website.

## Email Marketing

Email marketing is one of the most powerful conversion tools available to you. With email, you have a direct line of communication with your audience that won't be suppressed by an algorithm. Here's how to make the most of it:

- **Email capture** – have a prominent email capture box on your cart checkout, your homepage, and on the footer of all other pages. Offer something of value, like a free white paper, promo code, or chapter of your book, to entice visitors to sign up for your email list.
- **Build out segments** – create audience segments based on user behavior and engagement level, purchase frequency, or self-identifying information from your polls or quizzes. This allows you to create more personalized emails that resonate.
- **Automate key emails** – create email workflows based on the segments you create. A few to include are: welcome series, cart or browse abandonment, milestone celebrations, or a post-purchase series that cross promotes another product you offer.
- **Maintain deliverability** – for a healthy and profitable email list, regularly re-engage or suppress inactive subscribers. Quarterly list maintenance ensures a highly engaged audience while keeping

data for potential re-subscriptions. Automate or manage manually—just don't delete!

- **Create an email schedule** – decide on an email frequency you can maintain that delivers valuable tips, insights, updates, or promotional information to your audience.



**Pro-Tip:** Include flash sales, giveaways, or other exclusive content to keep your audience engaged and interested in your emails. [National Day Calendar](#) is a treasure trove of random holidays that you can use to delight your audience and encourage them to buy.

- **Don't spam** – once you have an email address, don't abuse it. Send thoughtful, intentional emails with valuable content that will be useful for your subscribers. Getting flagged as spam can impact all subscribers and whether your emails land (or don't land) in the inbox.
- **Make it easy to unsubscribe** – in the unfortunate event someone wants to remove themselves from your email list, make it simple for them to do so. Consider including a way for subscribers to update their preferences if they just want less frequent emails.

## Upselling

If you have purchased anything online, you have no doubt been exposed to upselling. Those little nudges as you're on the way to checkout, present a slightly different variation of what you're buying that you would also like, or some item to accompany it that would make your life better. When done right, these campaigns can be useful and effective. Here's how to make upselling work for you:

- **Supplemental content** – highlight other products, like an accompanying workbook or journal, that will help your customers get more out of your content.
- **Multiple formats** – creating multiple formats of your products not only offers a range of price points for your audience, but can also be a great way to add a premium offering to those looking for a full color, or special or collector’s edition.
- **Digital companion** – offering a digital download can be a great way to increase cart value and give your customers something immediately.
- **Personalization** – offer a personalized or custom version of your book for an additional fee.
- **Subscriptions** – if you’re publishing a periodical, offer a subscription so customers can get it in the mail each quarter or month without having to think about it.
- **Memberships** – offer a membership that gives access to exclusive content, product drops, meet-ups, and promotions.
- **Bulk discounts** – incentivize purchasing multiple products in each order by offering free shipping or discounts as order quantities increase.

## Customer Service

Providing good customer service can help you build relationships and trust with your target audience. Here are a few tips for great customer service:

- **Provide contact information** – make sure your contact information is easily available should a problem arise.
- **List business hours** – have your business hours clearly listed on your site so customers will know when they can expect a response after they reach out.

- **Reply to inquiries in a timely manner** – set expectations with your business hours, but try to respond to questions and comments within 1-3 business days.



**Pro-Tip:** Automated emails can help with this.

- **Create an FAQ page** – have an FAQ page that is easily accessible on your site to save time for you and your customers.
- **Utilize your email list** – use your email list to effectively communicate any important news or updates.
- **Provide accurate product descriptions** – ensure your product listings are accurate and descriptive so customers know exactly what they're getting.
- **Provide secure payment information** – ensure your payment capture is secure so customers are not at risk of being hacked or having information stolen.

## Additional Resources

- [Lulu Support](#)
- [API Knowledge Base](#)
- [API Documentation](#)