



Market Report

A Snapshot of your Market Sector

Printing

This pack has been designed to provide information on setting up a business in the **Printing** industry in Scotland, as well as helping to inform the market research section of your business plan. You can find more information on how to write a business plan from the Business Gateway website (www.bgateway.com/businessplan), including an interactive template and tips to get you started.

This market report was updated by Business Gateway in **January 2025**.

What do I need to know about the Printing market?

The following summary statistics have been taken from market research reports and reliable resources that the Information Service uses to compile industry information. They should give you an indication of how your industry is faring at present and whether there is demand for your type of business:

- ◆ The Printing industry's performance has been constrained due to the popularity of digital alternatives to printed materials. Demand for printed materials has fallen as consumers and businesses have gradually transitioned towards online trading. Demand from downstream markets has been edging downwards due to the growth in the popularity of reading online and through other electronic alternatives. Industry revenue is anticipated to tumble at a compound annual rate of 4.1% over the five years through 2024-25 to £9.2 billion. Industry revenue is expected to grow at a modest compound annual rate of **0.5% over the five years through 2029-30 to reach £9.4 billion**. The industry is likely to continue to face fierce competition from substitutes for commercially printed material, including online advertising and publication of information. (IBIS World, *Printing in the UK*, October 2024).
- ◆ Digital printing allows clients to fulfil their ad printing needs without investing in specialised printing equipment, which can prove very costly. Growth in the number of UK businesses is supporting industry performance, with many requesting posters and business cards. Advertising materials spearhead the revenue for the industry due to their high demand for vibrant, attention-grabbing visuals, often needed in short, customisable runs that digital printing excels at delivering efficiently and with superior quality. The returning popularity of printed books is also driving demand for industry services. Industry revenue is projected to grow at a compound annual rate of 3% over the five years **through 2028-29 to approximately £1.6 billion**. (IBISWorld, *Digital Printing in the UK*, April 2024).
- ◆ Despite economic pressures, there remains a strong market for books. Print still dominates sales, but growth is focused on digital formats. This will continue with many drawn to the lower prices of e-books and audiobooks. The books market will sustain **sales of £1.5 billion** despite increasing competition for time and attention. (Mintel, *Books, E-books and Audiobooks – UK*, November 2024).
- ◆ The national organisation for this industry is the **British Printing Industries Federation** (www.britishprint.com). Other industry bodies include **Independent Print Industries Association** (www.ipia.org.uk) and the **British Association for Print and Communication** (www.bapc.co.uk).

Where can I find more information on my market?

The Information Service has access to a number of databases which can offer more detail on this industry. Some of these reports are listed below - if you would like to be sent extracts from any of these reports, please contact us on **0300 013 4753** or email info@bgateway.com.

- ◆ **Mintel** - Magazines – UK – 2023. The cost-of-living crisis has led to one in five adults spending less on magazines. Many readers are opting for single issue print magazines, which can be seen as an affordable luxury and a means to treat themselves, whilst avoiding the financial commitment of subscriptions, particularly during times of household financial pressures. The upward trend of consumers' financial confidence since late 2022, has helped magazine readership levels rise back to those seen in August 2021; prior to the start of rising inflation levels. Despite the struggles of the print magazine market, there is broad appeal across all generations, indicating that publishers should not dismiss this format.
- ◆ **IBISWorld** - News Consumption – UK – 2024. While circulation of print newspapers has been on the decline for years, some people remain steadfastly loyal to the format, having a particular preference for print and the habits they have established while reading a newspaper. People in a healthy financial situation are more likely to still be reading print than those in less comfortable situations. Those in this financial situation, who have a strong affinity for print despite so many alternatives, are unlikely at this point to be driven away by small price increases. **Publisher Reach reported a 2% increase in print circulation revenue to £312.5m in 2023**, driven by price increases in titles. While publishers can clearly go too far with price rises, many of the remaining print readers should be fairly accommodating to incremental price increases.

There are also a number of online resources you may find helpful:

- ◆ **The British Printing Industries Federation (BPIF)** have published a report entitled [The Future of Global Printing to 2028](#) - This report discusses the key consumer, technology, and commercial dynamics shaping the evolution of the print industry across the next five years. (www.britishprint.com)
- ◆ **Print Monthly** (www.printmonthly.co.uk). An industry trade site with various news, features, blogs, and videos for all aspects of printing.

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How can I find out about my competitors?

Business Gateway's online guide to [Competitor Analysis](#) explains how to find your competitors, how to research what they're doing and how to act on what you learn about them.

Immediate competition will be from other businesses in your local area. There are several online directories which can be used to find company information and generate lists easily and at no expense. Many Local Authorities also publish local business directories on the web. Below are some key web resources:

- ◆ General business directories such as [Yell](#), [Thomson Local](#) or [Google Maps](#)
- ◆ Trade specialists like [EuroPages](#) (European directory), [The Wholesaler](#) or [Free Index](#)
- ◆ Business to business (B2B) specialists such as [Kompass](#)

Likewise, your local Chamber of Commerce may publish a members' directory; find your local Chamber on the [Scottish Chambers](#) website.

Once you've identified who your competitors are, the next step is to gather information on the way they do business. Which services do they provide? How do they market themselves? How much do they charge?

To learn about your competitors:

- ◆ Look for articles or adverts in local newspapers, trade press and directories.
- ◆ Try to read their marketing material; if the company has an online presence, visit the company's website as a first port of call. Not only does it give you a better understanding of the company's activities, it can also offer a wealth of information such as a company history or staff biographies, as well as the company's partners or suppliers
- ◆ Search for information on limited UK companies via the [Companies House](#) website
- ◆ Gain an insight into your competitor's performance using credit checks and the accounts that limited companies are required to submit to Companies House each year.

We can provide credit checks free of charge; if you are interested in using this resource, or looking for us to help you find relevant publications, please contact us by emailing info@bgateway.com or by calling **0300 013 4753**



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What about suppliers?

[Choosing and Managing Suppliers](#) can help you decide what you need from a supplier, how to identify one and how to choose one to deal with.

Trade associations or industry specific organisations may also be able to recommend suppliers or contacts. You can also use the aforementioned resources for finding competitors to find suppliers.

Once you have decided on a supplier, we can run a credit check on the company to help assess their financial stability. We provide credit checks free of charge; if you are interested in using the resource please info@bgateway.com or by calling **0300 013 4753**.

Who are my customers?

Your business plan should include information about the customers you would expect. Business Gateway's guides on [Market and customer research](#) will help you to identify new trends, opportunities, customers and competitors.

It can be useful to group your customers by geographical location, age or lifestyle. The websites listed below are freely available and can provide most of this information. If you can't find what you're looking for from these websites, please contact us and one of the team will be happy to help:

- ◆ Access the latest population estimates from the [National Records of Scotland \(NRS\)](#). NRS also offers demographic factsheets for each council area in Scotland, which can provide summary statistics for the area you will be based in.
- ◆ Information from the most recent census in 2011 is released via the official website. See in particular the [Census Area Profiles](#). Clicking on your area of interest will give the latest population figures, including estimates by age.
- ◆ [Understanding Scottish Places](#) has interactive profiles of towns and cities across Scotland. It can be useful for understanding the interrelationships and flows between towns, and also gives comparisons between two or more places.
- ◆ [Scottish Government Statistics](#) provide accurate and up-to-date statistics on Scotland, covering population, health, education and housing.
- ◆ [The Scottish Household Survey](#) provides information on the structure, characteristics, attitudes and behaviour of Scottish households, both at a national and local level.
- ◆ [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#) is the recognised national statistical body for the UK. ONS covers a wide range of demographic, economic and social issues at a UK level.

How can you help me with other aspects of starting my business?

The Business Gateway website has guides, videos, online tutorials and tips on all aspects of starting up a business in Scotland. Follow the links below to explore each resource:

Accountancy

Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland's (ICAS) ["Find a Chartered Accountant"](#) tool

Funding

[Practical information](#) on finance and funding for starting and growing your business

Insurance

[Business insurance guide](#)

Legal Help

Gov.uk ["Licence Finder"](#) tool

Law Society of Scotland's ["Find a Solicitor"](#) tool

Pricing

Business Companion [Pricing & payment guide](#).

Please note: the most effective way to research pricing is to conduct your own research – visit wholesalers or suppliers to obtain price lists, find quotes from similar companies and work out what other businesses in your area are charging

Promotion

[BG guides to Marketing](#)

Training

[Skills Development Scotland's My World of Work](#)

[Funding for training](#)

[Small Business Bonus Scheme \(Scotland\)](#)

Your local Business Gateway can offer events, workshops and 1:2:1 support on all aspects of starting and developing your business. Call the helpline on **0300 013 4753** to find out what is available in your area.

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You must not rely on the information in the report as an alternative to advice from an appropriately qualified professional. If you have any specific questions speak to your Business Gateway Advisor or consult an appropriately qualified professional.

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