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Thread: [What still works with POD in 2026 \[Print on Demand Businesses\]](#)

The Pact - October 20, 2026, 7:55 am

For someone starting or expanding a POD business today, I'd divide categories into four groups: gold rush, solid but competitive, dangerously saturated, and emerging opportunities.

Gold Rush Categories

These are where the strongest combination of demand and defensibility is.

1. Personalized Gifts

This remains the strongest POD category because it is harder to commoditize.

Examples:

- Family name signs
- Pet portraits
- Memorial items
- Custom mugs
- Anniversary gifts
- Birth flower products
- Grandparent gifts
- Custom storybooks

Why it works:

- Buyers are buying emotion, not a product.
- Much lower price sensitivity.
- AI can assist personalization.
- Difficult for competitors to copy individual orders.

Personalization is repeatedly highlighted as a major driver of POD growth and customer demand.

2. Pet Products

Pet owners spend surprisingly freely.

Examples:

- Custom pet portraits
- Pet memorial art
- Breed-specific apparel
- Custom pet blankets
- Pet owner gifts

The advantage is emotional attachment plus highly targeted niches.

Instead of "dog lover", think:

Border Collie owner
Greyhound rescue supporter
Maine Coon enthusiast

3. Home Décor This is what I sell.

Many POD sellers still focus only on clothing.

Home décor has become increasingly attractive:

Canvas prints
Framed wall art
Posters
Custom cushions
Blankets
Decorative signs

Consumers often perceive home décor as having higher value than apparel, allowing stronger margins. Home décor is regularly cited among growing POD product segments.

4. Creator Merchandise

Creators increasingly want branded products without holding inventory.

Potential customers:

YouTubers
Podcasters
Twitch streamers
TikTok creators
Facebook group owners

Many successful POD businesses now serve niche communities rather than selling directly to consumers.

Solid But Competitive

5. Apparel

Still huge.

Still profitable.

Still very crowded.

The days of:

Funny quote + generic T-shirt = easy money

are largely over.

The winning apparel stores tend to focus on:

- Specific communities
- Premium designs
- Personalization

Apparel remains the largest POD category but also the most competitive.

6. Stickers I sell these too.

Pros:

- Cheap to produce
- Great for testing designs
- Strong Etsy demand

Cons:

- Heavy competition
- Low order values

Many stores use stickers as an entry product rather than their primary revenue source.

7. Journals and Notebooks

Good when tied to a niche:

- Dungeons & Dragons players
- Gardeners
- Writers
- Mental health communities
- LGBT specific communities

Bad when generic.

The niche matters much more than the notebook itself.

Dangerously Saturated

I'd be very cautious entering these unless you have a major point of difference.

Generic Motivational Shirts

Examples:

- "Hustle harder"
- "Girl boss"
- "Live laugh love"

Thousands of nearly identical listings already exist.

Generic AI Art Posters

This was profitable in the early AI boom.

Now marketplaces are flooded with:

Midjourney landscapes
Fantasy art
Anime-inspired posters

The barrier to entry has become almost zero.

Meme Products

The problem is speed.

By the time most sellers upload products:

The meme has peaked.
Big sellers have already saturated the market.
Copyright risks may exist.
Emerging Opportunities

These are areas you should watch closely.

1. AI-Personalized Story Products

Examples:

Children's books featuring a child
Pet adventure books
Family storybooks

AI allows rapid customisation that was previously expensive.

2. Local Identity Products

Most POD sellers think globally.

Many opportunities exist in local pride niches.

These often face less competition than global niches.

3. Hobby Communities

Some of the strongest niches have passionate members.

Examples:

Beekeeping
Fly fishing
Miniature painting
Genealogy

Gardening
Caravan travel
Horse ownership
Pickle Ball

Passionate hobbies tend to outperform broad interests.

What you should probably do if starting from scratch in 2026

If you have around US \$300 and want to start today, you should probably choose:

A niche with emotional attachment (pets, family, hobbies).
Personalized products rather than static designs.
Build a recognizable brand instead of chasing trends.

The biggest mistake is trying to sell to "everyone." The businesses succeeding now are often serving a very small, very enthusiastic group and making products that feel personally relevant to that group.