



## How to get your product on QVC

January 4, 2009

*If you want to reach a national audience through the home-shopping networks, you'll need mass-manufacturing capabilities and a catchy storyline.*

### **Q: Mona Kahn, Salt Lake City**

I am a jewelry designer and I want to present my merchandise to a larger audience. How do I get my products on ShopNBC, QVC or similar outlets?

### **A: By Christina Crapanzano, CNNMoney.com contributing writer**

The application process is quick and painless. Both ShopNBC and QVC have applications available online for downloading, and both sites offer guidelines for product submissions. You'll need to send in digital photos of your product and answer questions about your manufacturing process and price point. The networks are looking for vendors who already have a product - they aren't interested in ideas, sketches or prototypes.

We asked the shows' vendor scouts to tell us a bit more about how they pick new products to feature.

QVC has more than 10,000 applicants each year, and also recruits vendors from trade shows or craft fairs. From that, only about 500 new vendors are introduced on-air each year.

"Don't be redundant," says Marilyn Montross, QVC's director of vendor relations. "The first thing we look at is the product. For jewelry, we're asking, 'is this something new and innovative versus products we're already selling?'"

The same philosophy holds true at ShopNBC. "The product is the star of the show," says Anthony Giombetti of ShopNBC's media relations department.

Watch the networks you are applying to and get to know their current products and vendors. That will also give you an idea of their target audience and your potential customers. For ShopNBC, the typical viewer is over the age of 45 and is affluent, with an average household income of more than \$70,000. QVC says its customers are predominantly women, though its demographic changes hour-to-hour depending on programming.

Knowing your audience's tastes is only the first part of the battle. The next step for applicants is demonstrating a capability to produce in mass quantities.

"They have to have their ducks in order," says ShopNBC Chief Merchant Kris Kulesza. "If you can only make five to 10 units of something, that could close the door." ShopNBC, which

broadcasts to more than 70 million homes, might ask vendors to have as many as 5,000 units available.

However, QVC's Montross warns against jumping the gun - never manufacture large quantities of your product on spec before getting approval from the network. They want to see that you are *capable* of manufacturing mass quantities, not that you've already done it.

The volume demand usually rules out hand-crafted items.

"In order to do both the volume and quality, [vendors] need to be working with a pretty sophisticated manufacturing factory," Montross says. In rare cases, networks might put vendors in touch with manufacturing companies, but they will not pay manufacturing costs.

"[Merchants] have to be willing to make an investment," Kulesza says. "Not everything will take off or sell out from the get-go. You may have to make an investment up front."

Something else the networks seek: A personality and a story to go along with the product. If you become a vendor, you will likely present your product yourself. You should be prepared with all the elements that go into making compelling TV, such as a good storyline with twists and turns. You'll want to have themes and variations in your product line that you can discuss.

Finally, don't be shy. Be able to talk enthusiastically about your product, both to the vendor scouts and also, potentially, on air.

Persistence is key: Kulesza says that if you submit an application and get no word back, "Don't be afraid to make the call directly to us."