



EXCITING

YOUR CUSTOMERS THROUGH

**Innovative
Marketing
Strategies**

2nd edition



Marketing that means business!

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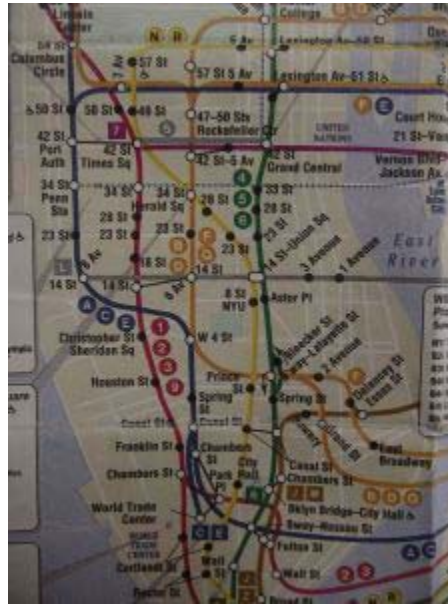
Introduction

So, you want to start an Internet-based business, or market your existing or traditional business online. What's your strategy?

Yes, you do need a strategy. You may have read those flashy websites that tempt you with phrases like "Make money while you're lying in bed!" or "Generate thousands in revenue without lifting a finger!" Ask yourself this: do you honestly know or have you heard of anyone who has become an instant millionaire (without winning the lottery, of course)?

That isn't to say you'll have to bust your butt in order to make money on the Internet. You won't have to take out a second mortgage, work 90-hour weeks, or sell your children on e-Bay to be a successful Internet marketer.

There is a secret to Internet success: **strategy**.



Map out your journey to Internet success!

It sounds simple, but it's the absolute truth. Most people who decide to market on the Internet don't look before they leap. They don't do their homework; they don't bother learning anything about the business or the industry. They are lulled by promises of instant cash rolling in to their bank accounts—and they are inevitably disappointed when it just doesn't happen.

You can be different. You can become one of those amazing success stories other people turn to for inspiration. All you need is a plan, and a little bit of patience.

That's what this book is all about.

Why are you considering Internet marketing? There are a number of reasons you might have decided to go for it. Do you:

- Despise your nine-to-five job?
- Long for financial freedom and a deeper purpose in your life?
- Live with the disappointment of a failed home business?
- Wish your hobby earned you money so you could quit your job?

All of these reasons and more are excellent motivations for success. But without a plan of attack, your dreams will fall by the wayside, and you'll return to your nine-to-five world with even more loathing than before.

90 percent of small businesses fail within three years of start-up. Some are due to lack of financial backing—but fortunately, Internet businesses don't require massive amounts of start-up capital. The majority of failed businesses are due to a lack of direction at the outset. If you don't know where you going, how can you expect to get there?

If you're reading this book, you are taking the first step toward formulating a successful Internet marketing strategy. More than anything, a little knowledge goes a long way toward carving out your online niche and turning a profit from the beginning.

What will you learn? Here are just a few examples of the valuable information contained in the following chapters:

- Why Internet marketing is for you
- The biggest online marketing mistakes
- How to create a business website
- Tips on generating website value
- How OTO marketing works
- Why blogs work, and how to get your own

Take the time and the dedication to plan your Internet marketing strategy now, and you will not be disappointed when you create a solid online business that will allow you to quit the rat race and make money doing what you love.

Let's get started!

Chapter 1 – Why Internet Marketing Is For You (Yes, You)

Many people still have the impression that Internet marketing is just for people who have e-books or other electronic products, or for those who have a lot of technical know-how. However, the World Wide Web has changed the way we do business, and these days websites and online sales are for everyone—even you!

No matter what type of business you are involved in or thinking about starting, there is a place on the Internet for you. E-commerce, which is a fancy term for online selling, has enabled companies large and small to reach a bigger customer base than ever before.



Everyone is online these days...

There are literally billions of people who use the Internet every day, and buying goods or services online is no longer intimidating or threatening. In fact, many people prefer to shop on the Internet for everything from books and videos to big-ticket items like cars, boats, and real estate. You can even buy groceries online and have them delivered to your house. Now *that's* convenience!

There are two main categories of Internet marketing: strictly online businesses, and expansion of traditional brick-and-mortar (offline) companies. Offline businesses are companies like Coca-Cola, Reebok, Neiman-Marcus, and Honda: businesses that exist in the "real world" and use Internet marketing to reach more potential customers as well as give their existing customers access to information about their companies. Business websites for offline companies also offer a chance to interact and offer feedback on products or services that worldwide customers would not otherwise have.

Online businesses include giants like Amazon and eBay—they are companies that don't have physical store locations, but sell goods and services online. Companies based on e-book sales or various Internet services are typically online businesses, as they have no need for a physical store.

Regardless of the type of business you're running or planning to run, the Internet is a powerful marketing tool. Everyone uses the Internet for business today, and if you aren't online,

you are missing out on potential customers. Go ahead—come up with the most obscure type of business you can think of and enter it in your favorite search engine. You'll be amazed at the number of results you get.

Your website doesn't have to be just a sales tool. In fact, it should be more than that, regardless of whether you plan to sell through it. The most successful websites are informative and interesting to visit, providing information about your business whether or not you actually offer online purchases.

How do you know what belongs on your business website? The type of company you run, along with your personal business goals, will dictate the style and function of your online presence.

Website and Internet marketing basics

Your first steps in starting your Internet marketing campaign sound simple, but will require an investment of your time:

- Decide what you want your campaign to accomplish
- Establish a budget
- Formulate a game plan

These steps conform with the basic but critical "secret" to Internet success. Remember, strategy is key. You are headed

into unfamiliar territory, and without a map, you'll probably get lost!

Your Goals

What do you want your website to accomplish? You may want visitors to buy products or services directly from your website, or you may only want to provide more information about your brick-and-mortar company and give your customers a place to learn about sales, special offers, business hours, and other information. Your first step is to determine your goals for your website, and plan to design it accordingly.

Research: Plan to spend a lot of time researching information, both for your company and about your competitors. The more you know about the competition, the better equipped you will be to offer something unique. Internet users typically make Internet purchases for one of the following reasons:

- They recognize the name (branding)
- The process is convenient and the deal is better than other companies offering the same product or service
- They can't get the particular product or service elsewhere

If you can offer something unique and original, even a new spin on an old product or service, you can succeed online. With good advertising practices, you can also be successful with not-so-unusual products by increasing your visibility and offering better deals than your competitors.

Your Budget



Money makes the Internet go 'round

Though it is true that you can start an Internet business with little or no initial investment, you should expect at some point to establish a realistic and firm budget. At the very least, plan to reinvest some of your profits in your company.

Also, having a small initial advertising budget can help get things moving faster. Once you have your website set up to take in profits, you might want to consider advertising in a few low-cost "traditional" ways to start attracting visitors. These traditional advertising methods include:

- Flyers
- Post cards
- Direct response mail
- E-mail blasts
- Fax blasts
- Yellow pages
- Newspaper ads
- Magazine ads
- Billboards
- Radio commercials
- Television commercials

Of course, some of these avenues are more expensive than others. You can also start with low-cost or free online advertisements, and consider placing more traditional ads when you have some profits to roll back into your budget.

Your Plan

Using your website goals and your budget, create a timetable or plan for your business. Where do you expect to see yourself in a year? Five years? Ten? What types of advertising will you be willing to expand to? Don't make the mistake of relying solely on Internet methods to advertise your business. You will be able to get started that way, but you probably won't be able to expand without seeking alternative advertising venues.

Keep these statistics in mind:

- As of 2005, 957 million people had Internet access, and more sign on every day.
- 96 percent of those with online access use the Internet as their first and preferred method of researching product information.
- During 2005, search engines were accessed and used nearly 5 billion times in the United States alone, an increase of 27.5 percent from 2004.
- 74 percent of those who use search engines research local information through them.

Simple math dictates that many more potential customers will find your business by virtue of your online presence alone. Combine that with a carefully targeted and well-researched marketing campaign, and it is easy to see why Internet marketing and online businesses succeed!

Be prepared to capitalize on your website. Every visitor who finds your website is a potential customer. It is important to capture as much information as possible whenever someone visits your site. The average consumer must be exposed to your marketing message between three and seven times before they are convinced to buy—so the more often you can put your business in front of them, the better your chances at making sales.

Some tips on capturing and using visitor information:

- Offer opportunities for visitors to add themselves to your list. Ask them to register, sign a guestbook, subscribe to a newsletter, or request to be notified when you have sales or special offers.
- Place a subscription box on every page of your website, not just your homepage. The more often visitors see the box, the more likely they will be to check it out.
- Give away premiums such as free gifts, newsletters, e-books and reports as incentives for signing up for your list. If your product is not an e-book or can't be given away, run a search for free downloadable e-books that relate to your product or service and give those away.
- Get recognition, credibility, and new customers by writing an e-book, how-to book or article series that you allow to be distributed free—with the provision that the material includes your byline, URL and subscription information.
- Add every address you collect (with permission from the subscriber) to your opt-in e-mail list.

Developing and maintaining a list of customers is vital to your Internet business. Whether you use your list to send out regular newsletters, communicate special offers, or simply touch base with new and existing customers from time to

time, you must have an ever-growing database of contacts on tap.

Six good reasons to market your business online

Still not convinced? Here are more reasons to harness the power of the Internet for your business, no matter what types of products or services you offer:

1. No other marketing method can work for you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Also, no other marketing method has the potential to reach customers all over the world, instead of the limited circulation area of whatever traditional avenues you choose.
2. Though it isn't free, the Internet is the most cost-effective method of advertising around. Your investment in Internet marketing will involve much more of your time than your money. If you think there are cheaper methods of advertising, call your local newspaper and ask about display advertising rates.
3. You can reach a broad, diverse potential customer base, particularly if you set up multiple websites.
4. Even those visitors who don't become immediate customers can be added to your database, and likely translated into future sales.

5. The Internet brings your products and services to life like no other media. Only television commercials can provide as much motion as a website, and television is not interactive—you can't click on a TV screen! (Besides, can you guess how much a television commercial will set you back?)
6. **More than 957 million people have access to the Internet** and that number is growing every day. You have the potential to harness far more customers than a strictly land-based business ever will.

Ready to go? The next chapter outlines some of the specific techniques you can use to make Internet marketing work for you.

Chapter 2 – What You Need to Know About Internet Marketing

The Internet is enormous. This is perhaps the most important concept you need to understand as an Internet marketer. No matter how original your idea, you are going to have competition online. The question becomes then: how are you going to stand out from the crowd and attract business?

The good news is there are many things you *don't* need for online success. These things include:

- A massive advertising budget
- Expensive graphic designers
- Making your company a household name
- An elaborate base of operations
- 80-hour work weeks

What do you need, then? You need to work smarter, not harder.

Running with the giants

There are top competitors in every industry. Microsoft dominates software, Google rules search engine technology, McDonalds is the emperor of fast food. However, the Internet

is a level playing field, and your company can appear as big and established as you want it to. You only need a fraction of a percentage of the online pie to enjoy business success.

Search engine placement is still the best way to gain exposure for your Internet business. In the beginning of the Internet, the practice of keyword stuffing—placing irrelevant or excessive keywords on web pages to achieve a higher search engine rank—was prevalent. Today, though, search engine technology is far more sophisticated, and there is no "magic" formula to ascend the ranks.

How can you place high on search engines and compete with the top Internet businesses in your industry? All you really need to do is keep it real. Make your website informative, interesting, and ever-changing, and you will score high with search engines.

Today's "secrets" for top search engine ranking include:

- Strive to provide visitors with real, useful, and interesting information that makes your website not only a great selling tool, but a great place to visit and spend some time.
- Plant hooks on your pages for the search engines that are related to the information on each page.

- Build buzz and word-of-mouth for your business using pay-per-click advertising and other relevant avenues for your target markets.

Getting started



All you need is a computer and a dream

When you choose your Internet marketing business, there are several aspects you need to consider. The wrong business will lead to wasted efforts and a lack of profits—a discouraging prospect indeed.

The first consideration should be your own interests and passions. If you are not passionate about your products or services, your business will not succeed. It's as simple as that. You must be convinced beyond doubt that your product

or service is worthwhile, exciting, effective, and something other people will want or need.

Another reason you need enthusiasm in your corner is your own business stamina. You've probably worked at jobs you couldn't care less about, if only so you could get a paycheck. You may even be working at a job like that now. How long do you intend to stay there? Are you putting your best efforts forth at work every day? If you are not, you're not passionate about what you do—and you won't get very far.

Once you've identified a business you can generate plenty of passion and enthusiasm for, further consider these two important questions:

- Does your product or service fill a need or a demand? Is there a high demand for this product or service, at least in niche markets?
- Can you inexpensively attract high numbers of targeted traffic to your website? Are there popular forums, ezines, or websites dedicated to this type of product or service, or used by your target market?

If you cannot answer these questions with a resounding "yes," you need to go back to the beginning and choose another product or service you're passionate about.

The best thing you can do to facilitate success as an Internet marketer is to exercise patience and put in the research at the beginning. Don't invest your time in finding a supplier, setting up a website, choosing affiliates, and putting your marketing machine into motion until you have the three key ingredients in place: passion, demand, and marketing avenues.

The good news is that there are thousands of niche markets out there, and each one presents an opportunity to begin a profitable online business!

Marketing Tips

Once you have settled on your business, it's time to start your market research. Again, this step falls into the category of strategy and preparation. Keep in mind that strategy, not investment, is your ticket to success!

OTO (One Time Offer) Marketing

You've seen examples of this strategy if you've ever taken advantage of a freebie offer. The OTO theory is simple and straightforward: give away a great product for free, and immediately offer another valuable product along with the freebie for a deeply discounted price.

For example: say your Internet business is selling e-book software. You can advertise for a free report on the secrets to creating e-books that sell, and then offer a discount on the software itself when customers take advantage of your giveaway.

Keep in mind, though, that you have to make the free product available even for those who don't take advantage of your discount price. If you make it difficult or impossible to obtain your freebie, you will lose that all-important trust—the most valuable commodity in Internet marketing.

Some tips to effective OTO marketing:

- One-time-offer marketing strategies are becoming increasingly popular in online businesses. As more companies take advantage of this technique, fewer consumers will be interested. You should strive to find ways to make your OTO offer unique or give it an original spin, to make it stand out from all the other offers out there.
- Bear in mind that you will likely have to deal with an increase in customer support issues as you implement your OTO marketing campaign. Even if your website contains clear, precise instructions for obtaining your freebie, some of your visitors may still have trouble finding the right link or logo to click. If they don't see it,

they will assume you're asking them to pay for something that was offered for free. Exercise patience and point them in the right direction, and you will earn their business.

- Make sure you are able to accept a high volume of payments. With any Internet business, it is a good idea to have several payment options for your customers. This helps you by not overloading your payment processors with a sharp increase in sales due to an OTO program. Some third-party merchant account services, such as PayPal, will often red-flag accounts that have a sudden increase in incoming funds, and you may be frozen from your account while the merchant verifies that you aren't running a scam. Having other payment options in place to cover this possibility will ensure you're still able to do business.
- A subscriber list is one of the best ways to announce an OTO campaign. If you don't already have a subscriber list, it is a good idea to build one before you bring out your OTO program. However, building a solid subscriber list for your newsletter or website takes time. If you don't have the time to get a subscriber list, but you still want to offer your OTO, you could make the announcement about your program through other partners with the promise to reciprocate for one of their promotions at a later date.
- An increase in traffic is good for your business—but it can be bad for your servers. If your product is

downloadable, the available bandwidth for your website should also be a consideration. Check with your web service provider and make sure you determine how much bandwidth you'll require ahead of time. If you'll need more bandwidth than your server allows, look into an inexpensive file transfer solution such as www.fileburst.com.

In summary, OTO strategy can be an extremely effective marketing technique. Offer your visitors something they would normally pay money for, and give it to them free—then immediately offer something of even greater value at a low price.

Be sure that your freebie and your discount product are directly related (such as the report on creating effective e-books and the e-book creation software). If your sale product is even better and more attractive to your target market than your freebie, your sales numbers will explode!

A Few Good Markets

There are truly thousands of markets you can choose from online, and many of them have millions of Internet users who fit the demographics you're looking for. Whether the market is tapped or untapped, identifying a niche equates to more, faster profit for you.

Have you considered these niche markets?

- **Moms.** Currently, there are more than 32 million moms online. If you have a mom-friendly product or service, you can tap this enormous market. Moms use the Internet to search for more than baby food recipes and parenting tips! However, you should be aware that most moms are web-savvy and will see through any condescending or intrusive marketing ploys. Make sure you keep it real—don't misrepresent your products, and don't let your marketing material sound preachy or highbrow.
- **Travel.** More and more Internet users are booking travel reservations and researching travel-related material online. This year alone, online travel and travel-related leisure sales will reach \$78 billion. The travel industry is one of the fastest growing sections of e-commerce, and there is plenty of profit to go around!
- **China.** There is a huge, largely untapped market in China. Over 111 million people in China use the Internet. The downside is that most of them don't have credit cards. Few Internet marketers have been able to come up with an effective method of doing business with China—maybe you will be the one to change that.
- **Baby boomers.** Everyone knows there are millions of baby boomers in the United States alone. Products and services that appeal to this generation can enjoy

enormous success. The baby boom generation is fast approaching retirement age, so products and services that deal with investment, retirement options, and later lifestyle changes are hot topics online today.

Free publicity



Get newspapers and magazines to advertise for you!

Do you want exposure without spending a dime? An effectively written and distributed press release can generate quite a bit of attention for your products or services, and it costs you nothing but your time. Of course, there are ways to save time on press releases by spending money—it all depends on which you would rather invest.

When it comes to writing press releases, you can't simply write what you would for your website. The people who read press releases are journalists and reporters. They are looking for stories that will sell newspapers or magazines, or get

people to tune in to their radio or television show. You will want to make your product or service compelling to reporters and journalists.

How do you do this? First, stick to the accepted style for press releases. Ideally, your entire press release should fit on a single page. The components of a standard press release are:

- Headline
- Date of release
- Summary paragraph
- Body text
- Company information
- Contact information

Second, make sure that the information you include is compelling and newsworthy, particularly your headline and summary paragraph. Develop a hook or an angle for your products or services that ties in to current events, or to subjects with universal appeal. If you don't feel comfortable writing a press release or do not have time to spare, you may want to consider hiring a professional copywriter to write one for you.

Visit the tips page of PRWebs.com here for more tips on writing press releases and a template:

<http://www.prweb.com/pressreleasetips.php>

Once you have written your press release, the next step is distribution. There are several ways to go about distributing your press release:

- Use the Internet or the Yellow Pages to research media outlets in your area (newspapers, magazine, radio, and television stations). Identify the appropriate person to direct press releases to, and either fax or e-mail your releases in. Be sure to allow plenty of lead time for seasonal story ideas and holiday promotions.
- Make your press release campaign even more targeted by identifying individual reporters or journalists and contacting them directly with your press release. For local newspapers, you can scan articles to collect the names of the reporters and then find their contact information on the newspaper's website.
- Sign up with a press release distribution service and gain the advantage of reaching a large number of media outlets with one submission. You can use a free wide-range distribution service such as PR Web (www.prweb.com) or invest a small amount in a paid service (usually \$10 to \$20) to reach a more targeted media base.
- Call up local radio stations and pitch your topic verbally, using your press release as a guideline for your speech. Radio stations constantly need guests to fill their time slots, and many will be happy to have you on if you can talk about something that will interest their listeners.

Not quite free publicity

If you are not getting the response you want from your free advertising efforts, you may want to start adding some low-cost paid methods to the mix.

Every successful entrepreneur knows that part of an effective business strategy includes re-investing profits. You don't need a fortune to get started, but you do need to be prepared to turn around some of your profits and plug them back into the company. Even a small advertising budget can go a long way toward making a big difference in the amount of money your business brings in.

Fortunately, there are plenty of inexpensive but effective advertising methods available to you as an Internet marketer. Here are just a few examples:

Ezine advertising

Ezines, or online magazines, are a popular commodity on the Internet. There are hundreds of thousands of ezines in circulation today, concerning almost any subject imaginable. Advertising in ezines can be highly effective (and cheap!) if you take the time to do your homework.

In order to effectively advertise in an ezine, you need to target your audience and track your responses. This means you must have some way to keep track of where your website visitors come from, so you can concentrate your advertising dollars on those publications that bring you the best results.

Choosing the ezines to advertise in is another important factor. Here are some things to consider when researching ezines:

- Subscribe to the ezine yourself and read several issues to get a feel for the type of material they include
- Know your target audience so you can readily identify ezines that might interest them
- Don't discount ezines with smaller circulations. Often, ezines with fewer subscribers are more thoroughly read, which results in a higher response rate for your advertisement
- Target ezines that feature a limited number of ads per issue so yours does not get lost in the crowd, and ensure the ezine employs a policy of not running similar ads in the same issue (so you don't end up directly vying with your competition)

How do you find these ezines? Enter "ezine" or "ezine directory" in your favorite search engine along with your topic, and you will turn up thousands (or millions) of hits. You

can also subscribe to a paid ezine database like www.web-source.net for access to an enormous listing of ezines with constantly updated information about subscription bases, advertising rates, and distribution demographics.

You can also bid on advertising space in targeted ezines at a website such as www.ezineadauction.com, which may prove more cost-effective and time-saving than traditional ad space purchases.

Pay-per-click programs

Inexpensive and effective, pay-per-click programs allow you to pay for advertising only when people actually visit your website. Programs such as Google AdWords and Yahoo! Overture list links to your website along with brief descriptions on search engines, usually on the first, second, or third page of results depending on the amount you "bid" for each keyword, and the maximum amount per click you set. To learn more about pay-per-click programs, visit www.payperclicksearchengines.com.

Programs similar to pay-per-click advertising include:

- **Pay-per-lead:** These programs list your website on other sites your potential customers may visit. If your products are services interest them, they can fill out a

voluntary registration form, download a free product, or enter a contest that will bring them to your website.

- **Pay-per-sales:** This type of program is also referred to as an affiliate program (you will find more information on affiliate programs further in this chapter). Other websites advertise your products or services for you in exchange for a small commission, according to the predetermined terms you set. Find out more about affiliates at www.clickaffiliate.com
- **Banner ads:** Banner ads are those flashy, eye-catching square or rectangular graphics you have probably seen on several websites. Banner ads usually operate on a pay-per-click basis: you pay a preset amount to the hosting website each time a visitor clicks on your banner.

For more information on banner ads, visit:

<http://www.addynamix.com>

<http://www.valueclick.com>

<http://www.i-clicks.net>

Opt-in email marketing

This is one of the most expensive forms of Internet marketing available. However, it's also one of the most effective.

What is opt-in email marketing? Simply put, you purchase a targeted list of email addresses and start sending them advertisements. Sounds like spam, right? Actually, the addresses you receive with an opt-in list purchase are people who have expressed interest in the types of products or service you provide, and have agreed to receive advertising. With an opt-in list, you are already a step ahead of the marketing game.

Before you purchase an opt-in list, there are two steps you should take. The first is to investigate the list provider and make sure their company is legitimate. If you purchase a list from a company that doesn't use opt-in confirmation, you will end up spamming thousands of potential customers and probably turning them away from your business forever.

Second, you need to road-test your marketing message and ensure that it is effective before you purchase a list. You will end up wasting money if you obtain a list of targeted customers and fail to impress them with your material. Make sure that your advertisement has already produced results for you, and then invest in an opt-in list.

Autoresponders

When it comes to Internet marketing, autoresponders are your best friends.

Autoresponder systems do just what their name implies: they automatically respond to incoming messages. In your online business, you can use autoresponders for a variety of purposes. You can set an autoresponder to:

- Reply to requests for more information
- Acknowledge receipt of messages
- Auto-send invoices when customers place orders
- Let people know when you're away on vacation
- Send out an initial message and several follow-up messages on a timed, preset basis

There are many more uses for autoresponders, and you may discover some of them as you move ahead with your Internet business.

Basically, there are two types of autoresponders:

Single follow-up autoresponders automatically reply to every e-mail sent to a particular address with the same message. If you have multiple e-mail accounts, you can program single follow-up autoresponders with different messages for each one. For example, you may have an info@mycompany.com address that replies with a general sales information package; a sales@mycompany.com address that replies with specific product information; and an

invoice@mycompany.com address that sends receipts when customers have completed sales.

Multiple follow-up autoresponders are often referred to as sequential autoresponders. These programs are a bit more complicated, and can be set to send out several messages in preset time intervals, such as once a day, week, or month, or with varying intervals according to the type of messages you're sending.

Some of the features of sequential autoresponders include:

- Message personalization
- The ability to send a copy of each incoming message to your e-mail account
- Online form creation
- Support for HTML and plain text messages
- "Full list" e-mail update capabilities for sending messages to everyone signed up to your autoresponder simultaneously
- Support for attachments such as documents or images
- URL tracking for following click-throughs
- Ad-free messages (some free single follow-up autoresponder programs are ad-supported)
- Automatic "Unsubscribe" link added to every outgoing message

There are many web companies that offer autoresponder software, usually for a low monthly fee similar to web hosting services. You can also get a total package with a web host and an autoresponder program for one monthly price.

Once you have obtained an autoresponder program, follow these steps to set it up on your website:

1. Create a website form to capture visitors' contact information.
2. Write compelling, personalized follow-up messages regarding your offer. You should create three to seven different messages that either promote your sale or cover different aspects and/or bonuses associated with it.
3. Load the messages into your autoresponder program and specify the intervals you want them sent out at. You can have them sent every few days, once a week, or whenever you would like.
4. Set up a confirmation page that your visitors arrive at after they have successfully subscribed to your autoresponder.
5. Set up an error page for anyone who makes a mistake on the form, and place an e-mail link on the page so the visitors can still send requests to your autoresponder address.
6. Upload or make active your main order page, confirmation page, and error page to your web host.

7. Inspect your live web pages and test all the links. View the sites at different resolutions and in different browsers to ensure they are consistently readable and clean.
8. Launch your marketing campaign!

Setting up an autoresponder is not a fast and easy process, but with a little research and work, you can create a successful autoresponder series that let your products or services sell themselves.

For more information about autoresponders, check out:

wwwAutomatic-Responder.com

Pay-per-click strategies

As briefly touched on earlier, pay-per-click marketing is a method of advertising that allow you to pay only for those customers that actually visit your website. Pay-per-click (PPC) advertising is highly effective, because it sends carefully targeted traffic to your site—in other words, people who are actually looking for the products and services you offer, and not just browsing the 'Net.

Here's how PPC marketing works: most programs require you to put a certain amount of money into an "account." You then

bid on certain keywords associated with your product or service. For example, if you were selling ebook creation software, you might choose *ebook creator*, *ebook compiler*, *ebook software*, *ebook maker*, and simply *ebook* as some of your keywords. Keep in mind, though, that other PPC advertisers are bidding on the same keywords.

Once you have set your keyword bids, they are not permanent—you can raise or lower them after you discover which ones yield the best results. The PPC program places your website into the top search results, along with the other bidders in order of highest to lowest bidder. When an Internet user clicks on your ad, the bid amount (usually 2 to 25 cents) is deducted from your account.

Many PPC programs will allow you to view a list of real search terms that have been used to find products or services similar to yours. This feature may be called a keyword generator or keyword engine. Take advantage of this as you assemble your list of search terms—the more keywords you list in your bidding, the more traffic you'll get to your website.

After you have come up with a list of targeted keywords, experiment with them. Visit various search engines and enter your keywords to see what kind of results they generate. Through experimental searches, you can also learn what your competitors are bidding on their keywords and adjust your bids accordingly.

You don't have to place on the first page of search results to get website traffic. Even if your PPC ads end up on the second or third page, they can still be effective. However, most search engine users don't get beyond the first three pages or so, which means you have to adjust your bids to ensure you end up somewhere in the top three pages.

Your goal should not be to become the highest bidder on the most popular search terms. With a general term like "ebook" you could easily end up paying a few dollars a click to get on the first three pages, and not all of those clicks will translate to sales. Instead, you should aim to find lesser-used keywords that are highly relevant to your offerings, and turn over a higher clicks-to-sales ratio.

Experiment with your PPC bids and keyword lists until you discover the best balance between traffic and cost per visitor. Once you have determined which keywords generate the greatest results for you, you'll find yourself much closer to Internet marketing success.

Writing your pay-per-click ad copy: Determining your bidding and keyword strategy is only part of a successful PPC advertising campaign. You may be able to get your ad in front of millions, but if it is not worded compellingly, no one will click through to your website.

The wording of your ad is critical to your PPC marketing strategy. You have an extremely limited number of words to convey your message, and you have to make each one count. Most PPC ads will consist of a headline, a brief sentence of body text, and your hotlink or URL. The headline must be attention-grabbing, clever, and honest—if search engine users click to your site and don't find what was expected, your reputation will be damaged.

Which headline would you be more likely to click on?

Ebook Software for Sale

or...

Create Great-Looking Ebooks in Just Minutes

Most people would choose the second headline over the first.

After your headline is your body text, which is limited to just a few words or sentences. Once again, your text should be brief, succinct, and to the point. Don't offer freebies here; some search engine users are simply searching for free offers, and won't be interested in buying your product or service no

matter how compelling it is. Again, make sure that your text demands attention. Rather than:

Use our software to make your own ebooks. We have a wide selection of cover graphics built in to our program. Enjoy our sale prices and special features that are just a click away.

Try something like this:

Turn out professional-looking, fully featured ebooks in minutes instead of hours with our simple user interface and thousands of graphics to choose from. Prices slashed for a limited time!

For more ideas regarding compelling ad copy, do some research! Run searches for products or services similar to yours and read through the pay-per-click ads (typically found in shaded boxes or separate sections at the top and bottom or along the sides of the main search results) to see which ones make you want to click. You may find some ideas to model your own ads after.

Of course, you can also take advantage of multiple pay-per-click advertising programs in order to maximize your exposure. A good strategy is to sign up for PPC programs through several search engines and monitor your results. When you have determined which programs are netting the

most visitors and sales conversions, simply discontinue the ones that aren't working.

Visit www.payperclicksearchengines.com for a list of PPC programs along with reviews and ratings. You might also want to browse these pay-per-click program websites:

<http://adwords.google.com>

<http://www.overture.com>

<http://www.Findwhat.com>

<http://www.7search.com>

<http://www.Win4win.com>

<http://www.Bay9.com>

Affiliate strategies

If you have ever read anything about Internet marketing, you've probably heard a little about affiliate programs. With an affiliate program, you host a banner or text ad from another website on your site. When your visitors click on the affiliate link, you get paid. Sometimes affiliates pay per click (a few cents). Other affiliate programs offer a commission (percentage of sales) if visitors from your website purchase something on theirs.

Many Internet marketers enroll in a number of affiliate programs, because in most cases they only earn a few cents

per click for each program. Enrolling in carefully selected affiliate programs that complement but do not compete with your business can be a good way to make money online.

However, an even better way to make serious money is to start your own affiliate program, and enlist other websites to advertise your products and services for you. It's like hiring a sales force that works cheap, but effectively.

As long as you offer a decent commission for your affiliate program, you will attract several people interested in becoming affiliates. Of course, the higher the commission you offer, the bigger "sales force" you will amass. It's a good idea to look at other affiliate programs that are related to your business area and find out what their commissions or per-click pay rates are, then offer a higher payout if you can.

You'll need to write an affiliate sales letter that outlines your program. This letter should be just as compelling and persuasive as your sales letter for your products or services. As you create your affiliate program, try to think of things from the potential affiliates' point of view. What are the benefits to them when they enroll in your program—outside of profit, of course? Are you offering quality products or services their customers will enjoy? Do you have bonuses for top performing affiliates?

If you create an affiliate program, you will also have to design your own banners and text ads for your affiliates to place. Not only is this more convenient for your affiliates, it is also more effective for sales. You know your products or services better than your affiliates will, and so you are the best person to craft compelling ads that will draw visitors from your affiliates' sites to yours.

When you are ready to set up your affiliate program, there are a few options available to you. If you have a decent level of computer skill, you can purchase affiliate software program that will allow you to design and track your program yourself. Another option is to "hire" a third-party affiliate tracking company.

There are benefits and drawbacks to each program. With affiliate software, you have complete control over the design of your program, and you keep all the profits. However, you must be prepared to invest more time in the program, as you will be handling all of the tracking, enrollment, and issuing of commission checks yourself.

If you use a third-party company, you must pay them a commission (normally this fee is subtracted from your affiliate profits, and the balance is forwarded to you). However, you won't have to worry about sign-ups, tracking, and commission payout, so you will have more time to devote to other areas of your business.

There are many different affiliate software and third-party affiliate tracking companies to choose from. As with all other aspects of your business, you should research them and decide which one best suits your needs. Here are a few to get you started:

Affiliate software

AssocTRAC:

<http://www.marketingtips.com/assotrak/t.x/767631/>

Pro-TRACK: <http://www.affiliatesoftware.net/>

Third-party affiliate trackers

ClickBank: <http://clickbank.com/>

Commission Junction: <http://www.cj.com/>

Remember: Do your homework before signing on with any affiliate marketing program! Each program is different, and the commission and payment structures vary from program to program. Make sure you read the agreement carefully and look for the following information:

- How is a "click" counted?
- How is a "lead" factored?
- How will you be paid (check, PayPal, electronic transfer), and how often?
- Does the company have a good reputation (are other affiliates satisfied with the results)?
- Are there any reviews about the company? Good or bad?

Whether you enroll as an affiliate in several different programs or start your own affiliate program, there are profits to be made from affiliates. Once again, when it comes to affiliate programs, strategy is key. Take the time to determine which programs or methods will work best for your products or services, and you will see a sharp increase in traffic to your website!

Chapter 3 – When to Begin

Of course, the simple answer to this question is: *right now!*

Now is the best time to start your Internet marketing business. With millions of people online looking for products and services that interest them, anyone with a great niche and a bit of marketing savvy can find success.

More consumers are buying online than ever before. The security issues that plagued online sales are diminishing as new technologies and watchdog entities work to expose scams and make the Internet safe for everyone. Most Internet browsers will whip out their credit cards without hesitation if they run across something that interests them—why not make that "something" your product or service?

"Right now" is a general answer. There are, however, a few specific aspects of your Internet business that will require timing and research.

When to advertise

By now you should be familiar with several different methods of Internet advertising. You may already be engaged in research to determine which methods are the best for you

and your business, or you may even already have those plans in place.

The question then becomes: when should you launch your advertising campaigns?

As with everything else regarding your business, the answer depends on what you're trying to accomplish. Timing is important for a strategic plan to make the most of your advertising dollars. Launch your campaign too soon and you will have wasted your efforts when your resources prove inefficient to handle the surge in traffic; too late and you may have already lost a good chunk of business to your competitors.

Focusing your efforts on a targeted audience is essential for your success. The Internet is a big place, and though many methods are effective for bringing traffic to your website, they will not all work to convert your visitors to sales. This is why research is so vital to your success. The more of your target demographics you are able to reach, the more likely you will be able to turn visitors into paying customers.

So, when should you advertise? Before you launch that campaign, ensure that these key components are in place:

- You have researched and thoroughly tested your keywords

- You have established an advertising budget that will not strain your resources, but will still achieve your goals
- Your website infrastructure is ready to handle an increase in traffic
- Your pages and links all load and work correctly
- Your product or service is ready to sell in large quantities
- Your business is automated enough to ensure you will not have to spend hours fulfilling orders and answering e-mails
- You are mentally prepared to make more money!

The power of keywords



Without the right keywords, you're locked out of Internet business

When it comes to Internet marketing, there is a simple equation you need to understand:

Keywords = money

It's that simple. The keywords you choose to focus on will determine whether the traffic that reaches your website consists of browsers or buyers. There are many people just looking around online, not particularly interested in making a purchase; but there are also many people who log on with buying in mind. These are the people you want to visit your website, and your carefully targeted keywords will bring them there.

Let's look at an example of the importance of keywords:

Cindy sells shoes from her seaside cottage. She has sandals, flip-flops, high heels, boots, and more—Cindy stocks a great variety of shoes in a rainbow of styles and designs. She believes shoes are her business.

When Cindy set up a website for her shoe business, she expended a lot of effort in using her past sales records to determine how people found her website. She made lists of keywords her customers may have used to get there, and then meticulously optimized her pages and her advertising campaign with those keywords. Then, Cindy sat back and waited for those sales to start pouring in.

Unfortunately, they didn't.

What went wrong? Cindy's research told her how people found her website, but it didn't tell her what they were searching for, or what specific searches led them to her business. Therefore, a majority of the visitors who found her website through her sales campaign were not looking for shoes sold from a seaside cottage. They may have been simply browsing for footwear. Some of them may have even been looking for brake shoes for their cars, and clicked on Cindy's link out of curiosity—but since they were looking for a different type of shoe, they didn't buy anything.

In order to choose the keywords that best suit your Internet business, you need to walk in your customer's shoes. Try to figure out how someone looking for your specific product or service (or your competitors' specific product or service) would arrive at a website. In Cindy's case, instead of optimizing her website for "shoes" or "sandals", she might have chosen keywords like "beach footwear" or "specialty sandals" or "hand crafted shoes."

There are several tools available online to help you determine a good starting point for your keyword list (keep in mind, though, that you will have to road-test your keywords to make sure they really bring you results). The keyword generator tool at www.overture.com is a good place to start for generalizations.

If you want more specific keyword assistance, take advantage of the free thirty-day trial at www.nichetracker.com, which will generate not only keywords, but real statistics regarding what people are searching for online. You can use the free time to develop a solid list of keywords, and you may want to sign up for the full service if it proves useful.

Chapter 4 – Where to Begin

The task of starting an Internet business can seem daunting at first—so daunting you might have trouble deciding where to start! Should you research first? Create your website? Develop your product? If timing is essential, where should each step go in your journey toward Internet marketing success?



Up, down, left, right: where are you going from here?

There are three steps to beginning an Internet business. They are, in the order they should be performed:

1. Select or develop a great product or service
2. Design a website to sell your product or service
3. Create a marketing strategy that attracts visitors and turns them into customers

In this chapter, we will look at what is involved in each of these steps.

Pick your poison: How to select a business

The Internet and other advances in technology have made it possible for just about any type of business to flourish. Even the smallest home-based business has the ability to develop products and services that will appeal to a specific market, and then locate that market online, no matter how geographically scattered that market turns out to be.

It's been said before, but it is important enough to say again: passion is vital to the success of your business. You must be behind your products or services 100 percent. Exploring your passions and your knowledge is a great way to develop an idea for a product or service for which there is real demand, in a niche that you will be able to fill.

Do you love animals? Consider starting a pet-related Internet business. How about parenting? Moms and dads are always in the market for products or services that make their lives easier. Do you have any extensive knowledge, collections, or hobbies you can capitalize on? Taking stock of your personal interests is a good way to start looking for a business idea.

You will need all that passion to keep you going in your business. If you select products or services you are not excited about, you will not be able to generate enough enthusiasm to get others excited as well. If you sell products or services that are completely unrelated to your interests, your own interest in your business will fade fast, and you will stop trying to succeed.

Doing your homework

If you thought you were finished with homework when you finished school, unfortunately you'll have to reacquaint yourself with the process. Performing thorough market research on your product or service is the most important step in successful online business (remember that strategy we discussed?).

Look around at the products and services that are already available and similar to yours. Your market research should answer the following questions:

- Who else is selling your product or service? (If the answer to this is "no one", this can be good news or bad news. You may have a unique product that many people will want—or there may be a good reason why no one else is trying to sell it. Your research will help you determine this.)

- How much is your product or service being sold for, and can you offer yours for less and still make a profit?
- What will you need to do to market your product? Are there identifiable venues and communities who might be interested in it?
- Can you develop a unique selling proposition (USP) for your product or service? What makes you different from everyone else offering something similar? Is it enough to sway buyers?

If your research can't address all of these questions so that the answer is in your favor, you will need to go back to the beginning and try another product or service. The research process is typically the most time-consuming step of starting an Internet business.

You don't have to come up with the next best thing since sliced bread in order to be successful at Internet marketing. Your product or service must fill a void in the market, and must be unique in some way. That's all there is to it. You will have competition, but as long as you can top them in one or more areas, there is a customer base out there for you. Your products or services should be better, more unique, and/or a greater value than your competition.

Your customer service can also set you apart from the crowd. The Internet is an often faceless and impersonal market, and people who buy products and services online appreciate any

business that goes the extra mile to ensure their satisfaction. Prompt, reliable service combined with a money-back guarantee or other customer-centric offers can also set your business apart.

Top Internet businesses

What sells online? Some of the most profitable online companies in operation now deal with:

- Personal website development
- Software
- Proprietary information

The first two are fairly self-explanatory. Website services, from design to hosting to SEO (search engine optimization) agencies, are naturally a large part of the Internet. Everyone who does business online needs a website, and everyone is looking for ways to get traffic. Starting a business that relates to website development is an excellent opportunity if you can come up with a business concept that offers something unique, different, or of better value than what is out there now.

When it comes to software, you don't have to be a computer programmer to profit through software sales. There are thousands of affiliate programs that allow you to make a one-

time purchase of a software program along with the right to sell copies of it yourself. This type of Internet business is sometimes called a turnkey program. Once you purchase the sales rights to the software, you can continue to sell copies at whatever price you decide to set, and you keep 100 percent of the profits. The challenge with a turnkey Internet business is effective marketing—because there are thousands of people out there selling the exact same product as you.

Finally, proprietary information is a hot topic for Internet marketing. What is proprietary information? A basic explanation is: any information people don't already know, but would like to find out. This includes how-to books, industry insider information, "secrets" to success in various areas, and more.

Typically, proprietary information is sold online in electronic form: e-books, special reports, white papers, and subscription websites. This type of business contains endless possibilities. Whether you already possess knowledge on the topic, or you have a strong interest in learning more and are willing to do some heavy research, you can develop your own proprietary information products to sell on the Internet. You can also choose from thousands of affiliate or turnkey programs that will provide you with pre-packaged products on topics you have interests in and/or passion for.

Perhaps the best aspect of selling proprietary information products is the profit margin. Once you have obtained or developed the product, you will profit 100 percent with every sale (unless you are joining a straight affiliate program, in which case you lose affiliate fees but still "take home" a hefty percentage). They are easy to distribute: you don't have to worry about packaging or shipping costs, because everything is handled electronically. Furthermore, e-books and electronic reports are fairly easy to create and reproduce.

Need some ideas for informational products? The following list is a brief sample of the thousands of possibilities this type of business presents:

- Cooking
- Gardening
- Canning
- Recipes
- Entertainment
- Novels
- Photography
- Digital cameras
- Music
- Self improvement
- Health and fitness
- Makeup and skin care
- Weight loss
- Parenting

- Single parenting
- Teen parenting
- Child development
- Romance
- Dating
- Relationships
- Weddings
- Marriage
- Divorce
- Internet research
- Computer repair
- Computer troubleshooting
- Home decorating
- Home remodeling
- Home maintenance
- Small appliance repair
- Carpentry
- Plumbing
- Home financing or buying
- Automotive repair
- Automotive purchasing
- Home business tips

Beneath each of these topics is a whole subsection of different types of businesses or proprietary information packages you can consider. These include:

- Graphic design
- Website design
- Data entry
- Spreadsheets
- Copywriting
- Article writing
- Web content writing
- Bookkeeping
- Scheduling
- Systems analysis
- Collections
- Research services
- Transcription services
- Translation services
- Event planning
- Menu planning
- Life coaching
- Virtual administrative services

The list is practically endless. All you need to do is decide on a subject that excites you, and then develop a product or service that the market will bear.

Delivering the goods

Once you have decided on what product or service you want to sell, you will then have to determine how your customers

will receive their purchases. If you're selling a physical product, you'll have to concern yourself with package and delivery issues. If your product is electronic (information, subscriptions, website services), your focus will be on electronic security for your wares.



Packaging products: by hand or by pixel?

If you are selling products that you manufacture yourself, such as handmade crafts, then your shipping and handling costs should be thoroughly researched before you launch your business. You must have sufficient shipping material on hand prior to selling, because if you fail to deliver orders you will lose business fast. Also, you need to factor in the cost of shipping and packaging materials when you set your retail prices. Most Internet shoppers expect to pay a shipping charge for physical products ordered online, but make sure you mark up the price enough to cover the packaging you're sending your product in.

You may choose to sell products through an affiliate or associate program. In this case, the affiliate company will

typically drop-ship orders to your customers right from their warehouse—so as a merchant affiliate, you will never have to bother handling the merchandise yourself.

If you are interested in selling affiliate programs, you might want to visit www.electronicdartshop.com. For an annual fee, this website offers a wide selection of name brand affiliate product sales along with information to assist you in setting up your website and creating your marketing plan. Basically, you will be setting up your own virtual mall, and the companies will deal with the physical merchandise for you.

One of the advantages to selling electronic products that you might not have considered is instant gratification for your customers. When you offer e-books or other information that can be accessed immediately, your customers will enjoy not having to wait for something to be mailed to them.

You also save time when you sell electronic products. Rather than spending a good portion of your work day packaging products and standing in line at the post office (or waiting for the UPS truck), you can almost completely automate your content delivery system and spend your time developing your website and marketing strategy.

The major issue for purveyors of electronic goods is security. If your downloads are not protected through passwords and secure links, anyone can get to them for free—in which case

they won't bother paying you. Also, once a customer receives your electronic product, there is little to stand in the way of passing it on to a few friends (or more than a few friends).

If you intend to develop your own electronic product, part of your research must include methods of security and protection that will keep people from accessing your information without paying for it. This will sometimes require a considerable initial investment, though it will pay for itself in sales with your carefully planned marketing strategy.

On the other hand, if you are not comfortable dealing with electronic programming and security issues, you can join an affiliate program that will handle everything for you. Affiliate programs that involve electronic products already have built-in security measures that protect you from theft.

For more information and a directory of hundreds of affiliate programs, you can visit www.associateprograms.com.

Your website: Setting up shop



Destination: Online

We've mentioned that the Internet is largely a faceless entity. Typically, your website represents the only form of interaction your customers will have with you. It stands to reason, then, that your website should be a primary focus area, second only to your actual product or service.

Your website is in competition with millions of other websites, whether or not the others offer a similar product or services. There are so many virtual destinations online today that it only takes one mistake to send visitors clicking elsewhere. Most Internet users know they can get what they are looking for from another website, and if yours is not compelling enough to keep them, off they will go!

It is essential to design a website that is exciting, easy to navigate, honest, and informative. Your website must be attractive to your target demographic customers, and it must

effectively showcase your products or services. The overall goal of your website is to grab visitors' interest and quickly convert them to buyers. Unfortunately, you don't have much time to do this: the average website visitor decides whether or not to stay on your site in about 30 seconds. If you don't have their attention by then, you will lose the sale.

When it comes to your website, words matter. More than any eye-popping graphic or flashy animation, your words are what will keep visitors (and search engines) happy. The right words will retain visitors, while the wrong words will send them on to your competition. Ditto for the number of words: too few of them and no visitors or search engines will find your website; too many repeated keywords and visitors will think, "Scam!" Excess keywords can also get your website banned from search engines.

The words on your website are referred to as copy or content. You may have heard the phrase "content is king" when it comes to websites—and it is the truth. Your content has to sparkle. It must be interesting, compelling, and error-free, with just the right balance of targeted keywords to hook search engines, and plenty of information to interest visitors.

Your website content is the one area you can't skimp on. If you don't feel confident enough to write your own copy, you should definitely hire a professional copywriter to do it for you.

Whether you decide to write your copy yourself or hire someone else, you need to ensure that every headline and paragraph of text on your website is crafted to make a sale. Your marketing strategy may be earning you thousands of visitors, but if none of them are buying, you are wasting your time.

Write (or have written) clear, concise, compelling copy. Words are the strongest commodity on the Internet. Speaking of words, consider including some of the most powerful words in the English language (according to a Yale University study):

- Results
- Guaranteed
- Money
- Save
- Discovery
- Easy
- New
- Proven
- Love
- Health
- Safety
- You

Why "you"? If you write your website content using third person description (*this product is great, it does this and*

that), your visitors will feel like they are reading a sales catalogue—which isn't very exciting or compelling. However, if you use the pronoun "you" in your copy (*When you use this e-book software, you will be able to create a professional-looking e-book in just a few hours!*), visitors get the impression that your website is "speaking" to them rather than relating dry information about your products or services.

In addition to the above power words, you should also make use of these compelling words in your website headlines and sales letter:

- Breakthrough
- Discover
- Free
- Hidden
- Incredible
- Master
- Powerful
- Profits
- Revealed
- Uncovered
- Ultimate
- Scientific
- Shocking
- Secret

These "buzz words" have the power to compel, and generate a great deal of interest in your visitors. Use them sparingly, but wisely.

When you are crafting copy with power words or buzz words, one of the things you must keep in mind is honesty. You should always tell the truth about your products or services. You can emphasize the positive aspects of your offering and downplay or offset any shortcomings, but outright lying will not get you anywhere. If you feel you have to lie about your products or services in order to get sales, it is time to rethink your business. Dissatisfied customers will not keep you going. A successful Internet business stays profitable through not only attracting new customers, but keeping the old ones as well.

Headlines that shout "Read Me!"

Remember, you have approximately 30 seconds to get your visitors' attention. Visit a few websites and notice what draws your eye first. Is it the graphics? Maybe, but it is a rare graphic indeed that keeps website visitors interested for long. What words do you notice on the page? Are they big and bold? Do they make you want to explore the website more, or are you already typing something else into your search box?

Headlines that get the most attention are those that not only explain what the page is about, but why you as a visitor need to learn more. Your headlines and sub-headlines should be concise but powerful. Don't just say "This product is great" – instead, say: "This product is great *because* it will have these amazing benefits *for you*."

If the price of your products or services is one of the biggest attractions, include that price in the headline for your landing page. According to a study by www.Knowthis.com, listing a favorable price in a headline can increase your visitor conversion rate by as much as 68 percent.

Whether it is your price, your quality, or your uniqueness that makes your products or services desirable, your headline should say it all—using as few words as possible. First-time visitors to websites do not typically read every word on the page. Instead, they scan for things that jump out: bigger text, different colored text, or text that is spaced apart from the rest. These are your headlines and subheads, and they are crucial.

When writing headlines, it is beneficial to understand the basics behind human motivation. You can find a tried-and-true breakdown of human behavior in Abraham Maslow's classic model of the *Hierarchy of Needs*.

Maslow's *Hierarchy* states that people will not seek to meet lesser needs until more important needs are met. For example, a person who is hungry will not look for entertainment until the hunger has been satisfied. The hierarchy of needs, from the most important to the least, is:

Physiological: The basic physical drives—hunger, thirst, shelter, clothing, and sex

Safety: Includes physical, emotional, and financial security

Social (Affiliation): Fulfillment of the need for companionship, love, affection and acceptance

Esteem (Self-esteem): Desires for achievement, recognition, attention, and respect

Self-actualization: The drive to seek a higher purpose and reach full potential

Your headlines should appeal to one of these basic human needs as defined in the hierarchy. Your goal in writing your headlines is to appeal to your visitors' emotions. The words you choose must reflect their wants, needs, and desires. Help your customers realize how your products or services will allow them to fulfill one of the basic needs, and you're on your way to converting sales.

Another important consideration in writing your headlines, and your content in general, is to keep it conversational. You want your visitors to feel as though you are talking directly to them, rather than describing a product or service for no

specific person. Identify the problem that your product or service solves, and apply that solution to your content. Let your visitors know specifically what they can expect to receive by becoming your customer.

To accomplish this, make use of "you" and "your", and stay away from generic description. Think of real life situations that are common to your target demographic, and apply your product or service to those situations. Let them know what will happen when they use your goods or services. Describe in terms of *why* and *how*, rather than *what*.

The more benefits you can clearly explain for your products and services, the more people they will appeal to. Continue to brainstorm ways to apply your products to everyday life, and bring those applications to life through the words on your website.

Your marketing roadmap

If you expect to keep your Internet business going and become a successful online entrepreneur, you will need to establish both a short-term and a long-term plan for your marketing strategies.

Your short-term goals should aim to bring a fast increase in traffic to your website. Keep in mind, however, that this

traffic increase will be temporary. The objective of this initial burst of traffic is exposure, recognition, and visitors that will hopefully convert to customers. Though your initial traffic surge will be exciting and encouraging, make sure your plans do not include relying on it to carry your business through to long-term success.

Achieving a short-term traffic increase typically involves listings on search engines and bulletin boards, paired with a purchased or time-intensive advertising campaign. This initial marketing phase may also include press release distribution, which will get you local publicity and some traffic.

When it comes to long-term goals, you should have these strategies in place before you launch your short-term campaign. Your long-term marketing plans will be designed to keep a steady stream of targeted visitors coming to your website, and producing reliable (but not necessarily huge) results for years to come.

Long-term marketing strategies include:

- Initial website creation and design
- Content production, updates, and changes
- Freebies and giveaways
- Newsletters and opt-in lists

Careful planning and balance between your short-term and long-term marketing plans will result in overall success of your Internet business. Remember, you are not looking to make a few fast bucks and then move on to the next idea when this one fails. The best way to achieve financial freedom doing the work you love is to choose one solid business and stick with it, developing it until you have a steady income stream that brings you personal satisfaction along with monetary gain.

Keep in mind, however, that Internet marketing is a fluid and changing field. The best way to stay on top is continual research and investigation. Keep adding new techniques to your marketing repertoire, and keep checking up on your competition to see what you can do to improve.

Chapter 5 – Starting Your Internet Marketing Business

Now that you know why you should market on the Internet, where to find a great online business that will work for you, and when to start your business and marketing campaigns, it is time to learn how you can go about doing it!

Free instant Internet business: Just add blog

You should now possess a basic understanding of the key ingredients for successful Internet businesses. You need a product or service, you need customers to target, and you need a website to reach them.

If you already have a website, you're one step ahead of the game. However, if you don't yet have your own business website, you can get one that is free, easy to maintain, and can be set up in about thirty minutes with a specialized website form called a blog.

What in the world is a blog? The word is short for "web log", and refers to a website that is set up like an online journal: you can "post" to your blog as often as you want, and you can add pictures, sound, and graphics to your posts. Blogs are one of the most interactive media forms available online—

with the comments feature, visitors can leave notes on your blog to let you know what they like or dislike about your products or services, and what they would like to see in the future.

Blogs are not used only for business. In fact, there are millions of personal blogs that Internet users have created just to connect with other like-minded souls. The popularity of blogs has spawned a whole new subsection of the Internet that is commonly called the "blogosphere" and involves bloggers (people who blog) linking to other blogs, reading and commenting regularly on other blogs, and enjoying many visitors and commenters in return.

You can also use blogs effectively as a free business website. The most popular blog software online is provided by a company called Blogger, which is owned by search engine giant Google. To get started right now setting up your free Blogger website:

- Go to www.blogger.com
- Click on the orange "Create Your Blog Now" link near the bottom of the page.
- Enter the requested information. You will be asked to select a user name, password, display name, and a valid e-mail address. Choose your display name with care, as it will often be the first thing Internet users

see. Your display name will be included at the end of every post you make.

- Click on "Continue"
- Enter a title and an address for your blog. The title of your blog can be your company name, or some creative variation of the products or services you provide. The address, or URL, should be something that is easy for people to remember and type in. The URL for your blog will be `http://youraddress.blogspot.com`.
- Select a template design for your blog. Blogger provides a variety of different blog styles, and you can change your template at any time down the road.
- Click on "Continue"

That's it! Your blog is now set up and ready to use. You will be given the option at the end of the signup process to fill out your profile. Your Blogger profile will be searchable by the interests and topics you enter, so include your carefully researched keywords here to help other bloggers find your site. Search engines will also index your blog, so it is doubly useful to include keywords in your profile.

When you set up your blog, you will be given the option to add a bit of extra earning potential to your new website by signing up for the Google AdSense program. AdSense is a snippet of HTML code you can add to your blog template that will automatically generate a series of brief advertisements

displayed on your blog pages. When visitors click these links, you will earn a few cents for each click.

To install AdSense on your blog, sign in to your Blogger account and go to your "Dashboard" (the control panel you use to create posts and edit your site). Click on the "Template" tab, and select the AdSense button, and then follow the instructions that appear on your screen. Be sure that you follow the prompts to save and republish your blog, or your ads will not appear on your site.

Once you have created your blog, you need to spread the word about it. Don't forget to e-mail all your family, friends, and business associates with a link to your new blog. Include the URL in your signature line at the bottom of your e-mails as well. You can also index and market your blog just as you would a regular website. Here are some further tips on getting traffic to your blog:

- Submit your blog information to search engine directories, just like a normal website.
- List your blog on specialized blog directories. If you visit www.PingoMatic.com, you can submit simultaneously to all the major blog directories.
- Visit other blogs and leave thoughtful comments in their comments section. Every blog you comment on creates another link to your own blog and gets your name out there. However, keep the cardinal rule of Internet

marketing in mind: **thou shalt not spam!** Leaving comments that simply say "visit my blog here!" is rude, unprofessional, and will turn the blogosphere against you rather quickly.

You can also register your domain name for your blog and host it on your own server, rather than having a .blogspot address. There are many ways to market a blog, so get creative! Visit www.homebusiness.org for more tips, hints, and resources on creating and maintaining a successful blog or website.

See the Internet Marketing blog at www.JeremyBurns.com/blog

Website words of wisdom

Whether you use a blog or a more traditional style website to market your business, your online presence is your only presence. It must be up to the task of effectively marketing your products or services.

The best websites are simple, clear, and easy to move around. If your visitors can't find what they came for with a few clicks, they will look elsewhere. Confusing graphics, fancy plug-ins, Flash animation, and automated music or sound files are often more distracting than impressing. You want your

website to get straight to the point: "I have a great product or service that you should be interested in. Here's what it will do for you, and here is how to buy it."



Keep your visitors from clicking elsewhere with their credit cards

Your website should be straightforward and sell-oriented. Keep the design simple and clean; don't muck up your pages with fancy fonts or heavy graphics that take a long time to load. Have a navigational menu with clearly labeled buttons across the top or down the side of every page, so your visitors know exactly how to get where they want to go. Don't tease with the promise of a bonus or free product, and then make it nearly impossible to find the freebie. Everything on your website should be accessible within three clicks from everything else.

Another important consideration in the design of your website is your search engine rank. The text, title, and layout of your website will determine where you place on search engines—whether your results end up on page one or two, or page 5,398. Few people will find your website if your search engine rank is not up there in the front.

Following is a breakdown of the website sections search engines concentrate on, and what should be included in each one:

- **Title:** The title of your website is the text that appears in the top bar of the browser window. Your title will be indexed by search engines first, and it will be the first thing potential visitors see when your website appears in a search. The title should contain your most important keyword or keywords, along with the name of your company if applicable. For example, if your business name is "Instant E-book" and you sell e-book software, your title might be: "Instant E-book: Easy, affordable e-book software and e-book solutions."
- **Description:** The description is the short blurb search engines will display along with your hot-linked title. If your pages do not specify a description in the meta tags or site building software, the search engine will simply display the first few lines of text on your page after the title. Specifying your description yourself allows you a better chance to rise in search engine rank and gain

visitors. Your description should be short (less than 200 characters) and include your most important keywords along with a compelling explanation of your products or services.

- **Keywords:** Your keywords are what search engine "spiders" (programs that "crawl the web" looking for and indexing pages) use to determine when your website will be included in its results. Make strategic use of targeted keywords in your title, description, and page text to increase your chances of high search engine rankings.
- **Text:** This refers to the words that actually appear on your website. Previously, search engines lent more weight to meta-tags (which are invisible to the casual Internet user), but practices like keyword stuffing and irrelevant keyword usage have led to more emphasis being placed on visible page text. Your website text should be sensible and informative, and contain "sprinkled" keywords (rather than stuffed) that make sense within the context of your wordage. The most important text on your website should appear near the top of the page, so visitors don't have to scroll down to view it.

You can find more information on keywords and website optimization here:

<http://www.jimtools.com>

<http://www.goodkeywords.com>

Budgeting basics

You can start out with little or no monetary investment, but you will eventually need to put some money in to your Internet marketing business. Here, budgeting your funds is vital. You don't want to end up investing hundreds or thousands of dollars on an advertising tactic or campaign that will not earn back your investment.

Once you have created a budget, make sure you stick to it. Do not be tempted by "special offers" or programs with "instant results" unless they are part of your carefully planned and well-thought-out marketing strategy. If you stick within your budget, you will force yourself to research any marketing offers thoroughly, seek out the best deals, strike bargains, and determine whether the results you receive from a particular advertising method are worth re-investment.

Unfortunately, there is no way to determine the exact cost of Internet marketing. Your needs and the current market pricing for goods and services related to online advertising will dictate how much you'll spend. Whether you need to invest your budget in a website package, a high-quality autoresponder, special programming such as interactive

components, or the purchase of products, materials, or turnkey packages, research is once again the key to your budgetary requirements.

If you need professional assistance in designing your website or crafting your copy, hiring a freelance professional is your best bet. Keep in mind that with freelance writers and designers, you get what you pay for. If the cost for the service is cheap, the service itself will likely be cheap as well. Be sure to ask for samples or portfolios before hiring a freelancer. Most freelancers work at competitive rates as well. The good news is that once you pay a freelancer to design your website or write your copy, the end result is yours—the freelance fee is a one-time investment that will remain profitable for you.

Some additional costs you may choose to include in your budget are:

- *E-mail marketing*: Hiring an Internet marketing company or buying a list of opt-in leads can prove profitable and cost-effective. However, launching a successful e-mail marketing campaign is not a simple process. First, you must investigate e-mail marketing companies thoroughly. There are many of them out there, and prices vary widely. Some are less than ethical, and may provide you with unqualified leads—which will get you in trouble for spamming. Second, you

must provide the marketing company with exact profiles of your target demographics in order to ensure you receive as many qualified leads as possible. Third, the marketing letter you write must be compelling to entice people to your website. And finally, your website itself must be in top form to convert all those visitors to buyers. E-mail marketing is not a complete solution; rather, it is a component of an overall effective marketing plan.

- *Banner ads:* Placing banner ads for your website can be effective—but again, there are many factors to consider here. There are many websites that offer banner advertising space, but force you to share space and compete with other websites offering similar products or services. The most effective banner ad placement comes with an exclusivity guarantee: yours should be the only banner on the page. Otherwise, you risk a sharp decline in traffic when visitors are directed to other websites.
- *Pay per click:* PPC programs are one of the most cost-effective and results-achieving advertising methods on the Internet. With a PPC campaign, you receive only targeted traffic—visitors who click on your PPC ads have looked for your keywords in a search engine. This means they are more likely to become paying customers when they arrive at your website. The problem with PPC advertising is that there are only so many specific, targeted keywords that will apply to your

business. The more popular, generalized keywords are subject to fierce competition, so that only those willing to pay a high per-click price will be able to use them.

There are also some other alternatives in paid marketing to consider. For example, when it comes to PPC marketing, you will not pay a huge amount—but you will have to invest a huge amount of time in keyword research and results tracking. In the world of Internet marketing, time equals money. If you are interested in launching a PPC campaign, but don't feel you have the necessary time or expertise to devote to making your campaign successful, you may want to consider hiring a pay-per-click advertising management service to do the work for you.

These companies understand how PPC marketing works, and will take much of the business of gaining website traffic out of your hands so you can concentrate on running your company. Some of the services PPC advertising management companies provide include:

- Development of high-performance keyword lists
- Creation of compelling, attractive text ads
- Keyword list and bidding management
- Campaign optimization based on performance data analysis
- Results and tracking reports for you to view

Keep in mind that driving traffic to your website is not enough. You need relevant, targeted traffic arriving at your website—quality over quantity. For this reason, a carefully planned and orchestrated PPC campaign can be highly profitable.

The most popular PPC program, of course, is Google's AdWords (previously discussed in this book). AdWords gets you listed near the top of the most popular search engine, and you can change your keywords every month until you arrive at a combination that yields the best results for you.

More on traffic

If all these marketing strategies have your head spinning, you can skip the campaigning and drive traffic naturally to your website with search engine optimization (SEO) practices. Remember the phrase "content is king"? SEO practices capitalize on that idea by giving your website intrinsic value, so that your search engine ranking is naturally high.

Internet users have all but exhausted their interest in gimmicks, flashy advertising, and cute tricks. Today, they are looking for real information and useful products and services. While PPC campaigns will get your website listed in the fabled "top three" pages of results, your information will be clearly labeled (at least for savvy Internet users) as paid

advertisements. Natural search engine results—those listed on the basis of page content—enjoy a whopping 75 percent of all search engine click-throughs.

You can hire a company to optimize your website, or you can do it yourself through market research and emphasis on writing your content. The basic keys to search engine optimization are:

- Include only relevant content. Don't lie about your products or services, and don't include popular search engine keywords that have nothing to do with your website.
- Make sure your content is informative and pleasant to read. Give your visitors real information, not just fluff and rhetoric.
- Add fresh content on a regular basis. Write informative articles about subjects your visitors will be interested in (or purchase articles from an article directory or content service).
- Keep it simple, and keep it real.

Research search optimization techniques, or hire a professional SEO marketer or company to overhaul your website. High natural rankings on top search engines will bring you plenty of traffic that is ready to be converted to paying customers. Your website will do the rest!



Innovative Marketing Strategies

Chapter 6 – Sizzling Success Tips

As in all business endeavors, there are right ways and wrong ways to go about Internet marketing. In this chapter, you will learn some techniques for creating and advertising a successful online business, as well as some methods to avoid at all costs.

Top 10 Steps to Success

1. *Design your site with screen resolution in mind.* The screen resolution your computer is set to determines how much of the website you're looking at will fit on the screen. Most Internet users have their resolution set to 800x600 or less. This means if you design your website to be viewed at a larger resolution, the typical user will not see everything on your page when they arrive—they'll have to rely on scroll bars to move, and may miss some of your crucial information. Remember to keep the most important text at the top of the screen.
2. *Respect your visitors' time.* If you use graphics or animation on your website, keep them uncomplicated and use a resolution that is as low as possible. In other words, make sure your entire page, including graphics and pictures, loads quickly. If your pages take a long time to load, visitors will click away before they see your impressive display. Don't forget that many

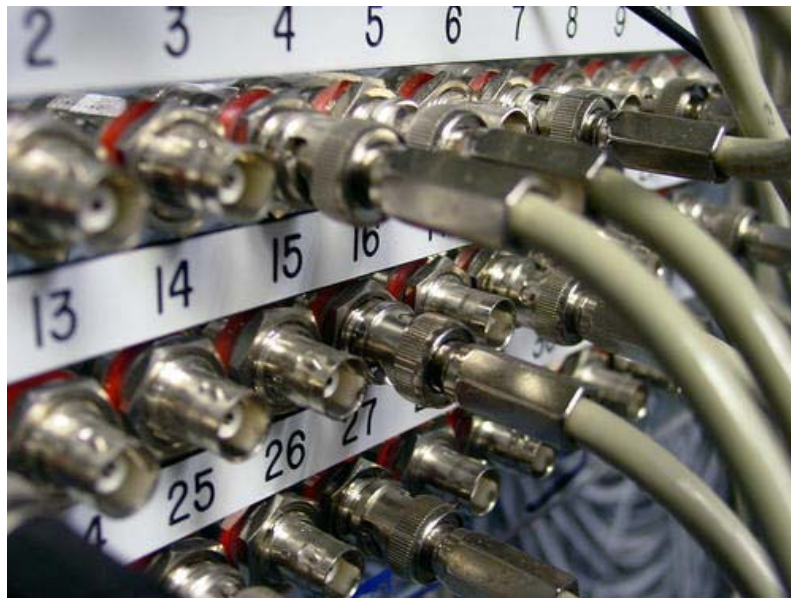
Internet users still have dial-up access, and a graphics-heavy website is a big turn-off.

3. *Keep the distractions to a minimum.* It's important to make your website an interesting place to visit, but stick to the main goal of selling your product or service as much as possible. Blinking text, text that clashes with your background, and complicated background graphics all scream sensory overload to your visitors, and they will not bother trying to decipher your message.
4. *Make your content valuable.* Don't just give some descriptions of your products and services. If possible, provide your visitors with real information about topics related to your products, in the form of articles or free special reports on your website. Also, provide links to complementary (but not competitive) websites where visitors can find more information. This helps you to earn repeat visitors, which will keep your business going.
5. *Simple home pages are best.* You don't need anything more than your navigation control, a brief mission statement or site description summary, and a splash graphic on the index page of your website. If it is too busy, visitors may become overwhelmed and move on.
6. *Diversify your navigation bar.* Nice-looking graphics or buttons for your navigational controls are great, but not all of your visitors will be able to see them. Internet browsers now feature the capacity to block graphics

when loading websites, so users can save load time and avoid possible viruses. Make sure any graphics that are linked to other areas on your website are accompanied by text links.

7. *Freshen up.* Running a series of time-sensitive promotions (Limited time offer available for the next X days!) is a good way to keep visitors coming back, because they will want to know if they've missed anything. Also, adding to or improving your products or services gives visitors a reason to keep checking in. The idea of refreshing your website should extend to your content as well: keep adding new articles and links, and removing outdated ones.
8. *Learn to say more with less.* Keep the text on your website short, and break it up with headlines, subheads and bulleted lists. Few people enjoy reading long blocks of text on a computer screen, and many won't scroll down very far before clicking on to the next section. If you have information you want people to see near the bottom of your screen, chances are many visitors won't get that far.
9. *Study the competition.* Look for successful websites that offer products and services similar to yours. How is their website designed? What seems to be working for them? Is there anything you can do to make your website better, more attractive, easier to navigate?
10. *When it comes to ordering, be flexible.* Though online ordering is not as avoided as it used to be, many

people still prefer other methods. The more purchasing options you make available to your customers, the more sales you are likely to capture. Consider creating a printable online form that can be mailed or faxed to you, or even establishing a toll-free number for telephone orders. You can monitor the line yourself, or hire a third-party order processor if you expect a high volume of telephone orders.



Keep your Internet marketing business connected

Top 10 Pitfalls to Avoid

1. *Gimmicks, false advertising, and other manufactured word-of-mouth tactics.* Though lying is easy and gimmicks are cute, neither one of these represents a successful advertising strategy for your Internet

marketing business. Remember the Taco Bell Chihuahua? You may have thought he was cute—or annoying—but did he make you want to rush out and buy tacos? That particular campaign proved a huge waste of advertising money for Taco Bell. The only way to generate true word-of-mouth sales is the original way: give people a product or service that is worth talking about. Once word gets out, you will gain long-term repeat business as well as short-term sales.

2. *Setting sale terms based on your needs (instead of your customers).* It may be easier for you to design your website according to your template or the "style you have always used", but that does not necessarily mean it will be easier for your customers to navigate. Every aspect of your website should be designed with your customers in mind. You must be able to think like a customer instead of a business owner, and decide how people would most logically look around your website. Remember, if they can't find what they're looking for within three clicks, they won't waste much more time in finding another website where they can.
3. *Using the same marketing methods that worked before the Internet came along.* Though some people may not like to believe it, the Internet has changed the face of business forever. More traditional businesses are losing customers to the convenience and the choices that are available online. If you don't take advantage of the opportunities offered by the so-called Information

Superhighway, your competitors will—and they will get your customers' business. Remember, too, that getting your message "out there" is not enough. You need relevance and honesty to succeed online.

4. *Believing the Internet is a "one-size-fits-all" environment.* Nothing could be further from the truth. No matter how compelling or wide-reaching your marketing practices are, you will not be able to reach every single Internet user out there (and yes, there are still some people online who have never heard of Google or Amazon!). Diversification is good for your business. One example of this is multiple e-mail accounts, which can give the impression that your business is larger than it seems. Another is multiple websites. If you have more than one product or service, creating a separate website for each one allows more exposure to different segments and market demographics.
5. *Following "best practice" marketing techniques on faith alone.* When it comes to the Internet, there are no established "best practices." This medium is still a relative infant compared to other advertising and business venues. What is best today may not be best tomorrow! The only "best practice" you should religiously subscribe to is the realization that the Internet is changing constantly, and you should be ready to adapt. Keep an eye on current trends and

technological developments, and keep an open mind when it comes to marketing practices.

6. *Traffic does not mean success.* This has been mentioned before: you can have thousands, or even millions, of website "hits" and still not have a successful Internet marketing business. Many online business owners make the mistake of "buying" traffic through programs that promise tens of thousands of visitors for one low price, but these visitors are not interested in your website. Many of them are clicking through a series of links in order to earn credit they can exchange for traffic to their own websites, or for "free" merchandise promised by the company hosting the traffic program. They don't want to stop and buy your products or services. You need targeted traffic arriving at a website that is engineered to convert visitors to buyers.
7. *Settling for less than the best results.* In any advertising campaign, the savvy business person will attempt to determine the percentage of people who actually made purchases as a result of viewing the advertisement. This number is called a "return." The rate of return varies among different types of media. For example, a 2 percent return in direct mail marketing—that's two out every hundred people who received a mail flyer and then made a purchase—is considered fantastic. When it comes to Internet sales, marketers typically measure rates of return on

conversions: visitors to sales. That number should average from 2.4 to 2.6 percent if you want success. Unfortunately, even that low a percentage is difficult to maintain.

8. *Equating elaborate website design with favorable customer impressions.* A busy, confusing website is one of the biggest mistakes Internet marketers make. Loading your website with multiple products, links, reviews, and sales fluff will only convince visitors that you're trying too hard to substantiate a second-rate offering. Don't make it hard for visitors to find what they're looking for, and keep each website you maintain dedicated to one or two specific products.
9. *Failure to attract repeat visitors.* If your website is just one big electronic sales brochure, your visitors will see everything they wanted to see the first time they arrive—and they will not return, whether they make a purchase or not. Offer valuable free information, frequently updated products or specials, bonus items, or subscriptions that will encourage them to come back.
10. *Failure to perform continual research and develop new marketing strategies.* Remember, what works for you now may not continue to work in the future. Be prepared to keep yourself informed and up-to-date on the latest Internet marketing strategies, and continually seek new, better ways to market your products or services and keep your website up in the front of the search engine rankings.



Innovative Marketing Strategies

Chapter 7 –Website Subscriptions

Have you ever visited a website that promised great information, only to discover that you had to register before you could see it? The registration process may have been free or paid, but in either case you had to enter your personal information to access it.

Did you complete the registration, or did you look elsewhere for the information?

The answer depends on the type of promised information on the subscription website. If you had already determined this was the only place—or the most convenient place—to obtain the information you were looking for, you probably went ahead with the registration. If not, you probably clicked back the search engine results and tried again.

Subscriptions for websites work in some cases, but not others. If you are considering starting a subscription website, be sure that you have a good reason for doing it, or no one will sign up.

To charge or not to charge

Free subscriptions

Websites that require free registration for access are seeking to collect demographic information, usually to help them learn where their traffic is coming from or what their visitors are most interested in so they can adjust their advertising campaigns accordingly. Some also use registration forms to capture e-mail addresses for their mailing lists (most will give you the option of whether you agree to receive information or special offers from them when you register).

If the information or services on your website are worth the extra time your visitors will have to spend registering, you may want to consider adding a registration or subscription component to your website. This will allow you to study your market and build your opt-in mailing list.

However, if your website contains information that can readily be found elsewhere without requiring registration, many Internet users will opt to skip the time-consuming registration process (even though it only takes a few minutes—remember, Internet users are used to instant results!) and visit another website instead.

Paid subscriptions

There are now some websites that charge subscription fees, starting at around a few dollars a month. Typically, the types of websites that charge monthly fees are web hosting services, specialized software providers such as autoresponders, freelance job boards and lead locators, and online newspapers or magazines (ezines). There are also a few run-of-the-mill websites attempting to charge a monthly subscription fee.

Paid subscriptions are counter to the "spirit" of the Internet, where free information abounds. Few people are willing to pay for information they could otherwise receive free. There is not yet enough perceived value attached to most websites to justify a monthly charge. If Google were to begin charging a monthly fee, people would simply turn to Yahoo or another popular search engine instead.

However, some information is so specialized and sparsely available that people are willing to pay for it—sometimes dearly. One example is Lexis, which is an extensive legal online database that charges users \$2.00 per minute for access. Lexis does a brisk business for such an exorbitant fee. This is just one instance; for other examples of trends in e-commerce, check out www.commerce.net.

Offline and online trends

Currently, the Internet is little more than 15 years old; too short a life span to establish firm rules and accepted practices. Much of the Internet remains unregulated and unexplored, which means there is a degree of uncertainty and risk associated with doing business online. However, the Internet remains an opportunistic medium for the entrepreneur who is willing to learn.

Without question, consumers turn to the Internet to research buying decisions, even when they do not intend to make a purchase online. In fact, the Internet is used to research offline products more often than online. In a March 2006 study by ComScore, it was found that 63 percent of people who researched a product online, and then later purchased it, completed the purchase at an offline location, which left only 37 percent of consumers making researched purchases online.

In essence, a large portion of consumers use the Internet to compare and contrast brands, select one product over another, compare prices, and find a retail store to make a purchase from. 22 percent of offline sales (almost a quarter) are influenced by the Web. For this reason, more and more traditional businesses are headed for the Internet, creating websites that are informative, easy to navigate, and make customers aware of their presence. An online presence also

enables customer interaction at a level that is not possible in the offline business world.

Whether you create a business that is completely online, or you use your website to help promote your offline company, there are many benefits to be found in Internet marketing. Don't ignore this explosive business opportunity!

Chapter 8 – More on Affiliates

We touched on affiliate programs before, so by now you should be aware that starting your own affiliate program for your products or services is a great way to make money through Internet marketing. Basically, creating an affiliate program is like hiring your very own sales force who will go forth and market for you.

However, there are also ways to profit from other companies' affiliate programs. In fact, you can base your entire Internet marketing business around affiliate programs and still enjoy success. As with all other forms of online business, the key to successful affiliate marketing is preparation and research.



Affiliate programs: a sales force of one?

Multiple affiliations, multiple paychecks

Affiliate programs are one of the most misunderstood facets of online business today. Many people believe that affiliate programs are the same things as pyramid schemes—you pay someone for exciting information that will make you rich, only to find that the only way to get rich is to sucker someone else into falling for the same scam you just did.

The reality of affiliate programs is quite different, and much more honest. In order to better understand affiliate programs, let's start with some useful terminology:

An *affiliate* is any website, or "referrer", that promotes a product or service owned or licensed by someone else in an effort to earn commissions.

A *merchant* is the owner of the affiliate program. Merchants own the product or the rights to the product, and through an affiliate program a merchant shares profit with affiliates based on performance.

In the previous section, we discussed methods you can use to be a merchant. This section will discuss methods you can use to become an affiliate.

Remember the three basic types of affiliate programs?

Pay-per-click programs compensate affiliates for every click that sends visitors from the affiliate website to the merchant website.

Pay-per-sale programs provide a percentage of a sale price to an affiliate whenever a visitor from the affiliate website clicks through to the merchant website *and* makes a purchase.

Pay-per-lead programs, which are the least common types, provide a flat fee for any sales lead the affiliate sends that the merchant feels is qualified. These programs are unpopular because they are subjective and entirely up to the merchant, and few affiliates are interested in only getting paid if the merchant "feels like it."

Often, affiliate websites provide free or paid content services, information, and/or entertainment to visitors. Online merchants with affiliate programs typically deal with products, goods, or services. The information found on the affiliate website is often complementary to the products, goods, or services sold by the merchant, which is why the visitors to the affiliate website are interested in visiting the merchant website. Some affiliate programs pay only for clicks on the links leading to the merchant site, while others provide an additional percentage of sales that result from visitors from the affiliate website.

Traffic generated through an affiliate link does not often add up to a lot of money. For this reason, many affiliate marketers sign up for multiple affiliate programs in order to generate more than one stream of revenue. It is important to understand how affiliate programs work in order to generate decent profits through them.

Merchants are able to track affiliate clicks and determine whether sales resulted from them. Each affiliate is given a special URL with an affiliate code embedded at the end, so the merchant can tell whether the visitors came from your website. It is important that you list your specific affiliate link wherever your visitors will click to the merchant site; otherwise, you won't get credit for the clicks.

As an affiliate, there are some things you can do to make your website more attractive to high-paying merchants with affiliate programs. You will want to enroll in multiple affiliate programs, but make sure your pages are not cluttered with links. The best way to capitalize on affiliate programs is to scatter the links throughout your website in addition to listing them along the sides or top of the page. For example, you may embed an affiliate link within the text of an article that is relevant to the merchant's product or service.

It goes without saying that your website content should reflect that of the merchant's website content. If your website deals with pet care, you should not sign up for an affiliate

program that offers e-book creation software. The best affiliate programs are selective about the websites they will allow to become affiliates, as they don't want the affiliate websites to create a poor reflection of them for their visitors. Just as with your own business, your affiliate website should contain clear, relevant information and be as error-free as possible.

Successful affiliate programs ensure that both sides—merchant and affiliate, are happy with the outcome. If you enter an affiliate program and find that you are doing far too much work without sufficient compensation, discontinue the program and look for something that produces better results. You do not have to be at the mercy of a greedy merchant who is too stingy to pay affiliates what they are worth!

Top tips for affiliate success

If you have decided to become an affiliate marketer, there are many things you can do to improve your chances for success. Keep in mind that with an affiliate program, thousands of other online marketers are vying for the exact same customers, using the exact same product. These tips will help you stand out from the crowd.

- Make sure you enter your affiliate business with a positive but realistic mindset. Do not believe you will become rich overnight—and in fact, if the program

description promises that you will, chances are it's a scam that you should steer clear of. Realize that your business will take time to develop, and be willing to put your best efforts into affiliate success.

- Use Google AdWords as a supplemental tool to market your affiliate programs. Set your keyword bids so that each click costs you less than the commission you earn. You will get a small side paycheck this way with little effort.
- Instead of using the pre-formatted ads, articles, and reviews provided by the affiliate programs, write your own and make them more compelling. This will not only increase your traffic, but it will also help you stand out from all the other affiliates using the same program and materials.
- Ensure that you choose affiliate programs that match your website's content and your newsletter, or can be connected to it in some firm way. Incongruous or irrelevant affiliate links on your website will diminish your reputation as well as the reputation of the merchant you are affiliated with.

You can choose one or more of these strategies to apply to your affiliate marketing business. Experiment with them, adjust your keywords, and try new strategies until you discover a combination that brings you a good, steady stream of income.



Innovative Marketing Strategies

Chapter 9 – Where the Money Comes In

When you sell products or services online, you need to have some way of collecting payment from your customers. There are many ways to accomplish this, but the main (and preferred) method for online money transactions is the ability to accept credit card payments.

There are two basic systems for accepting credit card payments online: merchant accounts and third-party credit card processors.



The smart Internet marketer is ready to take numbers—credit card numbers!

Merchant accounts

Setting up a merchant account gives you both the ability to accept credit cards online and the complete control over the process. Bear in mind that there are advantages and disadvantages to every payment method option. Merchant accounts often charge lower per-transaction fees and fewer associated account fees. However, there is usually an initial start-up fee, and you must be approved for a merchant account. If you have a poor credit rating, you may not be eligible for one.

If you decide to accept credit cards through a merchant account, you will need a shopping cart system and a secure server for your website. You may already have these things in place—but some merchant accounts are not compatible with certain shopping cart systems, and you may end up having to move to another web host.

Another advantage to merchant accounts is complete integration with your website. As previously mentioned, trust is an invaluable commodity in the e-commerce community. Some Internet buyers do not trust websites with payment services that lead off the business website, as many third-party processors do. Therefore, a merchant account lends professionalism to your business.

There are many merchant account services available, and each one offers different services, fees, and transaction percentage charges. Some merchant accounts will take only a percentage of each sale, while others charge a percentage plus a flat per-transaction fee. Most charge a monthly service fee, and some charge an initial "gateway" fee. Do your homework before signing up with a merchant account service.

Here are some of the features offered by various merchant account services:

- Ability to accept all major credit cards (Visa, Mastercard, Discover, and American Express)
- The ability to authorize, process, and manage credit card transactions from any computer connected to the Internet
- Virtual terminal services (some will provide you with the option to accept credit card payments over the phone)
- Extensive support
- Customizable shopping cart systems
- Shipping services
- E-check processing

For Internet marketing merchants accounts:

www.e-onlinedata.com/accuratemarketing

Third party processors

Just like with merchant accounts, there are benefits and drawbacks to using a third party credit card processor. A third party processor is a separate entity that will process credit cards for you, in exchange for a percentage fee. Most third party processors also charge a flat per-fee transaction (PayPal, for example, charges 30 cents plus a varying percentage).

The drawbacks to third party payment processors is that they are usually located on other websites that are obviously not yours, and the transaction fees are higher. The advantages are no monthly fees, no long-term contracts to sign, and no credit check required. Third party payment processors are also easier to set up than merchant accounts, and there are no signup fees involved.

Most Internet merchants, despite the drawbacks, choose to start out with a third-party payment processor. For those with high sales volumes and many monthly transactions, it is often beneficial to move to a merchant account service when the business grows.

Just as with merchant account services, the fees, policies and services provided by third party credit card processors vary from company to company. Look into each of them to find out what they will provide before you sign up with one.

Here are a few to get you started:

PayPal: www.paypal.com

iBill: www.ibill.com

ClickBank: www.clickbank.com

2Checkout (2CO): www.2checkout.com

If you are looking to compare rates and services from several different credit card processors, visit www.quotecatcher.com. There, you can enter your contact information and some basics about your business to received quotes by e-mail from providers interested in working with you.

Chapter 10 – Wrapping Up

You have probably heard the phrase "location, location, location" in reference to traditional businesses. When it comes to attracting traffic to a brick-and-mortar store, the only visibility outside of the advertisements you place comes from the physical location of the building in which your establishment is housed. For this reason, mall locations are at a premium, since the walk-by traffic alone can ensure plenty of business.

When it comes to online businesses, however, the mantra might be changed to "information, information, information." Information is the key to a successful Internet marketing business. Few people will arrive accidentally at your website, if anyone ever does. You must strive to draw traffic in through targeted marketing campaigns, and ensure that your website is solid enough to keep visitors there once they arrive, and buy something before they leave.

Furthermore, you must be diligent in your follow-up practices. Once you have gained a customer, you will want to ensure that you keep that customer for life. To do this, you must provide a great quality product or service at a great price, offer specials and bonuses, ensure your website is an interesting place to visit, and put forth your best customer service foot. Don't skimp on customer satisfaction, especially

when it comes to your online business. Handle complaints promptly and courteously, fill orders as soon as they come in, and strive to ensure that shopping at your online store is not just a purchase, but an experience.

This process is challenging, but rewarding if you keep at it. Gaining new customers is only part of the process; retaining them is the true name of the game. A satisfied customer will not only bring their business back to you again and again, they will also recommend your business to friends and family, giving you that all-important word of mouth.

So, what are you selling? Truthfully, as an Internet marketer you are not so much selling a product or service as you are selling your business as a whole. Your customers are going to be interested in the total package—great product, great information, and five-star treatment the whole time. If you don't present the best possible front, your customers will become your competition's customers.

Remember to let your interests and your passion guide your decisions on the products and services you plan to offer. Everyone possesses some personal knowledge or great story that others will be interested in. No matter what your circumstances, there is something you know or want to learn more about that will make a great Internet business. It's only a matter of finding that idea that sparks your passion, and

then turning it into something other people will pay money to possess.

Whether you manufacture handcrafted seashell sandals or write an e-book on how to survive the early years of parenthood in a one-bedroom trailer, you have something valuable to offer. Your enthusiasm and your belief in your product or service will speak for itself in your advertising materials, and you will earn the trust of the Internet community.

Find your niche, market to your niche, and make every advertising dollar (or cent) count, and you can succeed at Internet marketing.

Keep the following tips in mind as you venture forth into the cyber-frontier:

- **Content is king.** People who search for information online are looking for useful, valuable knowledge and insights. If you can provide them with real information they can use on your website, and continue to put up fresh content (giving them a reason to come back), you are that much closer to earning their trust, and therefore their business.
- **Strive for natural results.** Search engine optimization is one of the best methods of attracting targeted visitors to your website. If you put relevance over

gimmicks, your website will naturally make its way to the top search engine results. More people will find you, and they will be interested in your product or service before they arrive on your site.

- **Don't skimp on value.** Of course, the articles and information you provide on your website consists of content that people would have paid money for. That's the point—you are giving them something of value for nothing. If you prove yourself to be an honest, reliable, and trustworthy business person, your visitors will have no qualms in handing over their credit card numbers in exchange for your products or services.
- **Convert visitors to buyers.** Make sure your website is set up to keep visitors there once they arrive. Hone your web copy in a direction that encourages a purchase. Include a signup box for your newsletter or opt-in list and a "buy now" link on every page of your website. Keep your pages clean and your navigation clear. Make it easy for customers to click their way through to the end of a purchase!

Keep in mind Maslow's *Hierarchy*, and remember that every customer you deal with on the Internet is a real, live person with feelings—even though you can't see them. Treating customers as though they are simply credit or debit cards with minds of their own is a poor way to encourage business. Appeal to your customers' needs, wants, and desires; and go

that extra mile to provide honesty and excellent customer service along with your fantastic product.

Finally, follow up with your customers because you truly want them to be satisfied, not just because you want their repeat business. Of course you want them to buy again; and customers understand that. However, they will also be able to tell if you really care about their business and want to make sure your product or service made them happy.

Internet marketing IS for you. Whether you plan to start and continue a business completely online, or you simply want another marketing venue for your traditional brick-and-mortar business, you can take advantage of the millions of possibilities online today and start gaining more profits, more exposure, and the lifestyle you want.

Happy selling!

P.S. Don't forget to check out the bonus information in the next chapter!



**Reach customers the world over with your Internet marketing
business**

Chapter 11 – Bonus Information

In case you are not yet convinced:

10 good reasons to set up a business website today

1. You can provide 24/7 customer support (without working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, yourself) along with information about your business, directions to your establishment, store hours, job openings, additional contact methods, and a database of your products or services.
2. You can easily announce new products or services to your customers and post press releases that the local media will be able to view.
3. You will create new relationships with potential customers that may otherwise have never heard of your business.
4. Your customers will fill out the paperwork you used to do yourself, such as order placements and shipping forms.
5. You can sell your products across the country (or around the world) instead of just in your local area.

6. You can perform market demographics research by asking your visitors to register, sign a guest book, or fill out a survey.
7. You will save money on things such as phone calls, postage, and printing costs (no paper receipts or invoices to generate!).
8. You can reach new markets and niches without having to travel extensively—everything you need to find your target market is already on the Internet.
9. You will be able to build brand awareness and create a new demand for your products or services.
10. You can partner with other online businesses and create new, beneficial alliances with companies that offer complementary products or services.

Internet marketing acronyms and abbreviations

New to the online world? Here are a few commonly used abbreviations you should know about:

AOL: America Online

ASP: Application service provider

AV: AltaVista (search engine)

B2B: Business to business

B2C: Business to consumer

BBB: Better Business Bureau

CPA: Cost per action

CPC: Cost per click

CPS: Cost per sale

CTR: Click-through rate

DH: Direct hit

FFA: Free-for-all link list

HB: HotBot

HTTP: Hyper text transfer protocol

IM: Instant messaging

INK: Inktomi (search engine)

ISP: Internet service provider

LS: LookSmart (search engine)

MSN: Microsoft network (search engine/network)

NL: Northern Light

NSI: Network Solutions

PFI: Pay for inclusion

PFP: Pay for performance

PPC: Pay per click

PPL: Pay per lead

PPS: Pay per sale

ROI: Return on investment

RON: Run of network

ROS: Run of site

SEO: Search engine optimization

SEP: Search engine positioning

URL: Uniform resource locator

UV: Unique visitor

WWW: World wide web

Y!: Yahoo (search engine/network)

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Internet marketing resources

Private Label Resell Rights Products you can resell as your own <http://www.sourcecodegoldmine.com> & www.PLRights.com

"How to write and publish your own OUTRAGEOUSLY Profitable eBook in as little as 7 days - even if you can't write, can't type and failed high school English class!" Go to <http://www.jeremyburns.com/a/7dayebook> to get started

Authorize / e-OnlineData –

www.e-onlinedata.com/accuratemarketing

This is our 1st choice recommendation for merchant accounts, this is a very easy place to get approved and in the many systems we have tested are the easiest to work with! **Super Low Rates!!**

1ShoppingCart.com – <http://www.webmarketingmagic.com>:

Instant merchant accounts and real-time payment gateway services. This is a private label of the 1sc system and provides great service!

Now that you are on your way to becoming a Mentor Marketing Expert, don't stop there! The next step is the Holy Grail of Internet Marketing How To Guides... Read on for details!

"Learn how to make a life-changing income of \$100,000 to \$250,000 with your Internet business... even if you're a computer dummy!"

Review: "The Insider Secrets to Marketing Your Business on the Internet" by Corey Rudl

I've just finished reading the brand-new version of Corey Rudl's top-selling Internet marketing system, "*The Insider Secrets To Marketing Your Business On The Internet*," and frankly, I'm overwhelmed by the huge amount of critical wealth-building information he's managed to pack into these **two hefty binders and 3 CDs!**

But I guess I shouldn't be surprised; after all, when the box containing these materials showed up at my door, it weighed in at **over 10 pounds!**

That's 10 pounds of the most comprehensive **marketing strategies, test results, case studies, tools, and ideas** for generating a life-changing income online (from \$1,000s to over \$1 million) you're ever likely to read!

I'm talking about information like...

- Step-by-step advice for starting your own Internet business **in as little as 48 hours!**

Innovative Marketing Strategies

- How to build a top-selling web site... for less than \$100!
- Where to find hot products to sell (in 20 minutes or LESS)!
- 100s of FREE and cheap online tools, resources, and software
- How to get 1,000s of qualified NEW visitors to your web site... for FREE!
- How to **get #1 rankings in the search engines** and get tons of FREE traffic from the "Big Guys" like Google!
- Secrets to writing sales copy that can **increase sales by up to 400% (or MORE)!** And much more!

If you're unsure who Corey is, you should know that he's been a recognized expert in online marketing for a decade now. Not only has he generated **\$40,000,000 in online sales**, his sites also attract **450,000 visitor a week!**

What's *really* great about Corey is that he can show ANYONE how to have a **wildly profitable Internet business** (that takes just a few hours each day to run)...

... even if you're an absolute computer dummy!

And if you already have an Internet business, he can help YOU, too. The advanced sections of his system show you how you can **increase your sales by 400%... 700%... even as much as 1,000%!**

Innovative Marketing Strategies



I give Corey's system the highest rating possible! Its 1,300+ pages of step-by-step lessons contain the exact SAME tested and proven fast-growth strategies he has personally used to generate over \$40 million in online sales -- *starting on a shoestring budget!*

And it's the SAME SYSTEM that literally **1,000s of his students have used** to drive "truckloads" of cash out of the Internet.

I strongly urge you to check out Corey's wealth-building system as soon as possible! Go to www.JeremyBurns.com/a/tips for a FREE preview.



Free Bonus

Private Label Rights Tips -
PLR Rights Marketing Tutorial
Package Value \$97.00

Private Label Right's products are hot right now! There is a killing to be made from these ready made turn-key products if you know the insider secrets to making them work. I have worked out a special deal with Jeremy Burns where you can grab a

Jeremy Burns where you can grab a copy of PLR Tips with your purchase of this package as my gift to you!
PLRTips.com

Resources

www.magnet4web.com - Free videos and information on online marketing techniques

<http://www.internetbasedmoms.com/> - Information and job opportunities for work-at-home moms (and dads!)

www.inyourpjs.com - Ideas, resources, information, and articles about working from home.

www.learnthenet.com - Website that helps you "figure out" the Internet

www.clickz.com - Solutions for Internet marketers

www.shop.org - Association for online retailers

www.weblinx.biz - A search engine optimization company

www.clickhere.org - The Internet Marketing Association

www.emarketer.com - Market research and analysis

www.searchenginewatch.com - Information on search engine marketing

www.marketingsherpa.com - Practical marketing knowledge and case studies

<http://www.web-source.net/3steps.htm> - Series of articles on Internet marketing

www.lessworkmoremoney.com - The Ultimate Emarketing and Dropshippers Guide