Selling International Brands on Amazon India

A roadmap for beginners: how this business works, what the rules are, and how to start small without losing money.

Who is writing this: I am Ishika, co-founder of **Eleveon** and **BM Designink**. I started by selling my own products on Amazon, taught myself from YouTube, and over the last **6 years** have run Amazon advertising for **350+ brands** across India, the US, UK and Dubai.

Why this guide exists

My reel showed one idea: some sellers earn from international brands that Indian shoppers want but cannot easily find. A 60-second reel has to skip details. This guide adds the details, because in this business the details decide whether you earn or get stuck with stock you cannot sell.

What the reel simplified

The reel said	The fuller picture
"Zero ad cost"	Shoppers search by brand name, which helps. But Amazon fees, returns and ads on competing listings still exist. Plan for ads and test small.
"Not officially available in India"	Availability differs brand by brand. For example, Stanley launched a Stanley + Starbucks collection in select Starbucks stores in India in June 2024. Check each brand before you commit.
"2 to 3x premium prices"	I have no verified figure for this. Margins depend on duty, shipping and competition, so work out your own numbers (page 4).
"Start tomorrow"	Not realistic. You need an import code, GST, an Amazon account, and sometimes BIS or other approvals before the first sale.
"A seller made Rs 16 crore"	That was an estimate from tools, not a confirmed figure. Treat estimates as clues, not promises.

None of this means the idea is bad. It means the idea needs a plan.

1. How this business actually works

Three ways to sell international brands. Beginners should look at the first two.

Model	What it is	Reality
A. Buy from an authorised source	You buy from the brand's Indian distributor or an authorised importer, then resell. This is the cleanest route.	Lowest legal risk. Margins are thinner and many brands will not take new resellers.
B. Parallel import of genuine goods	You buy genuine products abroad and import them yourself. Indian courts have accepted this for genuine goods, with conditions (below).	More margin, more work. Needs customs, labels, approvals and honest listings.
C. Your own private label	You make or source products under your own brand.	Different business. Not covered here.

What the law says about parallel imports (simple version)

Under Section 30(3) of the Trade Marks Act, using a mark on goods the brand owner itself put on the market does not infringe the mark. In *Kapil Wadhwa v Samsung* (Delhi High Court, 2012) the court applied this to genuine imported goods. But the same court expected importers to be honest. In practice that means:

- **Say clearly** that the product is imported, that the manufacturer's India warranty may not apply, and who will give after-sales support.
- **Do not** pose as an authorised dealer or promise a brand warranty you cannot give.
- **Do not** remove serial numbers, repack, relabel over mandatory warnings, or change the product.
- Brands can still object when goods differ from the Indian version (labels, safety warnings, plugs) or are tampered with.

This is general information from legal commentary, not legal advice. Before you import a particular brand, talk to a trademark lawyer.

Amazon adds its own gate

Even when the law allows it, Amazon decides what you can list. Many well-known brands are restricted, and Amazon often asks for proof that you buy from a reliable, authorised source (invoices from authorised distributors, authorisation letters). **Check whether a brand is restricted in your Seller Central before you buy any stock.** Also remember that Indian buyers can order directly from Amazon's Global Store, so your price must beat that option.

2. The roadmap: from zero to your first batch

Eight steps, in this order.

Step 1. Pick a category, not a brand. Start with 2 or 3 categories you understand. Beginners do better with light, unregulated products than with food, cosmetics or electronics.

Step 2. Check demand on Amazon.in. Search the product. Is it missing, overpriced, or stocked by one seller with few reviews? A gap is the signal. Many results from big sellers means skip it.

Step 3. Check the brand gate. In Seller Central, see whether the brand and category need approval. If you cannot list it, nothing else matters.

Step 4. Check the rules for that product. Look up BIS, FSSAI, CDSCO, WPC or other requirements (table on page 5). If you need a certificate you do not have, choose another product.

Step 5. Set up the basics. Business registration, GST, a bank account, and an Importer Exporter Code (IEC) for imports. Register with Legal Metrology if you pack or import goods for sale.

Step 6. Source with paperwork. Buy from sellers who give proper invoices. Keep every invoice, customs paper and payment record. You may need them if Amazon questions authenticity.

Step 7. Work out the landed cost. Product price + shipping + customs duty + taxes + packaging, against what the product really sells for (page 4).

Step 8. Start with a small test batch. Order the smallest quantity that makes sense. Sell it, read the returns and reviews, then decide whether to reorder.

> **Rule of thumb:** if you cannot answer "Where do I buy this, with an invoice? What papers does it need? What is my profit after duty and Amazon fees?" in writing, do not order yet.

Five checks before any order

- **Gap:** Is the product missing or poorly served on Amazon.in?
- **Gate:** Can you list the brand?
- **Papers:** Does it need BIS, FSSAI, CDSCO or WPC approval?
- **Proof:** Can you buy with a proper invoice from a reliable source?
- **Profit:** Do the numbers work after duty, fees, ads and returns?

3. Will it make money? Do the maths first

Customs duty and taxes change, so check the current rates on the official tariff before you decide. The example below uses assumed numbers to show the method.

Maximum landed cost = selling price without GST x (1 minus Amazon fees, ads, returns and the profit you want)

Step 1: what you can afford	Value	Note
Selling price without GST	Rs 3,000	Assumed
Amazon fees	20%	Assumed. Use Amazon's fee calculator for your product
Ads	8%	Assumed
Returns and damages	5%	Assumed
Profit you want	15%	Your choice
Maximum landed cost	**Rs 1,560**	3,000 x (1 - 0.20 - 0.08 - 0.05 - 0.15)

Step 2: what it really costs	Value	Note
Price abroad	Rs 1,000	Assumed
International shipping	Rs 150	Assumed
Customs duty on (price + shipping)	35% = Rs 402.50	Assumed duty rate. Look up the real one for your product
Landed cost	**Rs 1,552.50**	Just under the Rs 1,560 limit

The result: a Rs 3,000 product can leave almost no room once duty is counted. That is why testing small and checking numbers before buying is the whole game. If the landed cost is above your limit, change the product or the price, do not hope.

For research, tools such as Helium 10 and Google Trends help you see demand and competition. (I am a Helium 10 affiliate partner.) Always confirm with your own Seller Central data.

For information only. Not legal, tax or financial advice. Rules and rates change, so verify before you act. No guarantee of sales or profit.

4. Rules by product type

Compliance is where beginners get stuck. Rules change, so confirm the current notification before you buy stock.

Product type	What to know	Difficulty
Insulated bottles, flasks, metal water bottles	BIS quality orders cover these (2024 orders: IS 17803:2022 for metal water bottles, IS 17790:2022 and IS 17526:2021 for insulated flasks and vacuum bottles). Products must carry the Standard Mark.	Hard. Check with BIS before buying
Electronics and wireless devices	Often need BIS registration and, for radio devices, WPC approval.	Hard
Toys and kids' products	Toys are covered by BIS safety rules.	Hard
Food, drinks, snacks	FSSAI rules apply, including import clearance and labelling. FSSAI labelling prevails over Legal Metrology for food.	Hard
Cosmetics and skincare	Imported cosmetics need registration with the drug regulator (CDSCO).	Hard
Stationery, hobby items, kitchen tools, accessories	Usually fewer product approvals. Still need correct labels and honest listings.	Easier for beginners

Labels: Legal Metrology declarations

Imported packaged goods need declarations in Hindi or English on the pack or a firmly attached label: importer name and address, common name, net quantity, month and year of import, MRP inclusive of all taxes, and contact details. Register with the Legal Metrology authority if you pack or import goods for sale.

A shortlist of product types to research

These are my starting ideas, not verified demand. Run the five checks on each.

Idea	Why it might work
Japanese pens, planners and notebooks	Low regulation, strong brand pull, light to ship
Specialty coffee tools (tampers, scales, jugs)	Home coffee is growing online (Redseer). Accessories avoid big-brand machine competition
Hobby and craft supplies	Niche buyers search by brand. Check for gating
Pet accessories	Large category. Avoid food and medicines
Fitness accessories	Light, simple and low regulation. Brands can be gated
Insulated bottles and tumblers	High interest, but BIS rules make it hard. Not for a first order

5. Mistakes that cost beginners money

- **Ordering big for a trend.** Trends fade. Start with a small batch.
- **Skipping the brand gate check.** Stock you cannot list is dead money.
- **Ignoring duty.** A great price abroad can become a bad price once duty and shipping are added.
- **Buying without invoices.** If Amazon questions authenticity, you need proof.
- **Promising what you cannot give.** Do not claim brand warranty or "authorised dealer" status.
- **Relabelling or repacking.** It can create legal and quality problems.
- **Choosing regulated products first.** Start with the easy categories and learn the system.

Your first 14 days

When	What to do
Days 1 to 3	Pick 2 categories. Run the five checks on 5 products.
Days 4 to 6	Check brand gates in Seller Central and the rules for each product.
Days 7 to 9	Set up IEC and GST if you do not have them. Request quotes and invoices from suppliers.
Days 10 to 14	Work out the landed cost, drop any product that fails, then place one small test order and prepare an honest listing.

A note from me

Picking a product is half the work. Getting it in front of buyers without wasting money on ads is the other half, and that is what I work on every day. **Eleveon** is where I teach Amazon Ads and Meta Ads, and how to find clients. If you want to see how we teach first, I run free live classes and a community. Comment **ELEVEON** on my reel and my team will share the details.

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Sources (checked 10 November 2026)

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