

# How To Make Your First Perfume For Under \$500

2020 Edition

By Philip Goutell

If you have never been involved with manufacturing, never been inside any kind of manufacturing plant, the idea that you can produce a commercial perfume on your own, for very little money, might seem like an impossible dream to you.

But if you've seen products made and understand that manufacturing is nothing more than executing a series of simple steps in sequence, then you can understand that producing a commercial perfume or cologne is simply a matter of knowing each step and having the ability to execute it.

This book lays out these steps and walks you through their execution. As for equipment, most of what you need can be purchased locally for well under \$50. This book is to be *used*, not simply read.

You will find a good deal of information in this book. You may also find some contradictions or points you do not understand. There are many variables in putting a perfume together but I have tried to keep the steps as simple as possible, so that you can follow each step without spending much money.

My own belief is that if you have a serious interest in marketing a perfume of your own, it is best to start with a small budget. Then, when stepping up to a larger project, you will have a good ability to communicate clearly and successfully with your suppliers, and this will save you a great deal of money. There is no substitute for "hands on" experience and you will get it by following the steps laid out for you here, one after the other.

I welcome comments and questions. You can contact me by email at [pgoutell@bio-byte.com](mailto:pgoutell@bio-byte.com). Be sure to use an appropriate "subject" line in your email so that it will stand out from the large volume of junk messages I receive.

Thank you for your interest in this book. I wish you all the best with your perfume or cologne project.



## I. The Purpose Of This Book

This book was written to address three specific needs.

First, for the business with a plan to launch a perfume on a commercial scale and with an investment of possibly \$50,000 more more, this book lets you rehearse the necessary steps for what amounts to little more than petty cash. It allows you to gain hands on experience with each of the steps involved in commercial perfume production while executing what, for you, is simply a practice drill. Yet this “practice drill” could very well help you keep your big project on track so it will come in on time and on budget. There is no substitute for experience.

Next, for the individual with hardly any money but an ambition to have his or her own perfume business, this book gives you a method for getting started with minimum risk. If you get it right you can plow back your first profits into your business and watch it grow. If you *really* get it right you might be able to attract investors who can help you jump start your business. But, most important, you are testing your desire to develop a perfume business and making this test with little money or risk.

Finally, this book was written for *idea* people, men and women who believe they have an exceptionally strong *idea* for a new perfume and, more importantly, a perfume name, and they want to protect that name by establishing exclusive trademark protection *for* that name. With one (expensive) exception, trademark protection for a perfume name cannot be established without first creating a perfume and putting it on the market with the name that is to be protected.

Note that to obtain and maintain protection for your perfume name your fragrance doesn't have to be original and your packaging doesn't have to be professional but your fragrance must be bottled and out there in the marketplace bearing the name you want to protect.

If you want to change the bottle, scent, graphics and packaging later, or sell the name to someone else, you are free to do so and the name will still be protected. But first you must *market* a perfume with the name on it that you want to protect. Until you do this you cannot gain trademark rights and protection for your name.

By following the steps described in this book you can produce a first perfume for around \$500. These steps are fundamental to producing any perfume so the methods here are not limiting. Producing a fragrance on a larger scale can simply involve employing professionals with equipment and staff to carry out the steps you will be following here, by hand, by yourself.

If you have never thought about the steps required to put together a perfume, you may be amazed at their simplicity.

And if, in the future, you have a chance to visit or work with a commercial perfume filling house, you will quickly recognize the individual steps being executed. Only the size of the equipment and plant will be different.

## II. Planning Your Project

There's a saying in the business world, "Plan your work and work your plan." Before you head off in all directions, all energy and no organization, stop and develop a plan in which you set a goal and lay out each step, in sequence, that you will execute to reach your goal. Your plan will keep you focused on your objective and help you avoid costly, time consuming, distractions.

So what *are* the steps you must execute to develop your own perfume? And what is the sequence of these steps you must follow? Let's start by looking at our goal. Then we can work backwards.

At this point there are two ways you can set your goal. First, you can simply say, "My goal is to produce 100 bottles of my own perfume." This is an easy goal to achieve and you'll have no trouble with it.

But I suggest that you set a more businesslike goal, one that brings economics into your plan. I suggest as a goal you say, "My goal is to produce *and sell* 100 bottles of my own perfume." Do you understand how this is different? If you are going to be in the perfume *business*, you have to *sell* what you produce. Therefore your strategy to *sell* your perfume becomes part of your plan. Now you do not reach your goal until, not only have you made your 100 bottles of perfume, but you have also *sold them*.

### Elements of your plan

Your plan is going to include finding the right fragrance, mixing it with alcohol, bottling it, capping the bottles with caps or spray pumps, labeling the bottles, and (optionally) boxing the bottles and possibly cellophane wrapping them. Then there are the matters of naming your perfume and selling it.

So what comes first? What is the first step in putting this project together? The first step is to develop an overall summary of what you want to do. Think a little. Who are you going to sell to? Where is your market? If you were working for a large company you would have already done some research on markets and singled out the market you planed to address with this fragrance.

Here since this book is in a sense a practice drill, we won't get involved with all the many possibilities for selling your perfume. Yet we do need to identify at least one way in which you might sell your perfume because all other decisions you make will be checked against this marketing decision to see if they are appropriate and consistent with your goal.

Here, for purposes of this project, let us assume that you have made arrangements to sell your perfume in a small but popular clothing boutique in a college town that is owned by a friend.

Women patronize this store because it has comfortable and elegant styles not available at the local mall. Prices are mid range. Customers range in age from college undergraduates to older faculty and faculty wives but are mostly concentrated in the 21 to 45 age bracket. The most popular sizes are small and petite. The store has sold some fragrance oils successfully (the kind that are promoted for their mystical and magical effects) and therefore the owner feels that a perfume, if priced right and presented nicely, might do well.

This now is your target market and the summary that will define the rest of your plan.

Working backwards from the finished product, we (may) need boxes and cellophane wrapping for them to achieve a professional look.

If we use boxes we will need artwork for the boxes and that may require assistance from a graphic designer.

The boxes will contain our bottled fragrance so we will need bottles and fragrance and closures for the bottles, either screw-on caps or spray pumps.

Our fragrance will be a mixture of a selected fragrance oil and alcohol. We will have to mix these together and then use this mixture to fill our bottles.

We will have to name our fragrance and create labels for our bottles using this name. Again this might require assistance from a graphic artist.

To do all this we will need some equipment but our equipment needs will be minimal and we can address them needs as they arise.

Here now we have a complete list of tasks we must accomplish. The sequence of events goes like this:

1. Naming your perfume
2. Selecting and purchasing your scent
3. Purchasing perfumers alcohol
4. Mixing your scent with alcohol
5. Selecting your bottle and closure
6. Filling and capping your bottles
7. Labeling your bottles
8. Boxing your fragrance (optional)
9. Delivery to retail store
10. Promotion to help make retail sales
11. Promotions to help expand your business to additional retail stores

## Naming Your Perfume

Naming your perfume involves creating a harmony between your advertising to your intended market, your graphics, bottle, and packaging, and the scent itself. This is always incredibly difficult to do, particularly as there is another element that has to be addressed — the availability of the name, so that you can gain exclusive rights to it.

The name, if it is “right,” can help sell your perfume so it is worth spending time and some serious effort to develop it. Also (very) important, if you are interested in obtaining strong trademark protection for your name, be sure that (1) nobody you know of (possibly from a Google search) is using a name that is identical or similar, and (2) that the name itself is unusual and unique — not something someone else is likely to think of. Yet for all this it is essential that the name and the fragrance go together.

## Finding The Right Scent

At this point all we have decided about the scent itself is that it must harmonize with its name. But where do we find a scent that will do this? Who will help us? Where do we look? If you are becoming involved with perfume for the first time your natural inclination is to want an original scent, a scent that nobody else has and will be unique to you.

Unfortunately on a low budget this is not possible unless you yourself are able to develop the scent and the formula from which it will be produced. To engage a perfumer who could create an original scent for you might set you back by several thousand dollars or more without any guarantee that the scent will sell successfully. Once you get your business rolling and have established a profitable relationship with customers you might want to try working directly with a perfumer. But it is not a necessary expense and, at the beginning, it could be a bad idea. (Responsible perfumers will discourage you from using their services until you can demonstrate that you can successfully sell what this person makes for you.)

The more practical way to find the scent you need is through a company that offers prepared fragrance oils on a non-exclusive basis. Or, in some cases, you may find a fragrance house that will give you a limited “exclusive” on a fragrance they have in inventory provided you purchase a certain amount each year to you maintain your exclusive rights to it.

At the beginning, for your first perfume, I would advise you avoid any fancy negotiations and simply buy your required supply of fragrance oil from one of the sources that offers oils in both large and small quantities. Please refer to the **Resources** section at the end of this book for names of vendors of fragrance oils.

So now we have to track down an existing fragrance oil that will be available to us. My starting point in this quest would be a survey of fra-

grances that are already on the market. This means going to fragrance counters at all the department stores and big box stores and boutiques you can get to and sampling existing fragrances to see if you can find something with a scent that is close to what you want.

Just smelling many different fragrances should inspire you. Bring small baggies with you and, if you can, wet test blotters with your favorites, label them and then, after smelling them, put each in an individual baggie and seal it. When you get home, smell it again.

When you find an existing fragrance that is as close as you can get to what you want, buy a small bottle if can afford it. Then live with this fragrance for a few days to be sure that it is something you like and that this style of fragrance will harmonize with your perfume's name and theme.

But now you have to find a similar fragrance that will be available to you in bulk. Here's where you go to one or more of the major fragrance oil vendors that serve small companies and individuals. Looking at their websites (see **Resources**) try to identify fragrances they are selling that might be close to what you want. If you can't find what you want, contact them by phone or email and ask for their help. They might know exactly what you want and have it.

Ideally now you'll be able to purchase a dozen or more small samples of fragrances that are very close to what you are looking for. When they arrive, live with them for a week. Use them. See how they last on your body. See how others react to them. Make notes. And then select the one you believe will be the most appropriate for your new perfume. Be sure that it is available to you in bulk and that it fits your perfume's name and theme.

### **Understanding perfumer's alcohol**

Commercial perfumes are a mixture of alcohol and fragrance compound. The alcohol may be diluted with water. In some markets there is a preference for non-alcoholic perfumes and here various non-alcoholic solvents will be substituted for alcohol.

The alcohol used in perfumery is *ethanol*. Due to tax regulations in the U.S. and other countries, the cosmetics industry (and other industries) have made compromises with the taxing authorities so that by "denaturing" their alcohol to make it unsuitable for beverage use — alcoholic beverages being the root reason for alcohol taxation in the first place — they avoid a high rate of taxation.

In the U.S., using pure ethanol could lead to your perfume being classified as an *alcoholic beverage* thus subjecting it to all the state and federal regulations imposed upon the distribution and sale of alcoholic beverages.

Different non-beverage industries denature their alcohol using different formulas. For perfume and cosmetics, the principle formulas are referred to as "SD-39" and "SD-40," the "SD" (or "SDA") standing for "specially dena-

tured.”

The virtue of the SD-39 and SD-40 formulas is that they render the alcohol unsuitable for beverage use while leaving the odor nearly unchanged. Similarly the faint odor of the alcohol itself will not noticeably change the scent of the perfume.

Commercially, perfumer’s alcohol is available at different degrees of purity. For the finest grades of perfume, the alcohol is generally close to 100 percent pure with the denaturing elements accounting for less than one or two percent of its volume.

But perfumers alcohol is also available commercially mixed with as much as 15 percent water. This is alcohol that would typically be used for *eau de colognes* and *eau de toilettes*. The presence of the water generally increases the persistence of the fragrance on the skin, that is it makes the scent last longer. In cases where only pure perfumers alcohol is available, water — either de-ionized (“DI”) or distilled — can be added, provided the alcohol itself has not been denatured with water-adverse substances such as *isopropyl myristate*. Perfumer’s alcohols should be clearly labeled as to their purity and additives.

### **Understanding Bottles and Closures**

Almost all who are new to perfume development state that they require a custom bottle for their perfume. Unless you are ordering a large number of bottles — perhaps 100,000 or more — a custom bottle is generally not practical. The design, setup, and die charges alone would be prohibitive.

The solution is to make use of an existing “stock” bottle. Today a great many bottles in a wide range of designs and sizes are available and affordable. But the selection of a bottle for your perfume brings us to the next issue. What type of closure will you use?

“Closure” refers to the cap or spray pump that will seal the bottle once it has been filled.

#### **Screw-on caps**

The least expensive closure is a simple screw-on cap. Screw-on caps are available in a number of sizes. This allows you a great many choices of bottles.

If you decide to use a screw-on cap as a closure you will have two requirements for your bottles. First, the bottle you select must have a *threaded neck* of a size that will mate with the thread of your cap. Second, the bottle must have a *sprinkler neck*.

A “sprinkler” neck refers to a bottle whose neck is constricted to a smaller opening than the full width of the neck. The purpose of this constriction is to allow the contents of the bottle to be “sprinkled” or “spashed” rather than poured. This provides for a more graceful application of the fragrance. A full size neck opening would lead to the risk of messy spills every time

someone used your fragrance.

Sprinkler neck bottles are widely available in many sizes and shapes.

### **Screw-on fine mist spray pumps**

If your project is strictly do-it-yourself without the aid of outside services or machinery, and if you want your perfume to be sprayed rather than sprinkled from the bottle, you will need screw-on fine mist spray pumps.

Sadly this limits a number of your creative choices. In the first place, it has become increasingly difficult to find suppliers of metal screw-on spray pumps (and easier to find plastic ones which are far less elegant for a perfume!) Purchased in small quantities, the pump alone can run about \$3. Even in volume purchases the price might not drop below \$1.00. Additionally, these pumps are large and bulky by today's standards. But the good news is that they still exist and still can be found if you search a bit.

The second problem with the screw-on pump is that they are only available only in a small number of thread sizes. This means that in selecting your bottle it will be necessary to pick one that has a threaded neck in a size for which you can obtain spray pumps.

You will now find that your options for a bottle with a screw-on pump are limited, both in the shapes of bottles that are available to you and in their sizes, particularly in sizes with capacities of 2 fluid ounces (about 60 milliliters) and under. These are the bottles that will be the most practical for a perfume or cologne.

### **Crimp-on and press-on fine mist spray pumps**

If your budget is such that you will be using an outside supplier to fill and close your bottles, you can make use of what has become the industry standard for closures — a fine mist spray pump that is either crimped or pressed onto the neck of the bottle to seal it. Both of these solutions require machinery. All professional filling houses will have the required machinery to do the job. For them it is routine. For you, without a crimp machine, the job is impossible.

Both crimp-on and press-on fine mist spray pumps are far cheaper than the screw-on variety and this option will give you the widest selection of in-stock bottles from major bottle suppliers. Your only consideration here is to be sure that the bottles you purchase have a neck that is the same size ("finish" it is called) as the pumps you will be using. Often you will be able to buy both bottles and pumps from the same source and their sales staff can guide you in making sound selections.

### **Understanding labels**

For small quantities, the simplest, least expensive labels you can obtain are ones you print yourself using an ink jet or laser printer. All you need is an appropriate sticker paper and your design. The advantage here is that you can print a very small quantity of labels with as many colors as you want in

a size that best suits your bottle and design. Here you can print a few dozen or perhaps 100 or so labels at far less than what they would cost to have printed by a commercial printer. If you take your label project to an outside printer you will likely be facing a minimum order quantity of 1,000 labels and also, possibly, a setup charge. 1,000 labels may be far more than you need.

If, on the other hand, you have more of a budget, you can have your labels designed by a graphic artist and printed by a printer who specializes in labels for perfumes and cosmetics. If you are producing a large number of bottles, say 50,000 to 100,000 or more, you can go one step farther and have your label printed directly onto your bottles. If you do this, be sure that you are working with a quality printer who is experienced in printing on glass bottles. Both their sizes and shapes can offer challenges.

### **Boxes and other packaging**

There are no standard boxes for perfume bottles. To box your perfume you must create a custom design and find a printer who specialized in custom boxes to produce it for you. Because this involves having a custom die made — to cut out the box from the pasteboard sheet it is printed on — it is rarely economical to produce less than 1500 boxes and this may be far more than you need for now.

Sometimes individuals find ways to package their fragrance by making creative use of stock materials that can be ordered from a catalog. If you are producing less than 1,000 bottles of perfume or cologne this may be your best solution.

If you have a larger budget and are producing several thousand bottles, working with a graphic artist and printer who specializes in boxes for perfume and cosmetics is an intelligent solution.

The lesson you are learning at this point is that you *can* produce a perfume or cologne at a very low price per bottle — which will give you a far better markup when you begin selling it — if you minimize all the frills and simply produce a good fragrance. You are not going to compete with the big companies using these techniques. You are not going to get your perfume into big stores.

But you do stand a very good chance of being able to make money with it if you have a sound marketing plan.

### **Revisiting your marketing plan**

Before you start spending money to develop your perfume or cologne it is essential that you give some thought to how you are going to sell it. Sales do not occur by magic. Potential customers have to be identified and wooed. Distributions plans have to be made.

For purposes of this book we have already defined our market but it is

still helpful to continue to think of ways that we can maximize our sales in that market — a fashion boutique in a college town.

How can we promote our perfume so that, rather than just happening upon it in the store, women come into the store asking for it? Are there local networks we can use to pump up recognition for our fragrance? Can a few bottles be given to local fashion leaders who will praise it? Can a few bottles be donated for use as prizes or gifts at charitable events?

Will you need to team up with someone else who has a gift for being able to make sales? Are there ways to turn a number of people into boosters for your fragrance?

We are very close now to creating the fragrance itself and you want to be sure that you will know what to do with it once you have it in your hands.

### **III. How To Create And Bottle Your First Perfume Or Cologne For As Little Money As Possible**

To demonstrate, step by step, what is involved in putting together a commercial perfume — a perfume you can sell — let's give ourselves a real project to work on. A project you can follow along, taking each of the necessary steps yourself. Our goal will be to develop and bottle a perfume or cologne at the lowest possible cost per bottle *and* a low overall cost. As you follow along you might want to make certain substitutions, based on your own needs and your own markets. And, while we will be talking about producing 100 bottles of perfume, if your budget is limited, you can reduce that number to 50 or even 25. The steps and principles will be the same.

#### **Materials Needed**

At this point you must make some decisions about the quantity of bottles you intend to produce. If your intention is to produce only a few dozen bottles, you will be limited in the sources available to you. And, while your cost per bottle will be considerably higher than it would be if you were producing 1,000 bottles, it will still be quite low. Here is what you will need.

##### **Materials**

Fragrance Compound

Alcohol

Bottles

Caps or Pumps

Labels

Boxes (optional and not recommended for now)

### Equipment

2-cup glass measuring cup (available at all major supermarkets)

funnel (from your supermarket or a laboratory supply house)

glass stirring rod (from a laboratory supply house)

1-gallon jug with cap (from a bottle supplier)

## Buying the materials you need

### Fragrance Compound

Otherwise known as “fragrance oil.” In the trade it is known as the “juice.” This is the heart of your perfume. Sources are listed in the **Resources** section at the end of this book.

Your first chore is to select a fragrance oil to use. You do this by reviewing a number of samples — and sharing their aromas with people you know, to get their reaction. Then you must decide on a single scent. This will be the heart of your project.

The issue for you now is *quantity*. How much compound will you will purchase? Here some calculations are needed. The planning we are doing calls for filling 100 1-ounce bottles. That means that once you have added alcohol to your fragrance oil, you will need 100 ounces of the finished fragrance to fill your bottles. You will also want some extra on hand to allow for spills. So let’s assume you are going to produce 120 fluid ounces of your fragrance in preparation for bottling.

Here you run into a complication. While your bottles were specified by their *capacity* in either *fluid ounces* (fl oz) or *milliliters* (ml), fragrance compound is generally sold by *weight*, in *pounds* or in *kilograms* (kilos). Alcohol, however, is generally sold by capacity, in gallons or liters. We will deal with these issues one at a time.

### Fragrance to alcohol ratios

Traditionally fragrances were graded as “*Extrait*,” “*Eau de Parfum*,” “*Eau de Toilette*,” and “*Eau de Cologne*.” The *eau de parfum* might be about 20 percent fragrance oil to 80 percent alcohol. For *eau de toilette* we might have 10 percent fragrance oil and 90 percent alcohol. For *eau de cologne* the ratio might be 5 percent fragrance oil to 95 percent alcohol.

These numbers are not written in stone and today’s commercial fragrances can vary widely from them. The labeling — EXTRAIT, EDP, EDT, EDC — is only suggestive of the blend of fragrance compound and alcohol contained in the bottle.

For this project in the interest of simplicity we are going to settle on a ratio of 20% fragrance compound to 80% alcohol. This ratio can be used for

either a woman's perfume or a man's cologne although a man's cologne would typically have less than half this amount of fragrance compound. (In my experience with men's products, the 20-80 ratio works just fine.)

Now we can begin to calculate how much fragrance compound and how much perfumer's alcohol you will have to buy. Of your 120 fluid ounces, 20% will be fragrance compound. That comes to 24 fluid ounces.

This also tells you how much alcohol you will need. For the purposes of this first fragrance we will not consider the alcohol/water ratios. You will simply purchase whatever perfumer's alcohol is available to you, regardless of whether it is mixed with some water or not, and use it as is — no mixing on your part.

So, you will need 80% of 120 ounces or 96 fluid ounces of alcohol.

Calculating the amount of alcohol you will need to buy is easy. 96 fluid ounces is equal to 3 quarts or  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a gallon. This is slightly less than 3 liters. As you'll want a little more alcohol on hand than the exact amount you need, I would recommend that you purchase one gallon (4 quarts) or 4 liters (a bit more than one gallon). Be sure that this is perfumer's alcohol, SD-39 or SD-40.

Our calculations for fragrance compound, since we want to translate our 24 fluid ounces into pounds or kilos, are more difficult. The most obvious solution in the case of the vendor selling by weight is to *ask* the vendor the fluid volume of a pound or kilo of the compound.

As a general observation I have found that a kilo of most fragrance compounds I have worked with come out to be about a bit more than a quart in volume. That would suggest that by weight we would need about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a kilo or a bit more than 25 ounces, or a bit more than a pound and a half of fragrance compound.

To be sure that you have enough compound on hand, order early and check the amount you receive (by weight) against the amount you will need by volume.

Of course, if your vendor is selling you fragrance compound by volume — fluid ounces, pints, or quarts, just order a bit more than the 24 fluid ounces you'll need.

Now you can place your orders.

You can order both your alcohol and your fragrance compound over the internet. At this point you should also obtain a one gallon glass jug in which you will mix your fragrance. A new, clean bottle is the ideal. Sometimes a wine jug can be recycled by cleaning it well, airing it out, and rinsing it with cheap isopropyl alcohol from your local drug store or supermarket. Then let the jug dry and air out until all the smell from both wine and alcohol are gone. Be sure to save the cap and clean it too with isopropyl alcohol.

But a new, unused, 1-gallon jug would be best. The only downside here

is that it is likely you will have to order a box of four jugs. Most companies will not sell a single bottle due to the difficulties and expense of repacking and shipping.

When fragrance compound, alcohol, and one gallon jug have all arrived, you are ready to mix your fragrance compound with alcohol. It goes like this.

**Step #1** — Fill your measuring cup to the 24 ounce (3 cup) mark with your fragrance compound and, using your funnel to prevent spills, pour the contents of the measuring cup into your clean, empty, one gallon jug.

**Step #2** — Without cleaning either your measuring cup or your funnel, fill your measuring cup to the 24 ounce (3 cup) mark with perfumer's alcohol. Now, using the funnel as a guide again, pour the alcohol from the measuring cup into the jug containing your fragrance compound.

**Step #3** — Repeat Step #2 three (3) more times. When you have done this you will have placed 24 ounces of fragrance compound into your jug and, on top of it, *four times* 24 ounces of perfumers alcohol (96 ounces) — a 20% to 80% ratio.

**Step #4** — Cap your jug using a proper size cap. If you purchased new one gallon jugs, caps should have been supplies with them.

**Step #5** — Shake your jug to get the fragrance compound and the alcohol to begin mixing. Leave the jug sitting in room temperature for a minimum of one week. Allowing it to blend for 30 days would be ideal. Give it a few shakes daily.

### **Bottles**

Our goal is to fill 100 bottles. Bottles are not generally sold in this quantity but rather by the carton or case and the number of bottles in a carton or case will depend on the size and shape of the bottle.

It has been mentioned that the least expensive packaging per bottle would be to employ sprinkler neck bottles with caps. Sprinkler neck bottles may be difficult to obtain in a quantity of around 100 bottles. This presents a problem as, per bottle, they can be quite inexpensive but you might have to purchase more than you really want in order for a vendor to accept your order.

Alternatively you may be able to find bottles with matched spray pumps from several vendors who specialize in supplying independent perfumers. Be sure that the bottles are the size you want (ideally 1-ounce, as that is the size we are prepared to fill), and be sure that you can get pumps that will mate with your bottles.

Before settling on a bottle and closure combination it is well to spend some time reviewing the available choices and combinations at several websites. An additional solution for bottles is a gold tone or silver tone meal spray "set" that can easily be carried in a woman's purse. These are usually

less than 1-ounce in capacity but quite elegant in looks and often available for purchase by the dozen rather than by the case.

Selecting your bottles can involve quite a bit of work in analyzing combinations and running the numbers to see what your actual cost per bottle will be. If you are producing a large number of bottles — 1,000 up to 100,000 or more, this is less of a problem as vendors will work with you to help you make practical decisions.

But for this project of 100 1-ounce bottles you will have to do the shopping on your own. My suggestion is that you look at both the cost per bottle AND what your total cost will be with the order size required.

In other words, if you want 100 bottles and the bottle you really want costs about 35 cents each but your minimum order must be \$500, might you not be better off with a bottle that costs \$1.25 each but can be purchased in quantities of only nine dozen? (\$500 vs. \$135?)

On the other hand again, if you are planning to make more perfumes or colognes in the near future, you might want those extra bottles on hand that would match the bottles you are already using. Then you might buy a larger quantity of bottles at lower price per bottle and set the extras aside.

### **Caps or Spray Pumps**

Your decision on caps or spray pumps is intimately connected with your decision on bottles. Quite likely you will be ordering both from the same source.

When you have made all your mathematical and aesthetic calculations regarding bottles and closures, place your order for at least enough 1-ounce bottles to give you the “100” quantity needed for this project.

REMINDER: The quantity of “100 bottles” was used for this project for the sake of simplicity. If you want to limit your cash outlay you can cut the quantity to 50 bottles or even 25 bottles. This would simply mean cutting each of your purchases by 1/2 or 1/4 (50% or 25%) of the quantities we have calculated.

### **Filling your bottles**

The first time my company filled bottles it was only because an outside contractor told us, at the last minute, that we had too few bottles for them to bother with. We had 1,000 1-ounce sprinkler neck bottles, we had eight gallons of fragrance mixed with alcohol, we had screw-on caps, we had labels. Most important of all, we had orders piling up. We had to make good or refund the money. All we had to do was to get the fragrance into the bottles and that seemed easy enough. But we were wrong. We suddenly became aware of a big problem.

Because sprinkler neck bottles have only a small opening in the neck, we were stumped when we first tried to fill the bottles. We needed a device

that could reach through the small hole. We tried medicine droppers — far too slow! Funnels? Not small enough to fit through the bottles shrunken neck.

Our solution was a metal tipped turkey baster and it turned out to be an ideal tool for the job.

I am not a cook. I was only vaguely aware of what a turkey baster was when the idea was proposed to me. I was shown a sample. It worked perfectly. The metal tip fit beautifully into the hole on the top of the bottle. The baster could suck up about an ounce of fragrance. In one or two shots each bottle was filled.

**IMPORTANT:** When you are filling your bottles, fill only to the shoulder of the bottle (where the straight side begins to taper toward the neck.) You must leave empty space at the top of the bottle to allow for expansion of the fragrance in hot weather.

**WARNINGS:** When filling bottles you are working with fragrance which, in this case, is 80 percent alcohol. **Never bottle your fragrance around an open flame. Always work with your fragrance in a well ventilated room.** Do not allow fumes to settle. Use a fan in your workspace if necessary. **Keep a fire extinguisher handy** and know how to use it, just in case. These are sound industrial practices.

**TURKEY BASTERS:** Turkey basters come in two styles, plastic and metal. Plastic turkey basters are useless for filling perfume bottles as they are quite wide at the tip. Also, the plastic does not react well with perfume and could spoil your perfume. Metal turkey basters come in three parts; the rubber squeeze bulb, the metal barrel, and the thin metal tip that screws into the metal barrel. Metal turkey basters can be purchased at shops specializing in gourmet cookware. You can also find them online.



Metal tipped turkey baster

number of years I finally encountered a manual, professional, filling machine. Would you be surprised to learn that it looked and functioned very much like a turkey baster? But rather than the \$9.99 we paid for the turkey baster, the filling machine sold for over \$2,000.

**Labels**

Your purchase of labels is a choice between going to a commercial printer for your labels or printing them yourself with a desktop printer. If you are producing 500 or more bottles I would almost certainly recom-

**FOOTNOTE:** After using metal turkey basters to fill perfume bottles for a



Manual filling machine

mend a commercial printer. The problem you may encounter is that the stock label sizes used by most commercial printers are not always good fits for perfume bottles. To get a commercial printer to print labels in the exact size you want might require custom work and thus extra expense.

For a quantity as small as 100 bottles it is quite practical to design your own labels using your favorite graphic design software and then ganging them so that you fit as many as possible on an 8-1/2" by 11" sheet of sticker paper. Once printed you can cut the sheets into individual labels with a sharp pair of scissors, a razor blade, or a box knife. I suggest that before printing on the more expensive sticker paper you make a test on regular (cheap) paper to make sure everything is correct and that you will know where to cut when you cut the sheets into your individual labels. Marking guide lines on your master sheet will be helpful.

Apply your labels to your bottles by hand after the bottles have been filled and sealed. Before sticking your labels on your bottles, I recommend that you wipe the bottles with a rag wet with a bit of isopropyl alcohol to remove any fragrance that may have spilled onto the outside of the bottles. The alcohol will evaporate quickly so in about ten minutes after you've wiped them clean you'll be able to start labeling your bottles.

### **Boxes and Packaging**

For a project involving only 100 bottles of perfume or cologne, boxes become an expensive optional. If you can do without them, omit them. If necessary use some inexpensive, stock decorating materials. Be creative, use your imagination. Look through online catalogs intended for owners of gift and jewelry stores and it's likely you will be able to find some perfectly good (for now) way to dress up your bottles. Perhaps a bag rather than a box.

If you are ready to box your perfume professionally your only option is to order a custom box — a box custom made to fit your bottle exactly. This involves working with a company that specialized in making custom boxes for cosmetics and perfumes. You can show them your bottle and they will give you a template for your graphic artist to use in designing the artwork. You then submit your artwork and they print and fabricate the boxes which will be shipped to you flat. You will assemble them — “set them up” — when you use them.

### **Still missing ...**

If we had more of a budget and if we were using an outside service to fill and box our perfume we might also ask them to cellophane wrap the individual boxes. This requires machinery that would only be available through a professional filling service where a very minimum project would involve 500 bottles but, more likely, 1,000 to 5,000.

Another frill which we are leaving off for this project is a corrugated insert inside the box to give the box extra strength and the bottle more pro-

tection. This type of insert is common with fine fragrances but involves many of the same steps and costs as producing boxes.

## Your first 100 bottles

If you have followed all of these steps you now have 100 bottles of perfume or cologne ready to sell. And you have some idea of how you are going to go about selling them. Let's look once again at the business of *selling* perfume.

## IV. Strategies for selling your perfume

For purposes of our workshop exercise we have assumed that our fragrance would be sold in a small fashion boutique in a college town and that our promotional efforts would be to encourage women to visit this boutique with the express purpose of sampling — and buying — our perfume. Let us now look beyond this artificial scenario and see what other possibilities we might find for selling our perfume.

Overall, it is essential that we remain focused on making sales no matter how much we may love the artistic side of perfume creation. Profitable sales are what make it all possible.

Volumes could be written on strategies for selling perfume but I want to sketch out four general strategies that can give you some idea of the possibilities.

### (1) If establishing your trademark is your interest

You may have developed your first perfume solely for gaining your first level of trademark protection for a name you have created and believe that, with trademark protection, could be valuable. To establish your trademark you must place your perfume on sale and make a reasonable effort to generate sales. You now have 100 bottles of your perfume, ready to sell, and so your next step is to put it on the market.

#### eBay

Today eBay represents an excellent media for giving your perfume immediate global exposure. Opening an account with eBay costs nothing. You simply pay a nominal sellers fee when you list goods for sale and an additional fee to eBay in the event that your item sells.

To make sales you will need some sound selling strategies and eBay skills. And, if you intend to use eBay to market your perfume, you would do well to study what others are doing with their own perfumes — particularly their bottles and price points — before you jump in.

You may find it takes a while to get your stride on eBay but it is a very inexpensive media for reaching out to a large, motivated audience.

### Your own website

The annual cost of having your own website can run well under \$100. And a website is a good place to display your wares and take orders using a (free) Paypal shopping cart.

If you sell on eBay and also have a website you can begin to build your own perfume business. It's not easy. It takes some work. Using social media such as Facebook and Twitter can help generate interest. But the combination of eBay and your own website can get your perfume into the stream of commerce and keep it there to retain your trademark (perfume name) protection at a very low annual cost.

## (2) Face to face sales

Probably the fastest way to start making sales while getting the greatest amount of valuable feedback is by selling face to face. Not everyone feels comfortable with face to face selling but it can be well worth your while to set any discomfort aside and get out and meet people — with your fragrance.

Get in the habit of having samples of your perfume with you at all times, and full size “for sale” bottles close by. Never pass up an opportunity to talk about your fragrance making it clear that it can be purchased, immediately, from you.

This can seem awkward at the beginning but in time you'll grow into it. As you talk more and more to others, you'll discover their interests and what will make them give your fragrance a try. Then you can begin to fine-tune your approach.

Don't be discouraged by those who have no interest in your perfume or talk disparagingly about it. You don't expect to sell to everyone. In time you'll learn that you might make a sale with one out of ten people who sample your fragrance. So then, if you can show it to 100 people, you're likely to make ten sales. That's a good start.

Selling face to face opens important doors for you. Once you become comfortable and successful at it, you will feel quite comfortable approaching local (appropriate) shops and encourage them to carry your perfume and sell it for you. Now a few words about that.

## (3) Selling your perfume in local stores

Getting your perfume into a few stores is not that difficult once you have learned to sell to individuals. But it's important to understand what stores are and what they are not. Stores give you *distribution* but don't count on them to give you sales. At best they will display your fragrance. Then, if someone happens to buy it, they will take the sale. But *fragrances need selling*. Buyers need a reason why they are going to pick up your perfume at a store and

make the purchase.

When you were selling face to face it was you who were making the sale, you who were making people aware of your perfume, you who answered and overcame any and all objections and convinced people that they should purchase your fragrance. In stores there is nobody to do that for you. This means that you must continue to sell and develop a reputation for yourself in the areas where stores are carrying your fragrance. It's a marketing challenge but, if you can meet the challenge, you can develop a nice business for yourself.

Yet there is another path you can follow in selling your perfume and this, for some, can be even more profitable — selling to groups.

#### **(4) Selling a perfume to groups who will sell it themselves ... or give it away**

There is an alternative to selling your perfume one bottle at a time. Instead you can become a source of private label fragrances for others — businesses and organizations who want a perfume with their name on it but are not prepared to spend tens of thousands of dollars to do it.

Think of local boutiques that would love to sell a perfume line with *their* name on it but instead of producing 10,000 bottles they know they can only sell only a few dozen bottles, yet they know they can sell them profitably, even while paying you up to 60 percent of their retail price.

The joy of selling private label fragrances, even in fairly small quantities, is that you get paid for the entire order — no returns — because the labels have been “customized” with the store or organization's name.

And while you don't want to use the same fragrance for two businesses in the same local marketing area, you can sell the same fragrance, changing only the label, to others in different local marketing areas.

In addition to boutiques and clothing stores that would like to sell perfumes with their own name on it (and there are many), there are many small organizations that would like to use a private label perfume as a free gift for their better customers. That's how Coco Chanel got her fragrance business started. Also consider local charities that might sell a perfume as a unique fund raiser. And local bands and musicians who already make money selling t-shirts and CD's. The possibilities for selling your own “private label” fragrances to groups are endless and all you need to make a business of it are the skills described in this book.

## **V. Expanding Your Business**

At this point you understand the basics of making perfume and have at least some sense of what is involved in selling it. This book was written with

the purpose of walking you through all the steps in the most basic, low cost way, to teach you what commercial perfume production involves.

The bottles of perfume or cologne you produced following the steps I've outlined give you a chance to go out and do some selling. The key to developing your business is gaining the ability to *sell* the perfume you have made. Once you learn to *sell* your perfume successfully you are ready to begin working with industry professionals and produce your perfume on a larger scale and package it with a more professional look.

But, as you expand and begin to produce perfumes in larger quantities with the help of professional perfumers and filling houses, success continues to demand that you keep the pressure up on sales — to keep selling in the same way that made you successful in the first place.

I congratulate you for getting this far!

— Philip Goutell

## VI. Resources

Our current listings of resources can be found at these two web pages:

- (1) <http://www.perfumeprojects.com/perfume/vendors/vendor-menu.shtml>
- (2) <http://www.perfumeprojects.com/perfume/technology/technology-menu.shtml>

## VII. Using These Methods To Develop A Manufacturing Business

While this book was prepared for the person wanting to develop a first perfume for very little money, because the methods described are simple and equipment requirements minimal, these production techniques can work well on a greater scale where low cost labor is available.

While this book was intended for projects of 100 or fewer bottles, by investing perhaps \$5,000 in manual equipment and utilizing low cost labor, a profitable manufacturing business could be developed.

### Required Equipment

The list of equipment needed is short. There would be stainless steel bowls or tanks of the size required for the intended production volume, storage tanks for alcohol, water, and fragrance oils (probably multiple oils would be kept on hand), a filling machine to fill bottles precisely to the required volume, a hand operated crimp (capping) machine so that press-on and crimp-on spray pumps can be used, and a labeling machine to apply precisely positioned pressure sensitive labels (on rolls) onto the bottles.

### **Labor and Skills**

With this equipment plus labor, a production line could be developed. Mixing fragrance, alcohol, and water requires precision, understanding, and training, but not advanced education.

Filling machines, capping machines, and labeling machines required responsible, trained operators. But other than training on the specific machines, education is not required.

Once filled and labeled, bottles can be boxed by hand, just as they would be in facilities used by major brand manufacturers. In this “cottage” perfume manufacturing business, cellophaning, when necessary, would also be done by hand, by operators with minimal training but good hand/eye coordination, the same ability that is required on many small parts assembly lines.

### **Electricity**

Capping machines are generally hand operated with no requirement for electricity.

Filling machines are available with either electric or manual pumps.

Labeling machines require minimal electricity and, as an alternative, pressure sensitive labels can be attached by skilled hands thus eliminating the need for electricity.

Even if this business made use of electricity, the power needs would be so minimal that they could be served by one or more small, portable gas generators.

## **VIII. Manufacturing Resources**

### **Videos**

To see how fragrance, alcohol, and water are mixed, tour a perfume factory in India. Have patience with the video. It won't win awards for style but it does communicate the various steps in commercial perfume production. It also helps to demonstrate that perfume, on a commercial scale, can be made just about anywhere. The setting here appears to be rural India. The link — <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWwyeTyfEmw&feature=related>

China and India are the source of much of the packaging equipment now used in the fragrance industry. A wide variety of semi-automatic machines are available today, particularly for filling and crimping. Here are some examples —

### **Filling Machines —**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0fxMp0l6vMs&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLFIdHOHnd0&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KotLoXc0IM4&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MLOSlDaNFbE&feature=relmfu>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivSzEcHv7Xs&feature=related>

### **Crimp Machines —**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-dC\\_t4wL2w&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-dC_t4wL2w&feature=related)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mS8DT--Ur0s>

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ic4\\_ZNaPZX4&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ic4_ZNaPZX4&feature=related)

### **Finding Suppliers**

All of the supplies and suppliers needed to set up a perfume manufacturing business can be found through searches on <http://www.Alibaba.com>.

Sources may also be found through YouTube searches for videos such as the ones listed above.

## **IX. “How To Do It” Suggestions**

If you decide to pursue the development of a perfume of your own, as suggested by this book, you will find both of these advanced books helpful. I am the author of both and both are available at Amazon.

*Creating Your Own Perfume With A 1700 Percent Markup!*

*Creating your own perfume from dropper bottles: Methods, mechanics, and mathematics*

Thank you for your interest!



Philip Goutell

January 2020