



# **ONLINE BUSINESS PROMOTION**

## **ECommerce:**

### **START TO FINISH**

**WEB DEVELOPMENT, SEO, TRAFFIC & CONVERSION**

**Liv Montgomery**  
**The eCommerce Gal**  
[www.eCommerceGal.com](http://www.eCommerceGal.com)

## **Terms and Conditions**

The information contained in this guide is for information purposes only, and may not apply to your situation. The author, publisher, distributor and provider provide no warranty about the content or accuracy of content enclosed. Information enclosed is subjective. Keep this in mind when reviewing this guide.

Neither the Publisher nor Author shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages resulting from use of this guide. All links are for information purposes only and are not warranted for content, accuracy or any other implied or explicit purpose.

© 2010 Liv Montgomery

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Website Development Tools - Building the Perfect Online Money Machine .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Things You Really Should Know About SEO .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Web Traffic Made Easy .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Online Conversion - Turning Website Visitors Into Loyal Customers .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>49</b>

## **Website Development Tools - Building the Perfect Online Money Machine**

There are plenty of reasons to start an online business. You may want to join the ranks of successful eCommerce entrepreneurs because you want to escape a grueling rush hour and the toil or even the mind games of the workaday world. Maybe you're drawn to the idea of creating an online business because of the promise of prosperity and the low start up costs. Maybe you're forward thinking, and you recognize the trend toward interconnected worldwide business. Perhaps you already have a brick and mortar business, and you want to fulfill your customers' expectations by providing information, products and services online.

What was appealing about the Internet lifestyle in the beginning has been transformed as the concept of online business ownership has become more popular, or even mainstream. Once the image of the online marketer was associated the techno geek, typically a young pasty-faced guy who stayed up all night writing code, putting out flames on forums, or giggling maniacally into his webcam like a modern day mad scientist. Not pretty.

While this notion that you had to be a techno geek to build a website wasn't far off the mark some 10 or 12 years ago, these days the picture of the online marketer is a little closer to the everyday world of mom and pop shops, stay-at-home moms, retirees looking to boost their pension checks, or high school kids who'd rather make their spending money online than delivering pizza.

All of these are compelling reasons to hang up your virtual shingle in the digital realm. But I've got to tell you, while they're the result of intelligent self-interest, in and of themselves, they mean very little to Google and the major search engines. The reality is that while your own reasons for creating a website are valuable inasmuch as they'll keep you going when the going gets tough, the world online is truly the great equalizer.

### **Why Be In Business?**

The biggest reason to be in business is to bring value to the marketplace. You can only do this by being of service to the people you would like to call your customers. If you provide enough value, you can set yourself free financially. It's very democratic. The power in having a website is that if you keep the focus on the parameters that count, you have a 100% equal opportunity to achieve online business success. The key factor that counts online is whether or not you're providing enough value to your prospects and customers. Your website is like the setting for the jewel that is your core offering.

Whether you intend to focus your promotional efforts on email marketing, directory submission, social networking or article marketing, every one of these methods is, in some way, subject to the rules of online engagement - chiefly, where your site comes up on the Search Engine Results Page. You can only achieve

top ranking by offering value in an intelligent, relevant way. You can only achieve long term success by serving others. eCommerce can be a very humbling endeavor, and you must keep the spirit of service alive in your business at every moment. Provide useful, relevant content on an optimized page; Offer products that solve problems; and develop lasting connections with people; and you'll find success in eCommerce.

Having a website means you have a unique opportunity to make an income online that, once set up and properly promoted, requires very little maintenance. An eCommerce site that is virtually hands free is often referred to as a money machine. This kind of solution is one that a lot of online marketers dream about, and it's often the reason they become involved in eCommerce in the first place.

But all too often, the stumbling blocks along the way can lead to a whole lot of discouragement, or even abandonment of their online real estate. The learning curve to create a quality website can be pretty steep, and shortcuts in technology get pricey in a hurry if you're not careful. Well, it doesn't have to be that way.

Gone are the days when developing a website involved coding HTML by hand. You don't need a degree in computer science or graphic design to use the latest web development tools. In fact, the tools that are available today level the playing field. There are plenty of solutions for creating a website that looks good, is easy for your visitors to use, and is optimized for traffic. These days, websites have become a necessity for almost everyone. Companies, organizations, individuals, even very young folks have created websites that fill a need online. Whether your motive is profit or entertainment, in the next half hour you'll find some great insider tips for building that perfect online money machine.

In this chapter we'll be taking a look at steps to Creating an Online Business. We'll take a comprehensive look at the parts of the eCommerce marketing machine that work together most effectively. You may be tempted to use others, and it's a good idea to stay informed about new methods and trends. But be careful not to scrap your initial marketing strategy. Give it a chance to work. Stay focused on your goals, and make refinements to your existing plan. In most cases, small changes can mean big results. Whether you already have an established professional service or storefront, you're looking to make a little extra money with an online business, or you'd like to set yourself free financially, the steps to building an eCommerce business are the same. Let's take a look at them now.

### **Preparing For Online Business Success**

Before we dive into the technology and talk about creating a website, you'll need to consider the factors involved in any successful online venture - things like market research, the cost of design, development and maintenance. You'll also want to consider your technology's ease of use for your customer, which web host to use and logistical issues. These factors will either bore you to tears or thrill you to the marrow. The fact is,

this is the foundation of your business and it will dictate your technology needs when you build your website. Get these things right, and the rest will flow almost of its own accord. The beauty of eCommerce is that all of these factors can be addressed for minimal cost, and in most cases, there's a perfectly viable free solution. You simply don't have to spend a bundle to get started online.

Now, your first step is to do a little market analysis and determine whether or not there's a demand for your idea. Choose a niche and specialize in it. If you're stuck for ideas, pick up a few magazines and thumb through them. Take a good look at what's featured on the cover, in the table of contents, and especially the ads in the back of the magazine. This gives you a good indication of what people are interested in and what they're buying. Also check Dummies.com. If there's a Dummies book on the topic, you can bet there's a market for it.

Take a look at what's trending now on Yahoo, MSN, Google, Amazon and eBay. Each of these sites tells you right up front what's popular now. Pick a niche that will be relevant a few years from now as well, something evergreen like pets, relationships, health or finance.

Once you've chosen your niche, create a written business summary, including your overall business goals, how you expect to achieve them and the timeline for reaching those goals. Don't trust your brain to carry this stuff around for you. Take the time to put your plan in writing. You'd be amazed by how many savvy business people don't do this. Once you've gotten where you want to go, what's your exit strategy? It pays to think this through before you ever get started. By the way, there are website valuation tools available online, such as Cubestat.com. Make use of these free tools periodically to keep current with your site's estimated market value.

Next, you're ready to choose or create a product and identify your main source of revenue. You'll definitely want to create your own product, and join a few affiliate programs as well. The most solid affiliate programs include ClickBank, Commission Junction, PayDotCom, TradeDoubler and LinkShare. Also, both Amazon and eBay have their own affiliate programs. This will be more than enough to keep you busy.

Once you've got your niche and a few products to sell, now you're ready to find a good name. Choose one that's easy to remember and spell. But don't just shoot from the hip on this. Do your keyword research, and find high search/low competition keywords. Use them in your domain name, title tags, headlines and content on your website, blog and lenses. Using the Google Wonder Wheel, find related terms and use these as the categories on your site or blog.

After you've determined your market, decided on your business model, and come up with the right domain name, your next consideration is hosting. Get secure, reliable hosting. Cost is not the only factor here, and neither is stability - although both of these are crucial to your business. Do a little research before you commit to a web host, because once you're in, you're not likely to want to move several dozen - let alone several hundred pages of your established websites... like I just did. Actually, it was more like several thousand. But I digress.

You're looking for reliability here - it's your top priority in choosing a host. You want a web host with 99% uptime, and you want a hosting company that's going to be around for awhile - especially if you're paying them annually. Take a look at the technology that the host offers. If you're developing with PHP scripting, you'll want to have a Unix or Linux hosting account. If you use ASP, then a Windows account is in order. Certain technologies are not cross-compatible.

The best hosting offers technical support 24/7, accommodates multiple technology platforms, and offers tiered hosting plans that won't break your business bank. If you're looking for hosting recommendations, check the list on my website at [eCommerceGal.com/web\\_hosting](http://eCommerceGal.com/web_hosting).

There are companies that offer a user friendly development tool, training, tech support and site hosting bundled together for what is usually a stiff monthly payment. What they're promoting is a spoon fed approach, often aimed at time-starved small business owners. Some of these packages cost hundreds of dollars a month. While this all-in-one package may look good in the box, it gets ugly in a hurry. Those monthly fees add up quickly, and the value delivered by these proprietary solutions is questionable. The biggest problem factors in when you try to migrate your website to another venue or web host. Their proprietary technology is often limited, and you will outgrow it in a hurry. But it just doesn't transfer to the real world. Making the right choice at the outset will save you a whole lot of grief in the long run.

Whether you're using one of these one-size-fits-all solutions or you decide to go with a simple WordPress installation and a free theme, you're going to encounter the same learning curve or outsourcing fees. You might as well choose the option that empowers you. Your web host will provide just about all the tech support you need. Keep it simple and affordable, and your odds of success go up exponentially.

Next, you may be wondering if retaining a professional consultant for web development is a good idea. It depends on what you want your site to do. It's not uncommon for consultants to charge more than the down payment on a house for custom turnkey technology, yet not even provide training or personnel to implement it. That's extra. All they're delivering is the site structure - just the bones - and a few training videos. I know some of these guys, and they're very sophisticated, personable, experienced. It's easy to get wowed by their bells and whistles and their resumes. But that doesn't mean their services offer any more value than you

could get from a good content management system like Joomla and a handful of quality graphics. In the world of ecommerce, time to market is crucial. You want to keep your business fast and light.

We'll go into the technology specifics in just a moment. The philosophy you want to develop is that as an online business owner, you're the one with the vision, and you decide how your business will be conducted. Any technical help you hire should serve your business in a supporting role. At no time should your developers dictate the terms of your business to you. If you ask for a button, a link, an opt-in form or a widget, your developer should deliver it to you. If you're going to be an online business owner, take the time to understand just a few basics of the technology you're using. Here's a case where knowledge truly is power.

Hiring technical help typically makes sense for specialized jobs on a limited engagement. When it comes to more complex coding, hiring help really is the best way to go if you're not technically savvy. Research the technology you want to use, then hire a techie to implement it. Use an online escrow service to handle the payment - that way you're happy with the work, and payment is assured to your contractor. There's no haggling over the details. You can find good help through Craigs List, and in a lot of cases, that means you can hire off-shore talent for routine coding jobs. However, at all times you need to retain the keys to your website, and the focus must remain on providing service to your customers - not funding your consultant's wine collection. You know what I'm talking about.

### **Selecting and Using Your Web Technology**

Creating a website is not that big a deal if we compare it to what you need to learn for other technical skills. Most people tend to give up and pack their bags as soon as they hear the words "programming" and "technical". They think it's too much of a hassle to actually learn a new "language". Let's put it this way: you program the heck out of your ATM machine every time you punch in your PIN number and pull out a handful of twenties. If you can handle that, setting up your WordPress blog will give you no trouble.

You may be wondering whether you should use open source software, and why. That's a great question. Let's start by defining what we mean. Open Source is a set of principles and practices for writing software, the most important of which is that the source code is openly available. That means the software has been developed and improved by the user community, and you have the freedom to use it. It also means you can obtain it with zero cost.

The free software movement was launched back in 1983. In 1998, the name was changed to open source software or OSS. There is such a wealth of open source technology available for all kinds of sites, whatever you want to do online. This is a great place to start, and you can hire a contractor to install it for you if it's

over your head. Popular OSS programs run the gamut from simple blogging platforms to enterprise-level applications. The open source technology that's available is really powerful, and it includes simple HTML web templates, blogging, eCommerce, auction sites, your own online directory, your proprietary search engine, or even your own forum or social network. I've used and installed most of these types of technology for my own sites as well as for my customers. If you can follow a recipe, you can install your own forum.

The benefits of using open source software go beyond the implementation and the low cost. In most cases, OSS applications offer efficiency, reliability and the option to customize. There's also a large community of support for these programs, and usually you'll find the answers to your questions almost immediately through a web search or a dedicated forum for your chosen technology. Also the tech support department of your web host can usually point you in the right direction if you have any trouble finding your answers independently.

Let's take a look at some of the different technology types that are available to you for developing and maintaining your own web presence.

### **Selecting & Installing Your Shopping Cart**

When talking about eCommerce, the first thing we want to do is address the question of check-out. You need an application that will work with your website to allow your customers to choose and order products from you. Open source shopping carts are widely available, and they include OSCommerce, ZenCart, OpenCart, XCart, and CSCart. Each of these applications has its own fan base and forums to support them. I personally use OpenCart for my store. You can see what this looks like at [Store.eCommerceGal.com](http://Store.eCommerceGal.com). Go ahead and browse through, take it for a test drive. I promise you won't pay for anything you don't buy.

Now, with eCommerce shopping carts, you'll still need to provide a safe place for your money to land. That is, you'll need some kind of merchant account to go along with your shopping cart. Unless you're in love with idea of investing in a monthly plan, using a service like PayPal should do the trick and serve your needs just fine at the beginning.

Some common digital cash payment processing methods include PayPal, CheckFree, FireballCart.com, Authorize.net, BidPay, BillPoint and WorldPay. Here's something I'll bet you didn't know. e-Gold.com allows for payment in gold, silver, platinum or palladium using an account-based system. Ah, but no diamonds - a girl's best friend.

Since there is not an actual store for people to walk into, the set up of your site will determine if they stay long enough to make a purchase or if they will go to another website. With so much competition in the e-commerce world, the consumer has the upper hand.

Your website should be appealing, but not overwhelming. The layout should make the website easy to navigate. Convincing your prospects to purchase from you can be a hard job. No matter how good you are at convincing them, they won't buy if they find the process cumbersome.

The checkout process needs to be very simple. Customers don't want to have to click many places to make a purchase. Make sure the eCommerce checkout process goes smoothly for your customer.

## **Building Your Website With HTML**

One of the simplest ways to build a website and maintain total flexibility with the development is to download a free website template that corresponds to your site's needs, and then edit the template with a WYSIWYG editor. The editor I use is called KompoZer. There are only a couple of things you need to understand in order to get started.

First of all, when you're developing an HTML website, you typically have three types of files. There's your standard HTML page, which is saved with the .HTML extension. Then you have your graphics, and these are commonly kept together in a folder called Images. Your web page will refer to them every time your page is loaded, so you place them onto your page, don't move them around or change the names. Just leave them where they are. Finally, you have something called a style sheet that tells the HTML page what it should look like. If you want to get fancy, you can make changes to your style sheet directly. But it's better to just make those changes using KompoZer.

You can get started with this type of web development right now. Do a web search on the term "free website templates." Pick a site, and download a few of your favorite templates. Don't go crazy - keep it simple to start out. Next, you'll want to download KompoZer. KompoZer is available for free at [Kompozer.net](http://Kompozer.net).

Once you have your files, you'll want to unzip them and install your KompoZer software. Launch the program, then open the index file of the template you just downloaded. Now you're ready to roll up your sleeves and get to work.

Building web pages can be fun, even exciting. You can add or change graphics, write new content and create links to other pages on your site. When you're satisfied with the look and feel, save the page once to keep your changes. Then save it again, but this time rename your file according to the links created.

Whatever type of site you're developing, you'll want to be sure to include an About page, Terms and Privacy Policy. After that, you can go crazy with content. Ideally, each page should have 350 to 700 words. When you're ready to launch, all of your files will need to be uploaded to your web hosting account in the same file structure that you used to build your site. If you have questions about any of this, there's all kinds of help available online, through your web host's tech support, and on my website at eCommerceGal.com. Knowing these fundamentals will help you as you build and maintain other types of websites.

## **Building Your Website With WordPress**

The next type of open source technology we want to look at is the WordPress platform. WordPress began life as a blogging platform. However, it's so powerful that it quickly became a hit as a website development tool. What's the difference? Well, for one thing, blogging has a certain look and feel. It's part of Web 2.0 or interactive content management systems. A blog typically includes information such as an article's date, time, author and comments - things not typically found on a website. There are loads of features on WordPress that make it completely customizable. Plus it's just fun to work with.

While it's possible to create a blog that's hosted by WordPress, I do not recommend it for your business. WordPress places restrictions on what you can publish, and they will shut you down if you don't comply, no matter how nice or well meaning you are. This is just not good for business. You want native hosting, and it's easy enough to do. This means you want to install WordPress on your own hosting account and have your own URL pointing to your WordPress site.

To use the WordPress platform for your site, you'll need to buy your own domain name and point it to the WordPress installation on your hosting account. There are a couple of ways to go about this, depending on your web host and whether or not they offer a tool called C|Panel.

If this option is available to you, it's literally takes a matter of a few clicks to install WordPress. Click on the WordPress icon, choose a location and name for your site along with a user name and password, and hit the Go button. You're done. The next thing you want to do is, using your web browser, navigate to your new site. Place your cursor in the address bar after your domain name, and type "/wp-admin", then hit the return button. You should see your WordPress admin panel. Enter the user name and password that you chose during set up. If you goofed and didn't pick one, check your email - WordPress sent this information to you. Log into your account, and start posting.

You should know these three things about using WordPress. First, you have a couple of different parts to your site. You have posts, which stack one on top of the other as you add fresh content. You also have

static pages, such as your About page. These are pages that will always be there. If you have a topic that you want people to refer to again and again, creating a static page about it is the way to go.

The second thing you need to know is that you have the option to change the functionality of your WordPress site through something called plug-ins. These are little bits of code that allow you to do everything from block spam - always a popular option in my book - to automatically posting content from article directories.

The third thing you need to know about using WordPress is that your theme is completely customizable. You can change the look and feel of your site with the click of a button. There are literally thousands of themes available for free that you can install and enjoy immediately by navigating to the Appearance section of your WordPress site. Follow the onscreen instructions. Now, if you don't find what you're looking for in terms of WordPress themes through their directory, go to my website at [eCommerceGal.com/WordPress](http://eCommerceGal.com/WordPress) and you'll find a number of custom themes designed especially for small business. This will be more than enough to keep you busy.

### **Developing Your Website with Content Management Systems**

The next stop on our Open Source Software tour is the Content Management System. Basically, this is a sophisticated idea that allows for the simplest possible means of managing information. It's a way for non-technical people to manage large amounts of data. Joomla is great example of an open source content management system. Using Joomla, you can create an online directory for your local community and use it to sell advertising for area vendors. And that's only one example.

One thing that you should be aware of is that, like WordPress, downloading and installing Joomla is completely free. A number of web hosts make this option available at the click of a button. Other content management systems include Drupal, PHPNuke, Mambo and TYPO3. These all provide power and flexibility for managing your content.

There are dozens, even hundreds of open source applications for creating social network sites. In fact, we're seeing a trend on the Internet that gravitates away from the uber networks like Facebook and toward the more intimate neighborhoods. This creates an opportunity for you as an online marketer to provide a place for your niche market to go and hang out. Available tools include Spree, iSocial, Mahara, Yogurt, the People Aggregator, GetBoo, and a whole host of other funny names.

Rounding out our open source tour are discussion forums, like other open source software, an Internet search will not only reveal a wide array of choices, but also a huge number of lists of choices. The forum

software that I like is called Snitz Forum. It's quick and easy and easy to install, and it really is a great feeling to provide a place for people to connect.

There are several other types of content management features you can add to your site - too many to list here by name. You can offer your visitors a classified advertising feature, a photo gallery, a user-managed knowledge base or a wiki. The list goes on and on, and it's limited only by your imagination. In fact, if you were to build a quality website using each one of the systems that we've covered here, you'd probably be busy for the next year. Of course, you can always outsource, but even then, you'll want to stay focused on one or two sites at a time. Get those plates spinning before moving on to the next one.

### **Test and Track, Rinse and Repeat**

Now that you have installed some great technology to build your site, you're ready to tackle some of the more subtle aspects of web development. Make sure that your site loads fast if you do not want to lose visitors. Most internet users will leave a website if it doesn't load completely within 10 seconds.

Test each link on your site before it goes online. Test and track your results, and use your web statistics to develop your market strategy. Web design is a very important part of operating your online business. There are tons of ways to put your message across. Some of them are more effective than others. Try using different types of content, different headlines and images. See what people are responding to, what they're ignoring and what they're asking for. Customer feedback is powerful. Your object is to feed the starving crowd and keep them coming back for more.

Are you an entrepreneur wanting to escape a grueling rush hour or the mind games of the workaday world? Maybe you're a young guy who stays up all night writing code, putting out flames on forums, and giggling maniacally into your webcam like a modern day mad scientist. Or it could be that your own self-perception is a little closer to the everyday world. You could be the owner of a mom and pop shop, a stay-at-home mom, a retiree looking to boost your pension check, or maybe you're a high school kid who'd rather make money online than deliver pizza. No matter who you are, you now have some great tools to get yourself started and hang up your virtual shingle in the digital realm. Using the tools and techniques in this program, combined with that dream you carry around in your pocket, you can bring value to the marketplace and enjoy real online business success.

## **Things You Really Should Know About SEO**

Search... Engine... Optimization. Wow, big words. That sounds kind of important, doesn't it? I mean, you hear this term bandied about a lot, but not everybody's clear on what it means. So, what is it?

If you do a search on Google for the definition of search engine optimization, you get a lot of different results. Basically it means making sure your site is optimized to appear in the top results of a search engine results page. The best result you can hope for is getting ranked number one on Google for your chosen keyword. Although that's a terrific goal and it can bring you loads of traffic, Google is only one traffic source. There are tons of others. The factors that go into making your site visible on the Internet change over the course of time in terms of their priority, but ultimately it's all about providing value to people through your web presence and letting the public know about it. The object of search engine optimization or SEO is to get traffic - tons of traffic - and to do so without paying for it.

### **A Little Background on SEO**

In the beginning of the Current Technological Era - back in the early '90s - search engine marketing didn't exist. There were a handful of forums and newsgroups online, a few email clients, and that was about it. There weren't even any graphics on the Internet, let alone ads or search engines. The Internet was used to exchange information only, and its users mainly wore pocket protectors. (Don't ask me how I know this.)

As the Internet evolved, marketers saw the value of reaching their target audience through information and advertising online. Websites became ad-heavy, and it was really tough to wade through the garbage to get to the goods. Search engines became a necessity, yet they themselves became players in the game of commerce on the Internet - or, eCommerce. Yet as site visitors became ad blind and the digital culture shifted once again, the search engines responded accordingly and rewarded webmasters who provided sites rich in content and low on hype.

This paradigm was dominant until a few years ago. Then the search engines shifted their main criteria to the number of inbound links from authority sites - that is, the top sites on the Internet. Today, with the advent of social networking and social media, the focus of what pleases the search engines has shifted once more. Now the Internet is best described as one global popularity contest. The business owner or entrepreneur who gets it right is rewarded with hoards of site visitors referred for free from the top 3 search engines.

## **Busting the SEO Myths**

Search engine optimization or SEO means a lot of things to a lot different people, and there are plenty of misconceptions about it. People think that it's expensive, that it takes specialized knowledge, that it's time consuming, that it's a pain to implement, or even that it doesn't work. (Perish the thought!) Each one of these arguments can be supported with real world examples and plenty of unpleasant stories to bolster the opinion.

A friend mine, an independent financial advisor, recently told me that he'd given up on SEO - he said it just flat doesn't work. Now, I've known this guy for years, and I didn't want to get into a disagreement with him. I can also understand why he would feel so discouraged on this topic. There's a whole lot of false or misleading information surrounding search engine optimization and search engine marketing.

But year after year, the fact remains that everyday people are using SEO and SEM to make a significant income without breaking a sweat. In most cases they've done this without a sizeable investment in their business. It's really pretty simple, and it does work. Set up your web site with a clear single focus. Make it relevant for your readers and update it often. Then create as many links as you can from the best-performing sites on the Internet. In time - and not much time, at that - your efforts will be rewarded with traffic gold.

A lot of factors are important when optimizing your web presence, including your site's content and structure of the copy, its freshness, the number and type of inbound links from other sites, and the activity surrounding your content - such as comments and traffic from social networks. We'll go deeper into each these topics, along with a practical plan for using search engine optimization as the foundation of your web business. With a little care and some consistent action, you'll be getting all the traffic you can handle through natural search.

## **Search Engine Marketing vs. Search Engine Optimization**

Let's take a look at what we mean when we talk about search engine optimization and search engine marketing. What's the difference? SEO and SEM are cousins - not twins - but the average business owner frequently confuses the two. SEO is performed on the content of your website. SEM is performed through promotional measures off-site, such as when you create external links to your site through social bookmarking, blogs, lenses, forums and social media. It also includes forms of advertising such as pay-per-click.

Neither SEO nor SEM requires a degree in rocket science. They take some understanding of the search engines' ranking tactics as well as the overriding philosophy that the search engines use to rank any given site. Like SEM, SEO's objective is to increase your site's rank in the search engine results pages so you can get gobs of free traffic.

SEO and SEM need to work in tandem to assure that your website gets the attention of the people who are looking for it so they can benefit from what you're offering. That's how you get paid. If you bring value to the marketplace and you promote it in terms that people actually use to look for what you're offering, you stand a very good chance of getting found and making a living.

### **Good Guys Wear White**

This is a good time to point out that you want to steer clear of any unethical or black hat tactics to boost your website. They can really backfire on you. Besides, it's just not cricket. If you hire a consultant to help you with SEO or SEM services, any honest marketer will clue you in on what they're doing to boost your business online. Be aware that no one can guarantee you a Number One rank on Google - not even Google can do that. First of all, if you follow the steps outlined in this chapter, you should be able to achieve good results on your own. If you hire someone to use the latest tricks and shortcuts, you may actually see some good results in the near term. But what happens when the search engines catch onto the trick?

They change their algorithm and stop that trick from working. They may even penalize your website for using it. Meanwhile you're out of pocket to the SEO consultant who used the black-hat trick, and your site may even get de-indexed by Google. You can't put a price tag on your reputation or your ability to conduct business online. Just play it straight.

Keyword stuffing and link farms are great examples of common tactics that were once used to boost search engine ranking and later backfired on the people who used them. Maintain your focus on providing value, and your exposure will take care of itself.

### **The Ultimate Search Engine Marketing Plan**

With that said, here's an outline of how to build a site that ranks well with the top search engines. Following is my summary of what I call the ultimate search engine marketing plan. SEM really boils down to only 3 things: Research, Development and Promotion. Some web gurus are charging thousands of dollars for this information, and their plans are so thick with fatty padding that it takes more than a month just to wade through their content. Their plans also can take up to a year to implement. I'm not promoting anything like that. What I promote as much as possible is fast, light and free.

This plan isn't limited to a strictly digital business. It's for the brick and mortar world too. With these tips you can start fortifying your independent business and online presence, with the object of getting your website to come up on Page 1 or 2 in the Google search results. You can offer digital downloads, affiliate products, drop shipped items, or an array of services. These methods are techniques I have used to get multiple websites ranked No. 1 on Google.

What I'm laying out here gives you the map and the compass you need to succeed online. The research should only take you a few hours, and that's if you drag your feet like I do. I'm curious and easily entertained, so I tend to get sidetracked with the story that the statistics tell. The development should only take you a few weeks of part time effort. The promotion is ongoing, but also very part time. If done correctly, it will likely land you on Google Page One for your carefully selected keywords. I'm not making any guarantees; I am giving you a star to guide by. Put this plan to work, and you're bound to love the results!

*Step 1* involves the market research. You need to identify your market and your keywords before you build a website. If you've already got a site, don't skip this important step. This is the foundation of your business, and there's no room for assumptions. The odds are high that you didn't take this step in the beginning, so do it now. What seems like a great idea to you may actually have no real value in the marketplace - and vice versa. I run up against this all the time, and instead of getting frustrated, I'm actually relieved when I find out that a concept has no market. Why is that? Because when I find out, it's in the planning stage - not after I've invested time, effort and resources in developing a site that nobody wants. You simply must understand your marketplace before you launch a business around your darling concept. This is the best time to display a dash of humility - before anybody else knows about your latest brilliant project. If you want natural traffic, you've got to find out where it is.

The first thing to do is log onto the Internet. Using the categories in Amazon.com's Books section, locate a niche market that you're passionate about. Amazon is one company with deep pockets, and they've invested heavily in their market research. Every section in their online bookstore is another market, and every sub-section is another niche. As an entrepreneur, you can leverage the work they've already done to identify profitable niche markets.

When you're doing your keyword research, look for terms that indicate your visitor is ready to buy. The more specific, the better. Look for terms that include the words *buy*, *purchase*, *solution*, and *download*. Steer clear from the word *free* as much as possible. People who are looking for free items generally aren't in the mood to part with their hard earned cash, and they will be harder to convert into paying customers.

Look to solve problems for people who have an urgent need. A dad with a 6-month-old baby will pay a healthy sum for a book that guarantees he'll be able to sleep through the night. There's great dignity in earning a living by helping people who really need it. Also satisfying people's needs is much easier than satisfying their wants.

Your next task is to use the Google Adwords keyword tool at [Adwords.Google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal](https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal). Locate a handful of keywords within your niche that have a high search volume. Start with about 20 or 30. Check the number of results for these keywords using the Google search engine. Enter your keyword term into the search bar using quotation marks so you get an exact match. This important, and it will have an impact on the choices you make, so don't skip the quote marks.

You want to find keywords that have what I call a high "Blue Ocean Index". Haven't heard of that term? That's because I made it up. Now, you can get this rating by dividing the number of searches by the number of results. Using a spreadsheet program like Microsoft Excel makes this really easy to do. You want to format your result as a percentage. Look for keywords that have a Blue Ocean Index of 30% or more; 100% is great, and more than that is stellar. If you pay attention and you're a little creative, you can find terms with a Blue Ocean Index of several thousand percent. But be careful - with terms like this, your time to market is crucial. It probably won't be long before others discover your blue ocean, so act fast and keep your cards close to your chest. Not long ago I discovered a term with a blue ocean index of 27,000%. Less than 2 months later, the market saturated and the opportunity was over. So keep your eyes open and be ready to move.

Once you've come up with your top 5 or 6 keywords, you're ready to dig a little deeper. Your best keyword will become your domain name. Take your list and head over to Google.com. Enter your main keyword into the search bar. You'll notice that on the left hand side of your screen, a series of options will come up. Click on the option for the Wonder Wheel. You'll see that the term you entered is in the middle of the wheel, and it's surrounded by 5 to 8 of the most closely related terms. Make a note of these terms and use them for your site's categories, article headings and keywords peppered throughout your content. Also use these in your blog and to name your Squidoo lenses.

The Wonder Wheel offers you keen insight into how Google perceives the relevance of your terms. Using this method gives you an unfair advantage over your competition. If your domain name and categories are all closely relevant in the eyes of Google, your site stands a much better chance of getting found. And if you're using terms that have a high Blue Ocean Index, it should be fairly easy for you to rank well on your chosen terms.

*Step 2* in your search engine marketing plan involves developing your web presence, and this is where Search Engine Optimization comes into play. Now that you know what people need, how they're searching for it, and which terms offer the least competition, it's time to put the word out. You'll want to take a look at your assets and what you have to market, create a presence on the Internet, and offer your customers some real value.

We've already established that your domain name needs to use your main keyword or key phrase. As much as possible, your domain name should be only two to four words and try to stick with a .com domain. If your chosen domain name is already taken, then use hyphens in between words. You can also take your main keyword term and add words like *best* or *site* to come up with your domain name.

Next, use the WordPress platform to create your website with about 15 to 30 pages, and use your top 5 keywords as your Category names. This is where you use your choicest keywords from the Google Wonder Wheel. These become your article titles and the keywords peppered throughout your content.

Now you're ready to build your site. In my audio program on website development I cover several techniques and types of technology for building your website, so we won't go deeply into the topic here in this chapter on SEO. However, you should plan to build a site that presents a central theme clearly covered on your home page, along with a welcome message that invites your visitor to join your mailing list.

When you first develop your website, the natural tendency is to want to cram all the content into it that you can lay your hands on. But if it's real traffic you're looking for, consider taking a more patient approach.

Anyone involved in SEO can tell you that organic growth of relevant content is the most successful long term strategy for search engine placement, and I can vouch for this. When people hear that, however, their brains toss the part they don't understand or don't want to deal with: "organic." What they hear is "successful long term strategy" and "search engine placement." And that's where the problem is, because it's the "organic growth" part that does the work.

What do people mean when they talk about organic growth?

First of all, I want to reassure you that organic growth online has nothing to do with steer manure! It means slow, steady, continual growth - the way plants and animals grow. When Google ranks your site they look for this pattern of growth to help determine whether your site is genuine. Think of a site you visit a lot, like a forum or maybe Wikipedia. Those sites didn't spring into being overnight, chock full of content with hundreds links pointing to them. They started small, and as people posted messages and articles, they grew.

The timing of your updates can be more important than the size of updates themselves. We're talking about the Slight Edge - those little things that don't seem important in the act of doing them, but that make all the difference over time.

A lot of webmasters have a hard time updating their site regularly. They have day jobs, families, a business to run. This can lead to a tendency to update sites in large, infrequent chunks.

To get the maximum benefit from your updates, try this instead. When you do get time to update your site, prepare and arrange your new content so that it can be uploaded in small pieces. Get everything ready to go so that the only task remaining is publishing the content. Then upload each small piece separately, allowing a day or two to pass between the uploads.

By posting in small, steady increments, your website ends up with the same content, but search engines monitoring how frequently you update will see a pattern of steady growth. You can still write or gather all your content in one pass, but dole it out to your web server slowly instead of in a single publish.

This brings us to the idea of leveraging WordPress as a tool for building your website. WordPress has become phenomenally popular because of its ease of use, versatility and power as a web development tool. Besides the fact that WordPress templates are widely available and plug-ins abound for everything from your Privacy Policy to your AdSense code, WordPress allows you to post-date content. This means you can write five articles, queue them up to publish one per day, and your whole week's worth of content is handled all at once. This is a great way to spur organic growth through an elegant, automated process.

Whatever platform you're using, it's crucial to your business that you build a mailing list so that you can build relationships with your visitors and market to them. Your home page needs to provide useful information that clearly solves a problem for people, and prominently features an opt-in form with an irresistible offer.

The opt-in form needs to link to your email service provider, such as iContact, GetResponse or FreeAutoBot.com. Your autoresponder needs to be populated with at least 10 email messages offering quality content, building your relationship with your customer, and sincerely recommending your flagship product. Now, I said 10 email messages, but 50 is better and 100 is great.

*Step 3* includes the core of Search Engine Marketing. This is where you promote your site and gather inbound links.

The first thing you'll want to do is create a blog. If you're not using WordPress as your site platform, install WordPress onto your hosting account to support your blog. Your content should be updated every few days,

and it should provide useful, relevant tips and observations. You can re-post your newsletter to your blog. Also where possible, have a link in every post to a relevant page within your website.

Besides blogging, you can highlight specific topics covered within your site using Squidoo.com. Create a handful of Squidoo lenses, with each one linking to a page within your site. Include useful videos, RSS feeds and other information about your market niche.

One of the best ways to enhance your web presence and become known as an expert within your field is to use article marketing. Write articles on your chosen topic and include a link in the bio box that points back to your site. You can build links from the top article directories. See an overview on my website at [eCommercegal.com](http://eCommercegal.com) in the Article Marketing section.

Another way to increase your online exposure is to create videos and share them on YouTube and other video sites. This will create a link back to your site. Once you've done this, you can then embed those videos onto your site. Keep them relevant, and make sure the links stay fresh.

You can also create links to your site by posting thoughtful comments in highly ranked forums hosted by non-profit organizations, universities and government agencies. Build links from the top social networks as often as you can. Create a page on your Facebook account, and use Twitter regularly.

Using social marketing, blogging and article marketing, you can promote your site for free. If done correctly, you can propel your site to the top of the search engine rankings.

Another way to generate links to your site is to develop and distribute freeware through software directories. Using Conduit.com and other similar sites, you can create a free browser toolbar that provides value to your users and enhances your web presence. You can distribute screensavers and .exe ebooks, generating even more links to your site.

### **Search Engines vs. Directories**

Let's take a look at the difference between search engines and directories and how you can use them both for your online business promotion. Everybody knows a search engine is one of the most important tools to help you find information on the Internet. With so much content on the web, it's no wonder that 78% of online users start their search process with a search engine. Search engines are automated cataloging and retrieval systems.

Directories, by contrast, are human based indexes. The sites included in the directory are first visited and cataloged by human beings. Directory users can search for relevant sites in a directory either by mining the subject they are looking for or by searching through keywords. Many directories require a payment to list your web site. This, in short, is advertising - whether you've paid for it or not.

Okay, so what does this have to do with SEO? What it means to you as the owner of a website is that it's in your best interest to befriend the Directories. Major directories play a role in your SEO efforts for the following reasons.

Listings within major directories provide context for search engines. For example, if your website is listed in the Open Directory Project, your website and pages will be indexed faster and might have a better ranking in search results for specific terms.

Major directories are often replicated by other web sites. The Open Directory Project has hundreds of copies, which means that a listing in a major directory will mean listings in all replica sites, contributing to your link popularity efforts and boosting page rank.

Getting listed in the Yahoo! Directory and the Open Directory Project is worth more than getting listed in all other directories combined. However, being listed in these two is possibly the hardest thing to do. Yahoo wants about \$300 a year for regular websites; only non-commercial sites qualify for a free listing. The Open Directory Project is free but you need A LOT of patience to make your way into it. The Open Directory Project is enormous, and it's strictly human edited, which means the waiting time for a listing can extend to years! My advice... do it anyway.

Remember a simple rule: directory inclusion is a lot like a celebrity night club. If it's too easy to get into a directory, it's probably not worth the effort in the first place.

### **Tools of the Trade for SEO**

With SEO and SEM, you can use a combination of techniques, tools, and technical know-how to get results. Once you understand the fundamentals, you can customize your approach to meet the needs of your business. Before you start optimizing your site for search engines, there are some tools that you'll want to acquire to make the job easier. These tools can become your best friends when it comes to SEO, especially when you're just starting out.

We've established that the first and most important step in any search engine marketing campaign is researching which keywords to optimize your site for, and there are several types of software that are useful

for this. Besides the Adwords keyword tool, some of the most popular programs include Wordtracker, Traffic Travis, Optilink, and Zeus.

WordTracker's keyword research tool is free and it provides a comprehensive database of the most popular keywords. It can help you find associated keywords that you might never have thought of. One of the differences between WordTracker and other tools is that it can spot subtle differences, for example singular and plural keywords, or often-misspelled terms, and tell you which versions are more popular.

Traffic Travis is an SEO tool that offers keyword research, search engine rank data, page analysis and a number of resource links. It comes in a free version with limited functionality or a professional version that currently sells for just under \$100.

Optilink has become very popular in a short period of time because of the power it gives you in terms of search engine optimization. Now, Optilink also costs money - a bit under \$50 - but they offer a free trial as well. Optilink helps you to come up with strategies to improve your link structure and get a better ranking. It analyzes the link structure of your top-ranking competitors.

The software tells you why your competitors rank well, so you can copy what they're doing. It lets you know what kind of rankings you can expect if you adopt similar linking strategies. It also helps monitor sites you've exchanged links with, to ensure that they're still linking to you.

I want to caution you about is spending more than \$100 on any given tool to promote your site. Only spend money as a last resort. Often you'll find that the tool you're looking for is available for free - or at least a free trial. You'll have dozens if not hundreds of opportunities to part with your money in the course of running your online business. Be discriminating in what you procure.

Another problem to be aware of with any of the software you use is that search engines can change the way they calculate and display their results, breaking your tools until their authors update them. This means that most position reporting software gets outdated very quickly. Be sure to check for updates.

### **Keeping It All In Focus**

SEO and SEM are powerful tools for creating and maintaining your web presence. But the thing to bear in mind is that your business encompasses much more than the virtual real estate it takes up online. Your business is not meant to serve a herd or even a collective of computer users. It's meant to serve people, flesh and blood people with real needs and desires just like you. Keep that in mind - maintain a service

mindset - and your online endeavors are sure to prosper. Here are a few ideas for keeping your business in focus and maintaining perspective on your pursuits.

Consider your passions, then consider how you can market within the niches that serve those passions on the Internet. You don't need to limit yourself to one website or even one niche. But make sure that you gain momentum before you move onto another project. Your site should be making money and operating pretty much on its own before moving on.

When it comes to search engine marketing, measure your progress. Take a look at your site's traffic rank. Go to [Alexa.com](http://Alexa.com) and get the Sparky toolbar. This will add a tool to your web browser that will tell you the worldwide rank of every website you go to, including your own. Keep an eye on this. You'll be surprised by what you find out with this tool.

### **Plan, Do & Review: Have A Meeting With Yourself**

Every so often, have a meeting with yourself. I do this anywhere from monthly to quarterly. Because as an entrepreneur I wear so many hats, I call on myself to report from the various departments of my business - just like when I worked in the corporate sector and we'd have project status meetings. These days, I report to myself on market research, product inventory, development, promotion, budgeting and revenue. *I have an agenda, and I take minutes.*

Sounds kind of funny, doesn't it? And it is! Anybody watching me would think I'm a little unusual. But you know what? *It's really effective.* There's nothing like looking at the minutes from your last meeting to hold yourself accountable. If you think people will point and laugh at you for having a meeting with yourself, you may be right. But you'll have the last laugh when you're sipping champagne on that chartered yacht and they ask permission to come aboard. What the heck - go easy on them. Pour them a glass, and deal a hand of cards. After all, what's the point of all this effort if not to share fruits with the ones we care about.

Some of the methods we've covered here may seem fairly obvious. Some of these are tactics that few of my esteemed colleagues know about. Try everything. Keep what works for you. If you create a schedule and stick to it, it shouldn't take long to see big results.

And that's what you really should know about SEO!

## Web Traffic Made Easy

*Internet... Business... Profit.* To successfully merge these words into a single concept that has meaning for your business you will need to add another word. *Traffic.* Internet business profit needs traffic. It seems that every tip you find about making your site or company successful in the game of online business promotion always emphasizes the importance of generating traffic.

The Bottom line is that traffic is one of the two the most essential ingredients for a successful internet business. Traffic and conversion together create the total package. In order to have a successful Internet business, you need to generate traffic to your site and convert that traffic from visitors into customers.

If you already have a site and you're not getting the revenue that you want, there are a couple of things to look at to change your results. One consideration is whether you're promoting a product or service that people actually want. The other consideration is the techniques you're using to attract attention to your business's core offering. It's crucial to be clear about the need in the marketplace for what you offer, and the level of that need. Once you're confident about this factor and you have data to back up your marketing assumptions, you can apply the tips and techniques we're covering here. In this chapter, we'll be touching on your product offering and taking a close look at your traffic.

### On Selling Lemonade...

First, I want to tell you a true story. This is something that actually happened just recently, and it illustrates the traffic concept perfectly. I went for a walk in my neighborhood the other day, just a little routine exercise, and the weather was fine. The sun was shining, it was a warm day and I was actually wishing I'd taken a drink of water before I left home. I almost turned around, but I figured I could tough it out for 20 or 30 minutes.

I walked up the hill, turned the corner onto a side street and went down the block. Set back from the street in the middle of somebody's front yard was a table with a small handwritten cardboard sign on it: Lemonade. You could barely see it from the street, and you had to be walking through the neighborhood in order to catch it at all. Someone who was on their way somewhere, driving in a car, would have missed it entirely.

There was a 5-year-old boy sitting at the table, shouting at the top of his lungs, "Lemonade! Get your ice cold lemonade here!" He had his arms wrapped around a 2-gallon glass jug, coveting it proudly. You know the type: it had the spigot at the bottom. You could see lemon slices floating on the top and condensation dripping down the outside of the jug. It looked really good.

"Have you sold any yet?" I asked him.

"Nope," he said. Then he went back to barking his wares - "Lemonade!" – which was kind of funny, because I was the only one around. I guess he figured I hadn't heard him the first time. More to the point, I wanted a glass but I didn't have my wallet on me. I was just out getting some exercise, so his one and only prospective customer was unqualified.

Does this sound like your website? Have you put up a sign in the middle of nowhere, hoping people will learn about it through osmosis? Gosh, I hope not. But so many Internet marketers run their business this way. They figure that everyone's going to want ice cold lemonade on a hot day, so they hang up a sign and they're surprised when nobody reads it.

Now here's what's even more ironic. Less than 50 yards away from the table where this little boy sat offering his ice cold, refreshing drink, thousands upon thousands of people were passing by every single hour. The kid's house was right next to the freeway!

Now, obviously, even if all that traffic could see his lemonade stand there in his front yard, they'd just keep driving right on by. I mean, they're on the freeway, right? They're going somewhere and they're not looking for him.

But what if this boy moved his lemonade stand about a quarter of a mile down the road, and parked his little keester at the freeway off ramp. Do you think he'd make at least 50 cents? More? Do you think on a hot day with the right product, he could actually cause a traffic jam? It could happen.

This kind of thinking is what you need to employ in driving traffic to your Internet business. In fact, you'll be most successful if you're not actually driving traffic at all but driving your business to where the traffic is. In order to be successful, you can't be sitting in your front yard all by yourself, shouting at the top of your lungs and hoping that people will find you through psychic means. You'll just get hoarse and annoy your neighbors. Take your message to the freeway, and sure enough, your coin jar will be jingling in good time.

### **Take Your Message to the Crowd**

How do you take your message to the crowd on the Internet? Well, you find out where the crowd is and determine exactly what they're looking for. Online, this is done through market research. I cover this in great depth in my program on search engine optimization and a few other programs, so in the interest of time I won't go into here.

I will say that if you're looking for a niche for your business, you have several tools available to you. Among others, you can use Google Insights, for example, to look up trends and identify their hottest markets. Amazon.com has also done extensive market research. Go to their book section and see what their categories are.

Once you've chosen your niche, you want to do keyword research. What you're looking for are low competition / high search keyword terms that relate to your business, and then use those terms in your website's domain name, categories, article titles and content. You can find these terms using a tool like Google's external keyword tool then comparing the results you get with what you find through the search engines.

Once you've figured out what your marketplace is looking for, and you've done a good job of presenting it, the odds are great that your market will come looking for you.

### **Turn Demand Into Dollars**

With your business set up correctly, you can turn your efforts toward promotion. To help you generate more traffic for your site, let's take a look at several ways to increase your traffic and serve more lemonade to more thirsty customers and get more quarters.

We've established that search engine optimization is the best way to attract traffic to your site. The concept used in SEO applies to all of your marketing efforts, in that you'll be most successful when you think like your customers and speak to them in terms they understand. When the language in your promotions is aligned with what your prospects are looking for, you'll get great results.

This applies not just to SEO but to every type of promotion you use. You'll want your message and your approach to conform to the rules of your venue, whether those rules are expressed or implied. In some cases, the rules are flexible while in others, they can be pretty unforgiving.

### **Social Marketing for A Thirsty World**

One of the most astonishing success stories of the past decade is the rise of social networking as a phenomenon. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace, LinkedIn, Flickr, StumbleUpon and literally thousands of other sites are engaging hundreds of millions of users on a regular basis. About one-third of the planet is online, and about one half of those people are using social networking regularly, keeping in touch with friends and family across town and around the world. Personally, I'm in touch with people on six continents

on a fairly regular basis, and I've never even met most of them. I'm not really sure how that happened, but I like it. (I'm still working on Antarctica.)

It's not surprising that Internet marketers have turned to social networks to get the word out about their business. But there are rules for social marketing. While it's possible to affect the browsing habits of a group of people through your online efforts, the term to bear in mind when it comes to social networks is "social". Your approach needs to come from a service mindset. About 90% of your communication in social networks needs to have the intent of building your relationships. One time in ten, you can make a sincere product recommendation. With this kind of ratio, your friends and colleagues will be more apt to take your word seriously and gravitate toward your offer. But if they think that your only interest is product promotion and not their best interests, you'll find the temperature in your virtual living room is a tad chilly. People don't want to be sold to, even though they love to buy.

We're talking here about your personal profile and your efforts as an entrepreneur. If you have a page for your business or group, the "social" factor still applies but not as stringently. People are seeking community when they join a social network, even in business networks such as LinkedIn. When you provide that to them through your persona and your business, you'll love your results in terms of revenue and the connections you make.

Most people are aware that the Facebook and Twitter experience revolves around a feed from the people in their inner circle. Now LinkedIn, Yahoo, Google, and Windows Live Messenger have also introduced feeds into their technology, acknowledging the power of this form of passive discovery for users and the potential for driving traffic.

### **Get Social Referrals to Your Website**

On-site social optimization is now a must for any business looking to drive traffic. Both Google and the major social networks are developing their technology to embrace the tremendous traffic-driving power of social search. There are a handful of tactics that websites can and should leverage to take advantage of this major trend.

The first thing your site needs to do is allow social referrals. That is, make it easy for your site visitors to share your content through social media. Prompt visitors to share your information, especially after they've just completed something on your site, like watching a video or taking a poll. Don't wait for them to find the share button - they're already moving on. It's your job to present it to them and make it easy. Prompting people at the right times, and incorporating auto-sharing features can increase sharing by as much as 500%.

Make it easy for your visitors to share with their friends. Enable sharing to multiple networks like Facebook, Twitter, Yahoo, Google, and Windows Live. These have all become huge sources of traffic for websites that allow their visitors to link to the networks. Be sure to give your visitors multiple options for sharing, along with the ability to share to multiple feeds all at the same time. Shorten all links to get maximum returns. Not only is link-shortening crucial on limited character platforms like Twitter, but also for creating return traffic.

Be sure that your social content is both search-engine friendly and feed friendly. Comments, reviews and forums are the most popular types of user-contributed content, and most of the platforms that offer these features are built with SEO and traffic in mind.

Add Open Graph Tags, Facebook Like buttons and Twitter Annotations to your site to offer more opportunity to generate feed items. This increases the amount of sharing that happens on your site, and it drives traffic back to your site from the feed.

### **When Worlds Collide: Social Networking Meets Natural Search**

We're seeing a trend now toward website allowing their users to sign-in using an existing social identity, such as their Facebook user name and password. This potentially gives the site access to rich user and friend data depending on each user's privacy settings. This is a capability the social providers make available to third party websites; however using a vendor can simplify the process of both adding and maintaining this functionality for one or more providers.

Here's how that looks in the real world. After signing in with a Facebook identity, an Amazon user is presented with a list of friends who have birthdays in the coming week. Clicking on the gift suggestions link below each friend's photo brings up search results based on the books and movies that their friend has "liked." Amazon is taking the semantic data of the likes and applying their own search algorithm to it. Product suggestions for the Amazon user based on books and movies that their friends have "liked" on Facebook. The suggestions show how many of the user's friends have "liked" the product, along with photos of those friends. The friend's name appears when the Amazon user mouses over any of the photos. This is some really powerful stuff.

Using social technology to improve the way people get information is the both the current trend and the way of future. Both search engines and social networks have opted-in, and their technology now reflects it. For online businesses, things have become more complex. But it means greater power for websites that can capitalize on this new technology. It means reaching people at a new level, and it means traffic.

## **Squeeze Forums & Blogs For Their Link Juice**

Similar to social networks - and much older - forums and groups offer a great opportunity to capture market share by showcasing your expertise and building your credibility.

The great thing about forums and online communities is that you can target a certain group that fits the demographic that you are looking for. You can discuss all kinds of topics within your niche.

Here again, though, forum etiquette requires that you build rapport, offer value in the form of contribution to the conversation, and use an unselfish approach. If you join a forum, jump into a conversation with anything like arrogance, and start promoting your latest, greatest product, odds are high that you'll quickly get banned. Forums offer a great deal of power to those who play by the rules, and because of that, they are to be courted and treated with respect. People want to conduct business with those they know, like and trust. But in forums especially, conducting business needs to appear to be a happy accident. When they get to know you and it turns out that you're likeable and trustworthy, they'll engage with you and even pass along your link to their friends. The reward is traffic gold.

Forums and groups are great for creating awareness of your site and building your reputation. However they're also great for creating back links to your site, something that Google loves. The higher the quality of the forum, the better the link juice. That means a link from a forum at a university, non-profit organization or a government agency will translate to prestige for your site in the eyes of Google.

The same can be said of comments that you leave on high-ranking blogs. The result is link love to your site, and this is a great way to generate traffic.

While social networking is huge, it's not the only game in town. I personally know many individuals and a number of business owners who are not as in love with social networking as they used to be. They still use the Internet regularly, but the game for them is not completely social for them. That means there is a huge swath of the Internet population that are simply less responsive to social traffic tactics. I for one am not thrilled about the idea of my face and name popping up on Amazon.com when my third cousin's husband browses the book section. Well... unless we're talking about a book I've written. The term TMI aptly applies to this level of marketing. It's just too much information. I'm not denying the trend; I'm just saying I'm not real fond of it either. As a Facebook user, there are certain pieces of data that I just won't divulge - like my political affiliation. It just doesn't need to be that available, and I'm not the only one who feels this way.

With that said, let's a look at other types of traffic driving methods.

## **Make Your Content Contagious**

Viral marketing has always been popular because of its power and relatively low cost. Viral marketing allows you to spread the word about your company and product through word of mouth, like a virus. This is what makes social network marketing so powerful, and it applies in other venues as well.

Content that's interesting, funny or entertaining has a great chance of going viral, and it can generate a lot of interest for your site. Think about the last video you shared. Was there a puppy or kitten involved? Maybe it was a good joke. Maybe it was just original or entertaining. Maybe it was a video of a great song. Content like this gets passed around. If your name is attached to it, you can benefit from a boost in traffic. With viral marketing, people get infected by the creativity or entertainment value of your content, and they'll pass it along to their friends, family and colleagues - especially if you encourage them at the right moment.

Many companies offer incentives like discounts and rebates when their visitors help spread the word. Using Viral Marketing to your advantage means that you can get a lot of publicity and public awareness about your site, your product or your company. With a little ingenuity and imagination, plus some incentives or prizes, you can reach out to a great number of people.

A classic example of viral marketing is Microsoft's Hotmail. At its inception, the only way to get a Hotmail account was by referral. Microsoft was the first known major company to use viral marketing at this level.

In addition to social plug-ins on your site, like the Facebook Like button, you can still use a Tell-A-Friend script to drive traffic to your site. This is actually one of the easiest methods in viral marketing. A Tell-A-Friend script is a simple programming script that you can insert into the code of your website. The script allows your site visitor to refer friends by email from your site, with or without receiving an incentive from you. You see this quite a bit on news sites, where you can share an article with your friends. Using a Tell-A-Friend script allows for wider distribution of your content, and that means traffic.

Finding a Tell-A-Friend script is actually really simple. Your web host may already provide this type of technology for you with the click of a button. If not, conduct a search through the search engines on the term "tell a friend script". Odds are, you'll find more than you can handle.

## **Send Love Letters To Your "In" Crowd**

Building your mailing list is a fabulous way to generate traffic to your site. Sales is a process, it's not an event, and it generally takes 5 to 7 exposures to a product for someone to buy it. That means when someone comes to your site, it's imperative to capture their name and email address. You want repeat

visitors. Offer something so compelling that turning it down is actually painful for them. Providing value to your would-be subscriber is an excellent way to make sure that you have that fifth to seventh chance to communicate with them, offer them value and ultimately make a sale.

Write a newsletter, and be impeccable with your distribution. If your newsletter is published each Tuesday at 4:00 p.m. then that's when it needs to be distributed - not Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. The great thing about writing a newsletter is that develops a bond between you and your readership. If you provide enough valuable information mixed with entertainment and sincere product recommendations, your readers will look forward to hearing from you. You can also re-post the newsletter on your blog, creating more content for you and more value for your readership and a way to reach a wider audience.

Writing a newsletter builds community, and your readers will automatically share it for you. As your newsletter gets passed around, you can widen your public exposure and continue to build your mailing list.

### **Use Article Directories to Build Your Traffic & Your Reputation**

Writing is an excellent way to generate interest in your site and your product offering. Writing and submitting articles to the top article directories drives traffic to your site in multiple ways.

First of all, if your keyword optimized article is posted on one of the top article directories, such as eZineArticles.com, it creates a link back to your website from what Google considers an authority site - a popular site with a high page rank. This will increase your performance in the search engine results pages.

The second form of exposure that article marketing creates for you and your business is that people will read your article on the directory you've posted it to. This increases your web presence and your exposure to the people you want to reach.

The third way that you benefit from article marketing is that article directories allow other site owners to reprint your article, as long as you are given credit and the links in your bio box remain intact. This means that the sites where your article is reprinted are legally required to keep the links back to your site, further increasing your exposure. And their site visitors will click through to your page.

The fourth way that you benefit from article marketing is that the link in your bio box may be pointing to a product offering, and that means sales for you and your business. Make a clear call to action in your bio box, and you'll see an increase in your traffic and conversions.

## **Traffic Exchanges, *No* – Pay-Per-Click, *Maybe***

Traffic exchanges are venues that guarantee you a certain number of visitors to your site but also require you to navigate to other members' sites. I've never been a fan of those. In order to be effective you have to remain on the site for a specified amount of time, such as 30 seconds, before navigating to the next one. This results in a large population of extremely bored web masters who don't read the content or the ads and are simply looking to fulfill a quota. This is a huge waste time - time that you could better spend each day writing an article and posting it on the top article directories.

While traffic exchanges are just flat out a bad idea, paid linking can be lucrative for a website owner. This equates to a form of paid advertising, whether through banner ads or contextual advertising. While it's not nearly as effective as it once was in the face of the social boom, paid advertising can yield good results for those who know how to leverage it.

Google's Adwords and Yahoo's Overture still provide reasonably effective advertising schemes. What we're talking about here is the pay-per-click advertising model, where the advertiser bids on a certain keyword term and pays that amount whenever a user clicks on their ad.

For example, lets say you run a car parts retail or wholesale site. You choose competitive keywords that trigger your ads to be shown in the results page when someone searches on, say, Honda Accord. This means that if your ad is compelling enough, a user will click through to your site and may actually make a purchase from you. Without using pay-per-click advertising, your site may not have been able to rank well for that term in a natural search. So you can see there's value in this type of advertising - as long as your website is able to convert browsers into buyers.

You can also use pay-per-click advertising in the Google content network. This means your ads will appear on third-party sites in the form of Adsense. With so much competition on the internet, it's possible to set yourself apart through advertising. But it's also a really good way to go broke if you don't know what you're doing. If you'd like to venture into the pay-per-click realm, you might consider hiring a professional to champion your campaigns for you until you get the hang of it.

Pay-per-click was a tremendous boon to website owners when Google Adwords was new some years back. It has since become far less effective than it once was, and advertisers can expect that they'll enjoy only 1 or 2% of all clicks on a page. The result that comes up in the No. 1 spot through natural search currently gets well over 50% of all click-throughs on the results page, so you can see there's quite a difference there.

However, pay-per-click advertising is making a resurgence with ads in the social networks like Facebook along with ads on mobile networks. In fact, we're seeing a trend toward mobile advertising at this time. There are over one and a half billion Internet users, but there are about 6 billion mobile phones currently active in the world. That's almost 1 mobile phone for every man, woman and child on the planet, and these users are taking their phones with them everywhere, unlike their computers. If you want traffic to your site, it's worth your while to look into advertising through the mobile networks.

As of right now, the greatest activity in the mobile market is in India and Pakistan. This is something you want to be aware of, and it makes the case that you never want to operate under assumptions that you haven't tested and proven with market research. Driving traffic - whatever its source - requires that you understand your market. There's simply no shortcut to doing your homework.

### **Build an Army of Lieutenants**

Another method for putting the word out, driving traffic and making sales through your website is engaging your product or service in an affiliate program. Becoming an advertiser through a CPA network or engaging with Clickbank.com will provide you with traffic and sales that you otherwise would never see. This requires that you pay your affiliates a healthy commission along with fees to the affiliate network. You'll want to factor in these costs when you determine the sale price of your product. However, the most successful entrepreneurs and businesses on the Internet use affiliate marketing and leverage an army of affiliates to promote their product offering.

There is an art to this type of marketing, and it is akin to managing a sales force in the brick and mortar world. If you're going to hire a virtual sales force, you'll need to supply them with the collateral to promote your product or service. That means developing and offering them a host of display ads, text ads and a complete autoresponder series of emails to promote your product. The initial investment of time and resources into setting up an affiliate program may seem a bit daunting to the online business promoter, especially in the face of sharing more than half your gross with your sales force. However, over time your efforts will pay for themselves through traffic to your site and sales of your products.

The beauty of leveraging a site like Clickbank is that they earn their fees by bringing talent to the table, connecting you with qualified sales professionals you ordinarily wouldn't meet any other way. Also the affiliate network handles the payment and accounting for you. This is something that's tough to put a price on, because improper accounting practices can mean big headaches down the road if you're not careful. And the object of the game is about generating revenue through the simplest possible means. You don't need accounting headaches. Sometimes you just need to hire a professional to get the job done right.

Whether you're selling ebooks on Amazon.com or lemonade on a hot summer day, make sure that you're setting up your virtual stand next to the freeway. When you take your product offering to the traffic, there's no need to drive. Just hold up your sign and your cash register is sure to ring.

## Online Conversion - Turning Website Visitors Into Loyal Customers

Just about anyone these days can build an ecommerce website. Getting traffic to it is your first task, but doing so will only matter if you can convert that traffic into a book of business.

When I sit down with clients to talk about their website strategy, one of the first questions I ask them is “Why did you originally develop your website?” Sometimes there’s a moment of uncomfortable silence before somebody replies, “because our competitors all had one”, or “our customers kept asking for our website address”, or one of my personal favorites, “to get our name out there”.

It's true that your competitors all have websites - otherwise, they're not really competitors in your online business promotion, are they? And it may also be true that your customers expect you to have a web presence. In the world online, it's not enough to simply launch a website and pray for traffic that converts. Any business activity requires an end game - a clear goal, and a well defined return on investment. You have to know why you're doing what you're doing. As for getting your name out there... all I can say is, out where? The latest statistics support the assertion that *there are a bajillion gazillion websites on the Internet*. What's your plan for getting found "out there"? Who's going to look at your website if you don't clearly define your customer base before you even begin?

Your website is the means for your business to attract attention, develop relationships with your prospects, and serve up some real value. That's right: I'm talking about generating leads, and making sales online.

After all, like any other business asset, a website needs to provide a return on investment. That return needs to be immediate and measurable. The bottom line for any website is how well it performs to attract traffic and bring in revenue. Has your site grown your business today? How about this week? This month? Enter the concept of Conversion.

### **Make the Most of What You've Got**

Some companies build a website for branding purposes, or to provide information to potential clients, thinking that brochure ware is the goal. Frankly, a blog is better for branding than a website is. Using a web site merely to provide information is like using an airplane to taxi around town without ever leaving the ground - you're kind of missing the point and a real opportunity to get your business take off.

Basically Conversion means the process of turning website browsers into buyers. After all, the only reason to be in business is to bring value to the marketplace and get paid for it. Your revenue comes from serving

customers' needs and satisfying their wants. If you're not converting your website visitors into subscribers and buyers, you're not serving them - or your business.

A business website has three primary goals: generating leads, selling products, and capturing referrals. These are the actions that lead to real revenue for your business. A website can accomplish other less-tangible benefits besides ringing your register. I call these secondary goals, and they might include building credibility, providing community, supporting existing customers, and recruiting partners or even affiliates.

### **Conversion & Other Thoughtless Acts**

If you already have a website, combining traffic and conversion is now the key to your success online. It's tough to make a living without both. You need traffic in order to have conversions. And in order to have conversions, the thought of doing without your product offering needs to be a bit painful for your would-be customer. The answer to the question of whether or not engage with you has to be completely obvious for them.

Now, I'm not fond of this term but it fits, so I'll say it just this one time: your offer needs to be a "no-brainer". It needs to be presented in such compelling terms that the obvious outcome for your prospect can only be one thing - performing your call to action.

Let's say you have optimized your website and attracted a large number of quality inbound links by one means or another. The result is that your site now appears on the first page of the top three search engines for your chosen keywords or key phrases. You have cracked it! Now you are getting hundreds of visitors a day to your website. Unfortunately very few are staying to browse your site and even fewer are purchasing your products or inquiring about the services you offer.

If this is the case for you, you've got to look closely at your site to find the reason behind this if you want to improve your conversion rates. There are two immediate actions you can take. First, have you optimized your site for the search engines or for your visitors? The answer should always be that you've optimized your site for your visitors since they're the ones who will provide you with your income - not the search engines. The search engines are simply a means to an end, a tool to rank and report on what you and I are providing to our customers.

It is better to have 20 visitors to your site and 15 who buy a product or service, than it is to have 500 visitors 5 sales. When developing your site keep your potential customers in mind and add content that they'll appreciate, like and find informative.

### 3 Steps To Fool-Proof Conversions

Next, the content on your website needs to A) identify a problem; then B) define the solution; and finally, C) tell your prospect how they can obtain that solution, such as "click the Order button now to get started."

You are fulfilling a wish or a need or solving a problem for your visitor, so your information needs to rise to the occasion. Be informative and engaging. People have conducted a specific search in order to get to your site. That means the need has already been established. Now giving them the information they need will go a long way toward convincing them to purchase from you. So just like always the content is the key to making sales as well as attracting the attention of the search engines.

Here, let me give you an example. Somehow in my trip around the Internet, I clicked on an ad for a company called Vacations To Go. I love travel, and I'm the ultimate armchair adventurer. But traveling is expensive, and world travel is a bit daunting in these changing times. So I was strongly drawn to this company by its banner ad depicting a cruise ship and last minute vacation packages at a 70% discount. Come on, who wouldn't bite at that, or at least be curious?

I wound up on their mailing list, and their president Alan Fox routinely writes the copy for their newsletter. His engaging tales of trips to places like Caracas, Barcelona, Athens, Alexandria, St. Petersburg, Brisbane, Hong Kong and Mumbai are utterly captivating with very practical considerations. I'm already packed. Now, I don't currently have 6 months that I can take off for a cruise around the world, even at 70% discount. But this company's repeated contact with me through their newsletter, combined with their pragmatic tips and deep discounts on everything except quality mean that I am going on a cruise, and Vacations To Go will sell me my passage. They've made it... oh, I have to say it... they've made it a no-brainer. Do I actually need to go on a world cruise?

Well, *yeah!* They've made it so compelling that the thought of not taking a world cruise is actually painful, and it hurts me. Take a lesson from this company - in fact, get on their mailing list at [VacationsToGo.com](http://VacationsToGo.com), and maybe I'll see you on the aft deck of the Norwegian Star. ...Okay, back to work.

### **“You Are Here” – Get To Know Your Site’s Performance**

When we're talking about conversion, the next thing we need to analyze is your site's visitor statistics. Boosting your conversion rates is all about understanding how your site performs. I am continually amazed by the number of business people who don't look at their server statistics. Your server stats are incredibly important because they tell you how many people are coming to your site, where they are coming from, how

they found you, how many of them are turning into customers and from which pages they're leaving your site. Without this information, you are just guessing at how well your traffic is converting. Don't guess!

Once you start looking at server stats, you can determine your conversion ratio, the number of sales you make for each visitor to the site. There's a distinction here that I want to make: it's not the number of sales per hit or per impression. One visitor may generate multiple hits - that is, they may look at more than one page, or even look at one page multiple times. That's a good thing. But when you're figuring out your conversion ratio, you want to look at unique visitors.

Take a look at each visitor and how they arrived at your site. That is, which search terms did they use? What page did they land on? What other pages did they navigate to? Here's a big one: What page did they exit from? Finally, what area of the country or the world did they come from? You want to know who you're catering to.

If they didn't convert, take a look at their search phrase and their browsing pattern, and see if you can calculate why they left without making that inquiry or purchase. Were their search parameters in line with your actual product or service, or the content of your site? Are you missing something they were looking for? Was the navigation a problem? Did the content satisfy them too much? Not enough?

This information is valuable because it tells you what you're doing wrong so you can fix it. It also tells you what you're doing right so you can do more of that.

You've worked hard for your traffic – so get it to convert. Understand the story that your server statistics are telling you. This information is a crucial part of assessing your conversion ratios and improving your sales.

By constantly monitoring your site's statistics you can dramatically increase your conversion rates - that is, convert more of your visitors into paying customers. Make a note of your efforts and when you make them so that you can accurately monitor your changes and see how much difference they make.

Test and track everything - your traffic, your site headlines, content, offers, conversions. You can try a hundred different gimmicks touted by marketing gurus and business experts to drive traffic to your site, but if you don't invest your time in some serious web analytics, you'll never know what's working and what isn't. How many people visit your site daily? Do you know? You should have that number off the top of your head. How many bounce, or leave immediately? Where did these visitors come from? How many of them are return visitors?

## **Look At Your Site From the Outside In**

Conversion ratios vary by product or service. Some may be as low as 1 in 25 visitors while others will be much higher. If you convert at anything over 1 in 500, your site probably needs some serious tweaks unless you are in an extremely competitive or generalized market.

Making your site convert is all about providing a convenient solution for your prospects. Review your site from this perspective. Is it easy to find and buy a product or do you have to click through four or five pages? Make it as simple as possible.

Internet web site conversion tactics, simply put, enable your visitors to quickly and cleanly learn about your website, glean what its about, and easily become familiar with your products and information. It provides your visitors with a clear call to action to join your mailing list, and it offers them value up front in the form of an irresistible offer. It means you and your visitors can get to know each other over time, develop a relationship, and engage in repeat encounters.

By deliberately using website conversion tactics, nine out of ten of my clients see at least a double digit improvement in their statistics. Web site conversion isn't difficult. It's simply a matter of keeping in touch with what your visitors are looking for, and providing it to them.

Assessing the conversion of your web site is actually tremendously empowering. For example, your new perspective can actually help you to determine what should or shouldn't be included in your site. In a sense you build your site backwards – start with your site goals and then flesh out the structure and content from there. As you set your goals, document a set of criteria for determining site content, and put your plan into action.

Having specific web conversion goals allows you to measure the effectiveness of your site after it's completed and live. That's key because if you can't measure web site performance, then improving it becomes much more problematic. So you'll find that measurement and improvement are the keys to the ROI you're looking for.

## **Tactics To Convert Your Visitors Into Loyal Customers**

Now let's take a look at how you can increase your conversion rate. The first thing to do in order to convert browsers into buyers is to provide them with clear direction. To build interest in a product or service, structure your website in a logical sequence of information. One way to accomplish this is to reduce the

number of links on your page, and identify the best next click for each page. Then provide a specific link which acts as a signpost pointing where you want your visitor to go once they've read the page they're currently on.

Another factor to consider in your conversion tactics is the length of time someone spends on your site. The longer they're there, the stronger their relationship with you and the higher your conversion rate will be. The number of visitors who land on a site and quickly move on is called the bounce rate. Statistically, we're talking about a matter of 30 seconds. Here are some proven tips to keep visitors on your site longer than 30 seconds.

As you know, there are a number of ways to get visitors to your website, but what can you do to keep them there? Here are some tactics you can implement to make your visitors stick around. Content is still king. Teach your visitors something. Visitors don't want loads of hype, they want to learn and increase their knowledge of your product or industry so they can make an informed decision.

Keep your content updated. If you're running an information-based site then it is important to consistently add fresh and unique content.

Make sure your informational content is accurate. Your visitors will stick around to read your message especially when you back it up with references and third party validation. Successful sites keep their visitors interested with easy-to-find information that fulfills the visitors wants and needs.

Blogs are an easy way to add new content. Blogs can be added to your site with just a few clicks, and they present a great way to add user-generated content. Blogs are also an amazing way to build a dedicated group of visitors who come to your site everyday, or at least every time you update. Since blogs create interaction with your visitors, it also builds trust and creates credibility for you and your website. Blogs that offer quality content always attract a loyal group of followers.

One way to improve your conversion rate is to make sure that your site is easy to navigate. Keep the navigation simple. Navigation links should be large and clearly labeled. Have you ever been to a restaurant in another country but couldn't tell the men's restroom from the women's? Well... at least not until you got inside! While you may think themed titles are cute, your visitors may become confused and end up leaving your site. If in doubt, always go with the more common title.

Also take a look at inconsistencies in the traffic on your site, and see if you need to make improvements. Are there any pages that have fewer visitors than others on your site? It could be that the links that are bringing

them there are inappropriately placed. Is the content as compelling as it could be? Or is it that your visitors simply can't find it very easily?

When you improve the navigation on your site, odds are you'll improve your conversion ratio as well. When you improve the conversion rate, you raise the percentage of visitors who become customers, purchasing your product or subscribing to your service. The average conversion rate for ecommerce and subscription based sites is widely debated. Most say that it falls somewhere between 1% and 3%. Not very high, is it? Even the sites with the most targeted traffic can claim only 15% to 20% typically. And those numbers are great! So how do you go about turning your little .5% into a number with double digits?

Consistently measuring the effectiveness of your site is essential to keeping up with the changes in the marketplace and consumer interest. Tracking information isn't a one time thing. It needs to be consistent.

Improving your conversion rate may be as simple as making sure that your site is accessible to everyone. Upgrading your technology so that it works for anyone who would like to visit your site could help your conversion rate immensely.

Those who work in a popular field or industry, providing a service that is offered by many businesses, will also have a problem with their conversion rate. Why should customers choose your site over your competition? Just like in the world of brick and mortar shops, this applies to ecommerce. You have to make yourself stand out. How is what you offer different from everyone else? What is your attraction in the industry? Offering lower prices isn't enough, and sometimes marketing based on price is the wrong choice. There must be something special that you have that no one else does. This will not only bring new visitors to your site but help convert the ones you already have into customers.

### **Courting Your Way To Online Engagement**

Next, what do your customers need in addition to your product or service? How can they gain enough knowledge to make the right decisions about their purchase? If you offer them that knowledge in the form of informative articles and content on your site, then you become a valued resource. Your visitors will bookmark your site for the information you have to offer and turn a one time visitor into a next time customer. However getting them onto your mailing list is a much more effective way to make sure they come back.

Let's talk about that now. Trying to sell a visitor on a first visit is like asking someone to marry you the first time you meet. To improve your chances of closing a sale, first seek to build a relationship with your prospect. You can build rapport in several ways.

One way is through education. Explain a process or concept to your site visitor. Give them step-by-step instructions and advice. If there is a common problem your prospects face, develop a creative solution. Provide a simple, quick, and easy way to fix it.

Another way to build rapport is to provide something of value to your prospects. Ideally, use digital products and systems so that once the product is created, it does not cost you any more effort or money to distribute it to 1,000,000 than it does to 1,000.

Writing articles about your area of expertise can allow you to dramatically increase your influence. By submitting articles you've written to the top directories, you could get republished to dozens of publications and reach thousands of prospects. You will be positioned as an expert to these people, and they will come to you looking for answers. The more articles you have published the directory, the greater your status as an expert. Here's a case where quantity is the goal - but don't skimp on quality.

The benefits of building and maintaining a blog are similar to those of publishing articles. However, besides building rapport with your readers, consistent blogging has the added benefit of boosting your Alexa rank. Posting new, interesting content will help you market yourself and build rapport by educating others. It attracts inbound links from other websites. It can boost your website traffic as well as your conversion.

Build relationships by sharing knowledge and giving away value before you try to close the sale. Doing so will not only improve your sales conversion rate, but will help win you loyal customers and clients.

Offering free tools that help your potential customers in some way is a powerful professional strategy for building traffic and relationships. Examples include calculators, generators, ebooks, and plugins. Often, these do not cost much time or effort to create, but they provide a lot of value to your target audience.

An email e-course can be built by taking 3-5 of your articles and setting up an autoresponder to send 1 article per day to each person who signs up. You will get the benefits of marketing through education, and the repetition of one article per day will enhance your rapport with your readers. Since your readers have chosen to receive this from you, you can also include a message at the end of each email promoting your product or service.

### **Build A Laser Targeted List For Robust Conversion Rates**

The typical online business promoter seeks only to build a large mailing list, and generally asks a new subscriber to supply a name and email address. This is successful in creating a list. One thing we know

about building a list is that the more information you request from a prospect, the fewer prospects will actually opt-in. But this can mean that you wind up with a generalized audience instead of a targeted list.

Well if done correctly, it's possible you may even convert more than 30 percent of your newsletter subscribers into paying customers simply by building a targeted list.

Using traditional permission marketing strategies that most internet marketers use simply isn't going to result in a targeted list. I myself receive hundreds of emails a day from lists that I've double-opted into. That means I really do want to hear from these people. This is one way that I keep an eye on the market, and I can tell you that very few marketers are speaking to me directly. Their messages look much the same, and that's because they don't know the first thing about me except that I've got a pair of eyeballs and an e-mail address.

Millions of people a day are getting pitched to for products that they're not even interested in. They've become desensitized to these offers, even when they've elected to hear from the sender, as I have. This accounts for low open rates and conversion rates in the low single digits.

But the solution is simple. Create highly targeted sub lists and then promote an offer to them that they can't refuse. Now, at this point you may be thinking that it's tough to do. But it's really not. Let me show you exactly how to do it.

Let's assume that my ideal prospects are stock market traders and investors. Here's how I would set up my targeted list.

I would create an optin-page offering a unique and really juicy ecourse or report, and I'd require the website visitor to subscribe in order to get it for free. Now, asking them for an email address and first name is part of the plan, but it's not the complete picture. You need more information than that in order to have your targeted list. You want to be sure that you're speaking to the right bunch in the future, and you need to know exactly who these people are and what they're interested in.

So in this example, I would ask for the first name, email address, asking trading experience in a drop down list that includes "beginner", "intermediate" and "advanced". I'd also ask other multiple choice questions in the form of drop down lists, including types of trades such as "Stock", "Futures" and "Forex". I'd add a drop down list for their Trading Style as well, including "Swing", "Day Trader" and "Investor". I might even ask them about their risk aversion. Do you see where we're going with this? By having them provide this information before they subscribe, you now have created a pre-qualified, laser targeted subscriber database

list. You can address specific demographics at will, approach them with your offers and build a kind of rapport with them that you can't develop with unqualified prospects.

You know exactly who they are and what they are interested in. That kind of information is invaluable when you're trying to serve their needs and sell them a product. Let's say you're promoting a Swing Trading product for beginners. You know exactly which subscribers on your list would be interested in your offer. Provided that you're using a good autoresponder system, you can query your database and find only the people who fit that description and then send them an email with your offer. If your market has enough depth and you're offering several products within the niche, then you can do this over and over again, offering your subscribers ever-increasing opportunities to engage with you.

Your conversion rate will skyrocket, particularly if you first cultivate a good relationship with your list by providing quality content and information. When you recommend a product, make sure of its quality first. You want to be sure to try it yourself before recommending the product. Be helpful and honest with your subscribers, and they'll reward you for it.

### **Make Your Case For Conversion**

Once you get traffic to your site, your pay-off will come if you've invested in your education about writing sales copy that converts. There's nothing like having a powerful sales letter to influence your visitors and convert them into customers. The many lessons of Dan Kennedy, the undisputed champion of the long sales letter, are available on Amazon.com in book form for less than \$20 each. A strong and effective sales letter can blast your earnings into the upper stratosphere, and no one teaches sales copywriting like Dan Kennedy. There's a reason that the top gurus online call him the Godfather, and all that the name implies. His demeanor is a bit brusque - not someone you'd want to invite to be the clown at your child's next birthday party, but definitely a good read and valuable information.

To support your long sales letter copy, you want to include a 60 to 90 second video on your landing page. This video should include your own voice, and if possible, a video of you in direct address. Now, if you don't have a video camera, don't worry about it. You can use something Camtasia to create your video. The purpose is to welcome your prospect, hit the highlights of your product features, explain what your prospect will find on the page, and give them clear direction on what to do next. I cover this topic in much greater depth in my audio program about media for eCommerce. You'll find great tips and techniques for creating videos that convert in that program.

## **Translating Statistics Into A Comfortable Living**

Unless you're selling a big-ticket item and making \$200 or more per sale, it's pretty difficult to make any real money with only a one percent conversion ratio.

Of course, there are exceptions to every rule, and if your website is attracting hundreds or even hundreds of thousands of visitors a day, then obviously you can do quite well with a one percent or lower conversion ratio.

But what if you don't have that kind of traffic. Then what? What if you're selling a \$20 e-book and you're only attracting a hundred visitors a day to your website? With a one percent conversion ratio, that means your website is making \$20 a day.

However, what if you could improve your conversion ratio to 3 percent, 5 percent, or more. All of a sudden; you're making \$60 to \$100 a day with the same amount of traffic. Improve your conversion ratio to ten percent and voila, that \$100 a day turns into \$200 a day.

Whether it's \$20 a day, or \$200, you can make a decent living from niche sites if you diversify and maintain a large web presence. If you're organized and persistent, you can often generate more consistency through a series of base hits than with the occasional grand slam. Be clear about your market, your product and your objectives. And make the most of your traffic through conversion.

Test and tweak. Not every site will be a home run the first time it steps to the plate. Use tools like Google Analytics to determine what makes your visitors stick around and what makes them "bounce". You can then proceed to build on the good and let go of the not-so-good.

Fine tuning your website will improve the performance of your sales funnel and link popularity over time. The difference between a site that generates 100% return-on-investment, and 500% ROI is usually a matter of split testing and tweaking.

## **Tools & Tactics For Making Your Point Online**

Your choice of product and the way it's presented will make a world of difference in your conversion ratio. Whatever your choice of project, list and describe the product benefits. Most site owners describe the product's features. Your visitors don't care about the features, they want to know what the product do for

them. Is your product a time saver? Is it easier to use? Will it make them feel sexy? Make sure you describe how the product will make the visitors life more productive, more fun, easier, or just better.

Another great conversion tool is to offer a fair and reasonable money-back guarantee. Thirty days is good. Sixty or ninety days is even better!

Also make it easy for your customers to pay. And offer a variety of payment options. I can assure you, if you're using only PayPal, you're likely losing sales so present your customer with options.

Wherever possible, provide product pictures and related images. People are visual. Images help your website come alive, and pictures help stimulate the visitor's emotions - and emotions drive sales. Remember a picture is worth 1,000 words.

Another tactic you can use to boost your conversion rate is to use psychologically effective colors. Now, I'm not going to go over the whole psychology of color, but here are a few tips to get you started.

The color blue suggests quality, trustworthiness, success, seriousness, calmness – think about it: Navy blue. Blue is the perfect choice for sales pages. Red can indicate action, strength, courage and even amour. But it can also invoke feelings of anger or discomfort. Be careful which shade of red you use - stick with the deeper tones. Avoid purple, which connotes uncertainty and ambiguity, and only use yellow to highlight certain words and phrases. Also, try to have as much white space as possible. This makes for a much cleaner looking, easier to read website. As much as possible, stick with the white background and dark text – not the other way around. You don't want to give your visitors eye strain.

Make sure your visitor knows their purchase is secure. Proudly display tokens of trust like BBB Online and Verisign logos. Make sure your visitors know your site is secure.

Another great way to engage your visitors and build their trust is to ask for site feedback. Provide your visitor with a way of leaving feedback for you and conveying it to other readers. With the advents Web 2.0, site visitors now expect to leave comments, so provide them a place to do this.

Along similar lines, use authentic customer testimonials, complete with first and last names on your site. Make sure you get your customers permission first. Testimonials are a powerful tool because they give your product credibility from a third party. Testimonials can really be a trust builder. The more testimonials you have, the more likely it is that your visitor will find confirmation someone they identify with. Prove what you say. Back up your claims with cold, hard, indisputable and verifiable facts. Offering testimonials and success stories can help you do this.

Don't be afraid to put your name online, along with a business telephone number. Having an address on your website is also a good idea. To be clear about this, I want to point out that it's a good idea to have a separate phone line for your business, even if it's a voicemail box. Eagle Conferencing is great for this, and they offer both free and paid services. Also, if you don't have a brick and mortar business, invest in a P.O. box for your online enterprise. It's a business expense, and it keeps your private life, well... private. These tips are great for optimizing your website and boosting your conversion ratio.

Once your web site is up and running, the work isn't over. Pay careful attention to the results you're getting. Establish a baseline, and then begin making changes to impact your conversion rate. Make sure you allow enough time for changes to show an impact, especially if your site gets only a few visitors at first.

Whether you initially built your website "because your competitors all had one," or it was simply "to get your name out there," now you know the real reason to take your business online. You want to bring value to the marketplace, serve the needs of your customers, and get paid well - very well - for filling their wants and needs.

## Conclusion

That's our look at ***eCommerce: Start to Finish – Web Development, SEO, Traffic & Conversion***. You can use these tactics to make a real difference in your marketing and your bottom line. But really we've just scratched the surface of eCommerce here in this half-hour. Now you're ready to put these powerful tools in context as an online business promoter. And I'm ready to help you do that.

The next step is to download my audio program called *Online Business Promotion*, 16 half-hour programs like this one, a full 8 hours of quality insights and potent Internet marketing tactics, plus an action guide and step-by-step instructions on getting the most from online promotion for your business and dominating your market. It's like getting a one-day seminar in a box - without the hotel ballroom or the travel headaches.

Getting to the top spot on Google is really pretty simple, and with my *Online Business Promotion* program you'll learn what it takes to get there. What will your business look like next month? How about the month after that? What kind of year-end sales numbers do you finally want to achieve? If you keep doing what you've been doing, you can be sure that you'll keep getting what you've been getting. My program *Online Business Promotion* will help your business break free of mediocre performance and lackluster sales. But you have to take action. I can't do that part for you. To put the power of eCommerce to work for your business, you'll want to get your hands on a copy of my *Online Business Promotion*.

To get started right now... go to my website at [eCommerceGal.com/OnlineBusinessPromotion](http://eCommerceGal.com/OnlineBusinessPromotion). You'll be so glad you did.

Thanks for joining me!

All the best,



Liv Montgomery  
The eCommerce Gal  
[www.eCommerceGal.com](http://www.eCommerceGal.com)



# **INTERNET MONEY LIFESTYLE: ONLINE REVENUE FOR YOUR BUSINESS**

**Liv Montgomery**  
**The eCommerce Gal**  
[www.eCommerceGal.com](http://www.eCommerceGal.com)

## **Terms and Conditions**

The information contained in this guide is for information purposes only, and may not apply to your situation. The author, publisher, distributor and provider provide no warranty about the content or accuracy of content enclosed. Information enclosed is subjective. Keep this in mind when reviewing this guide.

Neither the Publisher nor Author shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages resulting from use of this guide. All links are for information purposes only and are not warranted for content, accuracy or any other implied or explicit purpose.

© 2010 Liv Montgomery

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Internet Marketing Advertising - Ad Revenue from Your Internet Business .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Product Promotion - Product Marketing Management for the Real World .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Internet Affiliate Marketing - Selling Other People's Products for Fun &amp; Profit .....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Checking Out Online - eCommerce, Cart Selection &amp; Merchant Accounts .....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>97</b>

## Internet Marketing Advertising - Ad Revenue from Your Internet Business

Having a website means you have a unique opportunity to make a passive income, or at least make an income that requires low maintenance. One of the best ways to do this is through advertising - receiving compensation for promoting a worthy product, whether it's your own product or someone else's. This is a great way to supplement your existing revenue or even set yourself free financially. Ad revenue is part of the Internet money lifestyle dream - the idea that we can build a series of websites, throw a laptop into a carry-on bag or backpack, and head to Fiji on a moment's notice. Sounds great, doesn't it? Well it is doable with enough effort and a bit of savvy.

Really when you get right down to it, the only reason to be in business is to bring value to the marketplace. You have to provide value and service to the people you would like to call your customers. If you provide enough value, you can enjoy the Internet Money lifestyle. In my program called **eCommerce - Start to Finish**, we said that if you provide useful, relevant content on an optimized page; Offer products that solve problems; and develop lasting connections with people; you'll find online success.

But in order to find those products, people have to know that they exist. That means you have to promote them, whether they're your own or someone else's. What that looks like in terms of advertising is really pretty simple. The steps involved include a) defining a problem that your customer has, whether or not they're aware of it; b) informing them of how they can solve that problem by letting them know about a specific solution; and c) telling them how to get the solution. If you look at any type of effective advertising, you'll see that its promotion does exactly that. From contextual links within a website's content, to banner ads on your mobile phone, or even hour-long infomercials on TV - they're all doing the same thing: defining problems, defining the solution, and helping people obtain the solution.

### Cutting Through the Competition

Now here's where it gets tricky. We live in a world so completely polluted with advertising, that most people have learned to tune it out. Not only are we inundated with hundreds of ads on a daily basis, we even pay for those ads when we buy branded products like Nike baseball caps and REI t-shirts. If you turn on the radio or television, the programming is completely peppered with ads. When you log onto the Internet, the first thing you see is advertising. Do you doubt it? Okay, close your eyes and tell me the brand of your web browser. Who manufactured your computer? Which search engine do you use? Each answer you give is the result of promotion that's been engrained in your brain. Advertising is pervasive throughout our homes, offices and gathering places.

You can't leave your house without seeing billboards, murals, branding on buses, and even placards on people's front lawns. It's in restaurants, stores, libraries and schools. Ad Pollution is everywhere, and as an online marketer, your job is two-fold. One, make your promotions seem like what they are: pieces of useful, relevant information about products and services you passionately believe in. Two, fight ad pollution wherever you can. This not only serves to make your sites, blogs and lenses more appealing to your visitors, it also serves to make your product or service recommendations stand out. You can create a more compelling call to action if you're putting forward only one idea at a time. That means, can the ad pollution.

As a reader scrolls through the typical website, he's inundated with flashing banner ads, AdSense text, contextual ads within the content, and affiliate links within the article he's reading. Most often, this kind of jumbled messaging creates ad pollution that the reader is only wading through, tuning it out instead of carefully considering it.

It happens like this more often than people like to admit – but it doesn't have to be this way. The most common causes of ad revenue disappoints include insufficient market research, failure to track daily expenses or simply a lack of basic business knowledge.

If you're shuddering because you're afraid this looks a lot like you, well, that's why we're talking right now – to help you avoid these heartbreaking advertising mistakes, and experience genuine, solid online business success!

### **Prospects for Your Internet Advertising Income**

You may be wondering, "Will I get rich through advertising?" Uh, NO. Can we keep it real here? You don't mind, do you? Let's get something out the way: Unless you're a marketing genius with incredible intuition, the reality is that while your own reasons for creating a website are valuable inasmuch as they'll keep you going when the going gets tough, the world online is truly a great equalizer. The biggest reason to be in business is to bring value to the marketplace. You can only do this by being of service to the people you'd like to call your customers. If you provide enough value, you can set yourself free financially. It's very democratic. The power in having a website is that if you keep the focus on the parameters that count, you have a 100% equal opportunity to achieve online business success.

The key factor that counts online is whether or not you're providing enough value to your prospects and customers. Your website is like the setting for the jewel that is your core offering, subject to the rules of online engagement. You can only achieve only achieve top ranking by offering value in an intelligent,

relevant way. You can only achieve long term success by serving others. eCommerce can be a very humbling endeavor, and you must keep the spirit of service alive in your business at every moment.

You are not likely to become a millionaire within a few months, let alone a few days from advertising alone. If this is you and I'm wrong, drop me an email - Liv@eCommerceGal.com. I'd love to hear from you. Ad revenue is kind of like niche blogging. You will need to have a whole lot of irons in the fire in order to collect a nice little sum at the end of the month.

So your next question is likely to be, "If it's so Mickey-Mouse peanuts, why should I bother with it?" Because ad revenue can actually bring in a nice supplemental income, I can tell you that. And there are networks you can find that really will bring in more money than the average marketer receives through product promotion alone. And properly done, you can tap into ad streams that easily bring you enough to cover your assets on a monthly basis. In this program, we're going to focus on the best ways to reach this goal as quickly as possible.

### **Where Is Advertising Headed?**

Banner advertising performance has declined on the Internet during recent years because of overuse. Ironically, banner ads are seeing a resurgence in the mobile market. Currently 73% of all people on planet Earth own a mobile phone. There are reportedly 1.8 billion Internet users, but 5 billion people have some type of mobile phone. (Or was that 6 billion? I forget... it's a lot.) We're talking about a significant portion of the human population. I think we've established that. Mobile is everywhere. If you head to Sea World, the odds are high that you'll even see a dolphin sporting a Blue Tooth earpiece. Won't that be interesting to observe as the next wave of advertising emerges.

M-commerce is the buying and selling of goods and services through wireless technology - that is, handheld devices like smart phones. If all you can do with your phone is talk - and not send digital photos to your pal in Australia or find the best eatery on the way to Mount Rainier - well, then... your phone's just not that "smart". This is something that you may not have thought much about, but it's a market sector that's definitely on the move. Japan is currently seen as the global leader in m-commerce, but this type of marketing is on the rise everywhere.

The industries most affected by m-commerce include a number of sectors. Financial services is the most notable, including mobile banking, where customers use handheld devices to access their accounts and pay their bills. Brokerage services are also accessible through m-commerce. Stock quotes can be displayed and trades can now be made over a plate of chicken Kiev at your local bistro.

Besides the financial sector, the telecommunications industry has pioneered m-commerce. Consumers are able to make changes to their phone service, pay their mobile bill and review their accounts. The service and retail industries are now enjoying some popularity with m-commerce. You can place and pay for orders on-the-fly. Of course, advertising in all of these sectors is on the rise as hosting tools and development technology become more widely available through traditional web hosts and other vendors.

Now we're seeing a rise in pay-click-advertising on social networks. While the average website visitor has become inured to anything that even resembles an ad in spite of the appeal of whatever it is you're promoting, ads on social networks are still discreet enough to resemble the rest of the site. They're also highly contextual. Social networkers have a greater sense of security within their password protected area than they might feel on other parts of the Internet. The people who are reading their posts are friends and have been invited. There's a feeling that the reverse must also be true - that the contextual information that shows up on, say, their Facebook profile must be relevant and safe because it's so targeted. I'm talking about the advertising here.

Bottom line, what we're noticing overall is that advertisers' push-through marketing tactics have yielded a push-back on the part of the consuming public.

To get through to your target market, instead of using in-your-face tactics that were so effective 5 or 10 years ago, try this instead. The approach is called pull-through marketing or the soft sell, and it's actually much more effective in getting your point across. You've heard it said many times: People love to buy, but they hate being sold to. Whether you're using social marketing methods or making a product recommendation on your blog, the net effect is the same - and so is the approach. You want to define the problem and sincerely recommend your best solution. Then tell them how to get the solution.

As your reader scrolls through your web pages, keep only one call to action in view at a time. Sure, you can promote your blog or your upcoming podcast at the head of the page. To make it effective, place only one other promotional piece in view at one time, such as an affiliate link within your article or a CPA offer at the foot of the page. Your reader will come to think of your site as an oasis from a visually noisy worldwide web. Make your information trustworthy, and offer genuine value. Your readers will be sure to bookmark your site and come back for more. They'll even tell their friends. But do capture their email address before they leave - you'll want to be sure to send them an invitation to come back.

### **Renting Out Your Virtual Real Estate**

Now let's take a look at the various forms of advertising that can generate revenue for your online business. We'll start with the simplest form, Contextual Advertising. Let's define what it is we're talking about.

Sometime ago, Google adapted its search technology to create a powerful ad mechanism called Adwords. As someone used the Google search engine to search on a given keyword, Google would present bits of relevant advertising around the search results. The ads were based on the keyword term that the user searched on. Thus, search engine marketing was popularized in the form of Google Adwords. An advertiser could bid on certain keywords, and present users with their product offering through their text ads. These advertisers paid for the ad each time someone clicked-through, hence the name pay-per-click advertising. The amount the advertisers pay for each click ranges from pennies to double-digit dollars. Naturally this method of advertising is still in use, and you'll see it every time you use Google to conduct a search.

In February of 2003, another type of contextual advertising was served up by means of Google Adsense. Originally they called it "Google Content-Targeted Advertising." That's a mouthful, isn't it? Like its cousin Adwords, Adsense presents the user with pay-per-click text ads but this time the ads are viewed on an independently owned website such as yours and mine instead of the Google search engine.

The key to Adsense income is to make the text ads look like part of the site, masquerading in a color and a font that blends into your content. Placement also is key, as is the content that surrounds your ad.

Pay-per-click advertising, or PPC, is still around, though the first blush has worn off the rose with the search engines. Adsense is no longer the only game in town as other contextual advertising models like Konterra have come into play. Now it's much more popular for PPC marketers to advertise using social networks like Facebook or using mobile advertising. Now not only do you have several different ad revenue options to choose from, you also have all kinds of online revenue streams available to you and your business. Pull the ingredients together, mix them up just right, and you've got a revenue cocktail.

Setting up contextual advertising on your site really is a breeze. All you need to do is paste a few lines of code onto your page where you'd like the ads to appear, and you're pretty much done.

Select your advertising parameters through the Adsense panel. Refer to a Google heat map to place your contextual ads. The best place, of course, is in the center of your page, but there are other highly effective locations besides this prime real estate. You can place up to three blocks of ads, plus an adlink on your page. But remember what we've said about ad pollution. You want to make your calls to action clear and compelling. Keep only one call to action in view at a time.

As with any ad program, you want to test and track your results and compare them with the performance of your other ad revenue streams. You can use tracking tools to test and track your ad performance. Besides

AdSense resources and discussion forums across the internet, there is a lot of useful information, advice and hints available.

Besides AdSense and Konterra, Yahoo Publisher Network at [Publisher.Yahoo.com](http://Publisher.Yahoo.com) is another source for contextual ad revenue. One of the benefits of using YPN is that you may choose the option to get paid by PayPal, as opposed to getting paid by check. Another advantage is that you can place their ads into your RSS feeds, such as your blog posts and other content.

Microsoft Advertising offers contextual advertising that you can include on your website. Like AdSense, you can place both text and graphic ads on your site, and offer relevant ads targeted to your visitors. Microsoft ads can be placed on the same pages as other contextual advertisements, and so as long as you do not have an exclusivity agreement with another ad network, you can increase your ad revenue.

Chitika.com offers a pay-per-click advertising option that you can run in conjunction with AdSense. One major difference is that Chitika ad units are not contextual. Also Chitika ad units don't look like AdSense. What this means for site owners is increased revenue, flexibility, and overall a better user experience.

Google AdSense revenue combined with Chitika revenue is generally a lot more than AdSense revenue alone. However, if Chitika doesn't have a super-targeted ad to show in space you've provided, then they don't show anything. The ad disappears without leaving a blank space. You can actually select an alternate type of ad like AdSense to show in that space.

Chitika will target the ads to whatever your user entered into the search engine originally. On the flip side, one drawback to using Chitika is that their ads will only display to users who come to your site through a search engine - not through a link from another site.

### **CPA Networks and Why They're Worth It**

Another great idea for generating revenue from your site is to become affiliated with a CPA network. What is CPA? While most small business owners think of a certified public accountant when they hear the term "CPA", most online marketers know that CPA in this context means "cost per action" or "cost per acquisition", depending on who you're talking to. What makes CPA so attractive is that the marketer gets a little piece of the advertiser's expenditure. In other words, it's easy to get paid if you use the right technique. However, like all other forms of advertising, CPA requires a good amount of traffic in order to see any profit.

It's almost like a bad joke:

Q: "What did the CPA marketer earn?"

A: "Seventeen dollars and thirty-two cents."

Q: "What did the CPA marketer spend to get it?"

A: "Five hundred dollars."

Uh... yeah.

In spite of the high margin for error, it's possible to make a good income promoting CPA offers. Let's take a look at the Basics of CPA Marketing. Like standard affiliate marketing, when you become affiliated with a CPA network you're promoting somebody else's offer to your own prospects. The beauty of CPA marketing is that CPA Networks allow you to get paid without making a sale. Your site visitor usually has to take a lesser action - simply clicking through the link and entering a zip code, or their name or email address or some combination of those.

How do you get your site visitors to part with their jealously guarded information?

The answer is, you make it harder to refuse than it is to comply. And there's only one way to do that. You bribe them!

That's right. You must provide them with an enticing reason – one they can't resist. It should feel totally natural, as in it's the next logical step - in fact, it should be the only logical step.

So what's the key to doing this every single time? Well... you can't. But getting it to happen more often than not involves market research. Make sure you use the ads that are most applicable to your demographic.

To join many CPA networks, phone verification is often required. If you qualify for the network, you can get paid by PayPal in many cases. If your application gets turned down, ask your representative what you can do to qualify for the program. Often you can just make a simple correction and request a review of their decision.

Probably the best known CPA network is Commission Junction at CJ.com, and I can tell you they're great to work with. You'll find every type of promotion you can think of, from the wine market to personal development.

Epic Direct is another traditional CPA network, focused primarily on direct response advertising and "CPA".

MaxBounty.com is another traditional CPA network. Since 2004, MaxBounty has offered great customer service from their affiliate managers, and they boast timely, never late payments in multiple currencies.

AdPerio Network provides customized packages based on demographics, geography and other market segments. Adperio's reach includes social networks like Facebook, casual gaming sites and plenty of others.

As you probably know, social networks, gaming and virtual worlds are no longer limited to the young. My white haired mother routinely becomes engrossed in World of Warcraft, spending hours at a time online. She's made friends online from Tokyo to Edinburgh. But I digress...

### **Global Exposure, Local Market**

There are a host of other Ideas for generating ad revenue online. Here are a handful of them.

Local portals offer one of the absolute best ways to make money online. A local portal is the modern day equivalent of the Yellow Pages, combined with all the social interest of a review site. You can make a full time living simply by creating a local portal for your nearest city.

Here's how you can get started. Create a local portal using a content management system called Joomla, which you can download at [Joomla.org](http://Joomla.org).

Joomla is great example of an open source content management system. Basically, this is a sophisticated idea that allows for the simplest possible means of managing information. It's a way for non-technical people to manage large amounts of data. Using Joomla, you can create an online directory for your local community and use it to sell advertising for area vendors.

One thing that you should be aware of is that downloading and installing Joomla is completely free. A number of web hosts make this option available at the click of a button. Other content management systems include Drupal, PHPNuke, Mambo and TYPO3. These all provide power and flexibility for managing your content.

In your portal, include restaurant reviews, local activities and attractions, theaters, bus information, and professional services.

Once your portal is set up, you can sell advertising on your site to local merchants at tiered rates. With the Platinum level you can offer a featured write-up that you post on the search results page for that vendor's

category. The vendor will love it, local customers will appreciate finding this good information, and you'll love your ad revenue. With this type of ad program, you can easily charge \$500, \$1000 or more per year per ad.

Besides the ad revenue this type of site generates, you can market your web development, hosting and SEO services to these businesses. This type of promotional site works well for any medium to large size city. You can make your site the go-to place by driving quality targeted traffic to it.

For development ideas, go to your local yellow pages and create a list of vendors within your marketplace. Approach these businesses with the information about your portal, and let them know they've been included in your directory free. Offer them an upgrade, such as a link on your site to a one-sheet overview of their business.

For example, I live in Seattle. Let's say I have my own local portal, and I've taken the time and care to develop a specialty directory including mom 'n pop gourmet shops and local eateries. Once I've launched my portal and I'm driving traffic to it, I can approach my friend Chris who owns Circa Neighborhood Bar & Grill over in West Seattle. Now, I happen to know that the staff at Circa get phone calls all the time about their menu, about directions, hours and whether or not Circa takes reservations (which they don't). With my portal in place, I can let Chris know that Circa's been included in my local directory for free, but if he pays me \$500 a year, I'll include a link to a full page write up or maybe even Circa's menu. This will save time for his staff, give a boost to his business, and generate revenue for me.

I have to say here that I don't actually own a directory like this - it's just an example for illustrative purposes only, so please don't go looking for it. But I really do have a friend named Chris, and Circa serves just about the best eggs benedict around. Mm! I shouldn't have said that... now I'm hungry.

Another revenue generating solution is to build a search engine of your own. Though it's not something that you commonly think of in terms of making money online, it's easy enough to find database driven technology that allows you to build your own search engine and monetize with AdSense, Amazon or other ad revenue.

### **Off-Beat Ad Revenue**

Getting paid for blogging through agencies seems like a good idea, and I hear that some people have done well with it. I'm not of those people, and I've had an uncommonly difficult time getting paid from multiple agencies. I'm pretty careful with my relationships, and I follow directions well. But every blogging agency I worked with seemed bent on finding new reasons to object to my submissions and re-submissions. The result was countless lost hours and a great deal of frustration.

Another source of online revenue may come from accepting ad links on your site from direct marketers, other websites and ad agencies. This is actually pretty easy money. You can get paid a healthy sum for placing a single text link on your site for a specified period of time, such as 3 to 6 months. This concept also works well for your ezine or newsletter.

Another way to generate revenue is to build a forum or social network of your own, and accept paid advertising. I really enjoyed creating and maintaining a site called The Readers Forum, which quickly became something of an online success. There's a bit of work involved in building a site like this, but there's even more work involved in clearing the spam that gets posted daily. This is something you'll want to be aware of before you enter into the online social realm - hosting a blog, forum or social network means working directly with people and all their funny little quirks. You'll want to plan your day accordingly.

One of the most underutilized tools both for search engine optimization and for revenue is Squidoo.com. I love Squidoo. It's completely free to use, and it allows you to create a one-page site or "lens" that focuses on a single topic. A quality lens will include three or four original articles you've written, along with couple of RSS feeds, some videos embedded from YouTube, and a guest book. Having a Squidoo lens serves a number of purposes for your online business success. You can make money from the advertising on your Squidoo Lens, and also from Amazon products that Squidoo will feed to your lens. You can also place an irresistible offer on your lens for a free product that links to your opt-in page. The greatest benefit from creating a lens is that Google loves Squidoo. Not only will your lens make your pagerank rise, your odds of getting onto Google Page One increase with every lens that you build.

### **Putting It All Together**

The Internet Money lifestyle is not just a dream, but a real goal, and it's achievable. By putting a series of money machines into motion, we can achieve that kind of freedom. The idea that we can build a series of websites, throw a laptop into a carry-on bag or backpack, and head to a tropical island on a moment's notice is within reach. With enough effort and a bit of savvy, ad revenue can play a starring role in your online business success.

## Product Promotion - Product Marketing Management for the Real World

What's the key ingredient to making money online? I'm talking about that one factor that makes it all possible to walk away from your day job or your business, make a passive income, and live the Internet Money lifestyle. Here it is - are you ready? I'm going to give it to right now. Listen up. Grab a pen and write this down. I'm serious. You're going to want to look at this every single day, and you won't hear it from anybody else in the field of online business promotion - I promise you. You want the key to making money online?

Here it is: In order to make significant profits through the Internet, you have to run your business like a non-profit organization.

Huh?

Told you - no one else is touting this one essential truth. I can just hear it now: "Liv, that simply doesn't make any sense. How can you say that? You are *crazy*, lady."

Well, maybe. But that's beside the point. It's a fact. You simply cannot make a profit unless you run your business like a non-profit organization. It doesn't matter what the model is - online, offline, product, service, local venue, global market - you must understand and maintain a non-profit mindset in order to succeed. Here's what that looks like.

You may already know that I have a corporate background. I spent a great deal of my career in media and marketing for big business in the tech sector. What you probably don't know about me is that I've also invested nearly a decade of my life working in the non-profit arena. Whether it's economic development, government procurement assistance, the field of medicine, or the fine arts - every one of these non-profit sectors is concerned with only two things: bringing value to their buying public, and getting their hands on every single dollar they can. They're service-oriented, and they have a money mindset.

See, when you're in the non-profit sector, you're doing the work because you love it. You're on a mission, and you believe in the core of your soul that the work needs doing. You're completely engaged in your daily activity and your long term vision. Having non-profit status as an organization doesn't mean you don't make any money. It means you can't sit on your capital - after salaries, capital expenses and overhead, you've got to reinvest almost all of your profit back into your business. That's fairly reasonable, isn't it?

## **Tough Love For Your Business**

Now, most non-profits are struggling, and profit is something of a pipedream, so they won't miss a single opportunity to bring in revenue. They smell money like a shark smells food. I am not kidding you! They're dependent on donations, grants from the government and foundations in order to survive. Almost all non-profits have to fight tooth and nail everyday for their very existence. And it's tough. But they do it because they believe in what they're doing, and they believe that without their good works, the world would be a poorer place. They have passion for their work. They have courage. They have vision. They have heart.

Now if you doubt what I'm telling you, pop into the emergency room at your local hospital sometime. (I mean that in a good way.) You'll see some of the most giving, courageous, service-minded people in your community. You can bet that behind the scenes, some great hearted pencil pusher is doing everything possible to keep the doors open and leverage one dollar into doing the work of five.

This kind of resourcefulness, this commitment is what you must bring to your business in order to make a profit - in order to make it a success and eventually a self-operating money machine. Money is a tool that can be used to do great good in the world. Money's great, and you want it - lots of it - but it's only a vehicle. To get it, you've got to cultivate the non-profit mindset, at least in the beginning. It can't be only about the money.

There's a statistic going around that says 99% of Internet marketers quit the business before they ever make enough money to live on. Your goal is to be in the 1%. The profit motive alone won't sustain you. You simply can't succeed as an online marketer unless you're passionate about bringing value to the marketplace through the products that you promote. And in order to do that, you can't know the meaning of the word quit.

The good news is, online success is totally attainable. Stay focused on your goal, eyes on the prize, and your passion for it will carry you across the finish line.

## **Your Product, From Concept To Sales**

In this chapter, we'll be taking a look at developing and promoting your own product. What this encompasses is the core of eCommerce - identifying your market, creating a product that will serve and sell, creating a sales funnel, building your mailing list, and attracting JV partners to your promotions. Master these fundamentals. Combine them with Traffic and Conversion, and soon enough you'll find yourself running your business from your laptop at your favorite resort. Now, let's dive into those details.

Of all the ways to make money online, developing and marketing the right product is the most powerful method for achieving online business success. Naturally you can make an income through advertising and other associative selling. But to bring real value to the marketplace, it's best to market a product or service - and preferably one you've created yourself. Successful niche markets for an information product don't grow on trees or fall out of the sky. But you can find them, and with the methods I'm showing, it's almost just as easy.

If you don't have a product already developed, there are some shortcuts you can take. We'll give those a look in just a moment.

When it comes to owning your own business, Internet marketing presents one of the most economical. There's no need for a big financial investment to begin an online business. But even though you need to invest heavily in product development, don't even think about skipping this step. This is the foundation of your business. But don't spend *too* much time on researching your product. You'll want to get into action as quickly as possible. Money loves momentum.

The first thing you need and must have in order to create an information product is an idea...a subject...a topic...that will fill needs, solve problems, or just make life better for some very specific segment of the general population. You are surrounded by ideas everywhere - just look. You don't have to nail it down with your first pass, but you do want to have some kind of concept for your market. Choose something that you're passionate about. Excitement sells, and your own enthusiasm will be contagious.

Deciding on what product or service you will promote in a niche market should be based on a simple principle. There should be a demand for your product or service. You want to offer something that people actually need, something that will make their lives better, make them feel better physically, make them look better, or help them solve a problem.

Once you've got an idea of the direction you'd like to go, it's time to hop onto the Internet and do a little research. A great place to start is Amazon.com. Take a look at their book titles. Amazon has spent very generously on their market research, and that means that every book category you see is another market, and every sub-category is a niche. If you see a Dummies book in your category, so much the better - that means there's a big demand for your topic.

Next, take your idea over to Google, or better yet, Google Trends. Type in a few of your keywords and check the graph to see which direction the market's heading. You want the graph to be pointing up and to the right. Also, check the top regions for this term. Who's looking for what you want to sell? Do they speak your language? If you want to develop and promote a product on, say, pay-per-click advertising within the

mobile marketplace, you'll want to make sure that you're promoting your information product in a place that speaks English, like India or the U.S., or you've written your book in the Urdu language. Why do I say that? Because as of right now, the hottest search trend for the term "mobile marketing" is in Pakistan, followed by India in a close second. The U.S. is not even in the top 5. (I bet you didn't know that.)

The best research, of course, comes from reading and talking to people who have succeeded in niche marketing. Get onto some mailing lists. Watch the gurus - pay attention to what they do, not so much what they say. A word of caution here: check the Alexa rank of the website where your would-be advisor is marketing from. You'll want to consider their success before you model what they do.

Niche marketing at its best helps to solve real problems that real people live with everyday. If you can come up with a product or service to promote in a niche market that will help people solve their problems then you will have a money making niche market website, and you can quickly build a long list of potential customers.

The things that people view as 'problems' run the gauntlet of possibilities... everything from a hang nail to a golf swing to a chronic disease. These are just a few of the problems that people are looking for help to solve. The more urgent their need, the better your sales and the greater your customer's loyalty.

A good way to find out what people consider to be a problem is to visit the online forums. People talk about anything and everything online. They discuss subjects that they wouldn't talk about with their best friends for the simple reason that they can remain anonymous. They look for solutions online for the very reason. By visiting forums and taking note of what people are most concerned about you can search the Internet for products and services that will help them solve those problems. Gather the information about the topic, and write about it. Build a content-rich website for your niche market that helps with the problem you have identified and that will serve the needs of your customers.

Another way to use forums to help you build a niche market website is to join a forum, identify the problem most often discussed, post a question that will produce many responses and edit those responses into an e-book on the topic. The fact is that many people will buy an e-book that is filled with information they could actually gather for themselves.

Another method you can use for product and market research is [Pixelfast.com](http://Pixelfast.com). It lets you see the amount of Google results and the amount people are paying for pay-per-click advertising bids on Overture. Do a little brainstorming and check your results using this tool. You may be surprised by what you see. Sometimes a keyword that you imagine to be popular hardly gets any traffic at all. Likewise, a keyword that you expect to be overrun with search results may actually lack competition. Never assume your own opinion is typical. Verify your assumptions, and you'll do just fine.

## **Finding Your *Blue Ocean Index***

You want to locate low competition / high search keyword terms. The way to do this is to use Google's external keyword tool, which you can access for free at [Adwords.Google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal](https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal). Enter the keywords you're considering, then see how they popular they are. Next, take your best keywords from that research and using the Google search engine, find out how many results there on for that specific keyword term. I personally use this information to come up with what I call my Blue Ocean Index.

When you're fishing - or making sales - you don't want to fish where all the other fishermen are. You want to cast your net in the blue ocean, where there's no competition and plenty of fish, right? Using Microsoft Excel or some other spreadsheet software, take your number of searches for your keyword term, and divide it by the number of results. Translate that number into a percentage, and you've got your Blue Ocean Index. If it's 30% or above, you're in great shape. That means you have a good chance of getting found by the search engines if you do your marketing correctly. If the number's upside down - that is, if it's higher than 100% - all I can say is, what are you doing sitting here? Get to work! You've got some people who are waiting for you to bring your product to market.

When you do your keyword research, choose buying keywords - terms that are specific and indicate that your prospect is looking to make a purchase. If someone searches the term "mobile phone" it means they're curious. But if someone searches on the term "Blackberry 8830 T-Mobile" it's a pretty safe bet that they're ready to buy that phone. They've made their choice, and they're just looking for a safe place for their credit card to land. And my friend, that's the kind of traffic you want to get in front of.

Once you have chosen keywords for the product or service you want to market, now you can research where your customers spend their time online. Get a feel for what makes them tick from a personal as well as business point of view. The tools available at [Quantcast.com](https://www.quantcast.com) are terrific for this. Enter a domain name - let's say Blackberry.com - and take a look at the demographics that come up - gender, age, social background, income, education. Then take a look at other sites that serve the same demographics. These are called affinity sites, and they're listed on the right hand side of the page.

You may be wondering why this level of detail is important - why go to all this trouble when most other marketers don't? Well, that's exactly the point. Most don't. You only need to be a little bit better than everybody else to set yourself miles apart. You want to get inside the mindset of your customer, become intimately familiar with their pleasures and pains, and offer solutions to them in their own terms. Not only that, but by knowing their habits and where they hang out, you can easily take your product to the source and immerse it in the running stream of traffic.

The next thing you need to learn as you research your online niche market is what you can reasonably charge for your product or service. The best and most effective way to do this is to visit sites that advertise products or services similar to what you have chosen to sell. [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) is great for this. [Clickbank.com](http://Clickbank.com) is another great resource. It should be easy to see if they are selling a similar product at a price that's comparable to what you would like to charge.

If you can determine that there are people who are willing to spend money to buy what you are selling, and you can identify how to reach those people, then you have a niche that can make money on the Internet. Sometimes it takes reframing your product or service to make it more attractive, better or just different than what others are selling. Research is the key to successful niche marketing.

### **Creating Your Product – The Homegrown, Organic Method**

Next, let's take a look at developing your information product.

Once you have your market niche idea and you've done your product research, now you're ready to decide what you can do to make money from your niche. The most common type of product is an e-book, and there's a good reason: e-books are in demand, now outselling their paper predecessors on Amazon.com. Ebooks are easy to put together, they're convenient both for buyers and sellers, and they don't take up a lot of space in your garage.

The first thing you'll need for your eBook is a list of chapters. How do you know what chapters to put in your ebook? Well you need to know what people want answers to within your niche so for this we head over to [Yahoo Answers](http://Yahoo Answers).

Yahoo Answers is an excellent resource to see what people are wanting answers to within a market. It is an awesome tool to find out what the chapters or sections of your eBook should be. In the Yahoo Answers search bar, type in the market phrase you have decided on. Search through the results and see what the most common questions or subjects are.

Next, choose 5 or 6 of those questions and make a note of them. These will be the chapters of your ebook. All you need to do now is create a good title for each chapter and add the content.

As you start to put in the content, don't get too caught up in the titles. You can always go back and change them. First, try to think of a catchy title that grabs the reader's attention Here are some guidelines that will help.

Use words like “Secrets” or “Insider’s Guide” or “Never Before Revealed” to spark their interest. (But if you do use that, make sure it really *hasn’t* been revealed before.) Also use the top 10 reasons method, or 10 things to avoid, or some number like that – 5, 7 or 10. Numbers really attract interest. Catch and hold your reader’s attention. When choosing your topic, address the reasons for doing something or certain things to avoid.

Write an introduction to your ebook, telling your readers what you are about to tell them. This does not have to be too long, however a nice brief story will go down well and connect you with your readers.

Want to know the secret to creating your own product super fast? To begin writing the content for your Ebook, you’ll want to find good solid content. Using this shortcut, you can get your book written within a day. Does that make sense? Well, it will in a moment.

You do not need to spend hours of painstaking research to write your next best seller as all the research has been done for you. All you need to do to get good quality content for your Ebook is know where to find it. There are a few tricks you can use here.

Article directories like [EzineArticles.com](http://EzineArticles.com) have thousands of articles that you can use for the content of your product. Bear in mind that it is illegal to copy people’s articles and claim the work as your own. But you can by all means take the main points from an article and re write it in your own words. That’s not too hard, is it?

To use this method, type your keyword into the search box, and it will return all the articles in the database. Choose 3 to 4 articles for each chapter, and compile them into a notepad file, one file for each chapter. For each tip you offer, illustrate your point with a story, illustration or explanation. Then summarize your chapter. See? That’s pretty easy.

The best approach is simply get started, work quickly and write down your initial thoughts. Then go back over your work and refine it after your first flush of inspiration. Using this method, you’ll find that your chapters practically write themselves.

### **Creating Your Product – Bisqwik-style Shortcuts**

Now that we’ve taken a look at the organic, homegrown method of creating your own product, let’s talk about some Bisqwik-style shortcuts. When it comes to product creation and promotion, you’ve got some wonderful ready made solutions. If you’re like me, your hard drive is loaded with Private Label Rights articles and ebooks. Every JV giveaway features oodles of Private Label Rights content. Plus I collect PLR the way

some people collect Pez dispensers - "new in package, still in blister pack, never been used". It's a little odd. But that means that I will never run out of inspiration.

Sound familiar? A great use for all that PLR content that's sitting on your hard drive is to compile it into a series of products using the method we've just outlined. Decide on your topic; define your chapter titles; compile the articles; write the introduction and conclusion. Comb it out - that is, make your edits for grammar, content and voice. Now, one thing you'll want to be very careful of is the fact that a lot of PLR articles are slapped together or even poorly written. Even though you have the right to claim authorship, you'll still wind up doing a fair bit of rewriting. It sure beats writing from scratch, though.

Another terrific option is to use PLR ebooks or public domain works to generate your product offering. One of the beauties of starting with PLR ebooks is that so often you get a sales letter, graphics, thank-you page, and sometimes even an autoresponder series that come with the product.

Here's a tip for you. If you find yourself blessed with this kind of package, have the discipline and the good taste to improve it. Remember, you only need to be a little bit better than those around you in order to set yourself miles apart. One of the drawbacks of using PLR products is that other people are promoting them too. You'll want your product to be all but unrecognizable to someone who may have purchased the very same product from another vendor.

Start by changing the product name. Use your optimized keywords in your title, and whenever possible, get a domain name to match. Rework the graphics. Change up the segments on the sales page, and edit the sales content. Rewrite the autoresponder series in your own voice.

If you have never created an e-book before, it is difficult to understand exactly how much hard work it entails. To be worth the buy, most e-books are at least one hundred pages long; however, some are longer. In addition to the hard work, you must also have some knowledge on the topic that you are writing about. Customers want to buy quality work.

### **Your Sales Funnel: Ever-Increasing Opportunities To Collect Money**

Now that you have a product to sell, let's take a look at your sales funnel. You may be wondering what a sales funnel is. All that means is a method of giving your website visitors ever-increasing opportunities to spend money with you. Your sales funnel includes your opt in page, thank you page, download page and follow up series. Your focus needs to be on getting visitors, then on engaging subscribers, then on making sales - in that order.

Your opt in page is meant to quickly and easily add your visitor to your mailing list - period. This is where you make your irresistible offer, a free report of, say 20 to 30 pages that they can download for free. It has to be so enticing that not subscribing actually creates discomfort, or even a twinge of pain. Subscribing to your mailing list needs to be the obvious choice. There should be as little navigation as possible on this page, no other links - and definitely no sales promotions. Now, why is that? Because once they're on your mailing list, you can market to them all you want. But if they leave your site without giving you their email address, odds are high that you'll never see them again. It takes an average of 5 to 7 exposures for your prospect to become your customer. You're not going to make a sale the first time your prospect comes to your site.

Once you've secured your visitor and they've become a subscriber, all other contacts from that point forward need to build the relationship, provide value and offer your customers ever-increasing opportunities to invest in your trustworthy product offering. In other words, you need to present them with a means to spend money with you at every point of contact after your opt-in page. Monetize, monetize, monetize. This is where the non-profit mindset comes in. Remember what I said about the shark smelling food? You already know your product provides value. You've taken care of that part of the equation. Now your focus is on putting that value into the hands of your paying customers.

After your visitor becomes your new subscriber, they will immediately be directed to your Thank You page. Where many online marketers make a mistake is in using their autoresponder host's default Thank You page. I personally see this mistake all the time. This is a prime opportunity for you to present your first money-making offer. On this page, be absolutely certain to reassure your subscriber that their download is on the way, and let them know that they need to check their email Inbox in order to get it. In the meantime, present them with your first product promotion, whether its an entry level ebook you've written yourself or a link to an affiliate product. Make it a stepped transition, a gradual increment from free to a paid product.

Like your Thank You page, your download page should also present an opportunity for your customers to engage with you and get more value. Your Download page should contain a thank message at the top and the mention that their product link is at the bottom of the page. The content in between needs to be a nice, juicy product promotion sandwiched in between two slices of satisfaction. Mm mm mm. Tasty marketing!

The autoresponder series is simple marketing mastery at its most elegant. Once your subscriber joins your mailing list, they should be treated to a minimum of 10 automated emails from you, all of them offering valuable content and enticing products for them to enjoy - at a price. There are differing opinions about how to present sales copy in your newsletter. Some say you need to do it with every contact, while others say every 3rd or 4th time. I say it depends on how often you contact your list and how crowded your market is. If you're swimming in the blue ocean, there's no need to be timid about your message. Ultimately, your marketing is a reflection of your own style, personality and passions. Over time, you'll find that your

relationship with your readers becomes intimate and nuanced. You'll know when you're contacting them too much or not enough.

This brings us to the topic of feedback. The best feedback you can receive is through your online data. Test and track everything - traffic, load times, headlines, even product names. Keep your finger on the pulse of your business the way you would monitor the health of your child or your pet. If you love what you're doing, you'll be naturally curious about its every facet.

### **Embarking On Joint Adventures**

Driving traffic and creating conversions are two topics that I cover in other programs. But it's worth touching on partnership promotion here in this chapter. Life gets more easy, fun and profitable when you bring in like-minded partners.

You can meet potential joint venture partners through social networks, online forums, or simply by getting onto their mailing list. Once you have 500 subscribers on your list, you can easily approach other marketers who are enjoying a similar level of success, and you can trade marketing emails to send out to your subscribers. This doubles the size of the market you can tap into and adds significantly to your reach.

JV Giveaway events also can be a great way to build your mailing list, but it depends on the event. They can be hit and miss. However, once you have your opt-in page set up for one event, you can use it over... and over... and over again to grow your list of subscribers.

If having a partner is a good thing, having a team of partners is a great thing. When you involve affiliates in your sales efforts, you can double, triple... or even quadruple your sales goals for a given month. The possibility for potential growth through affiliates is virtually unlimited. The more affiliates you have in your program, the more money you can make. If Ray Croc had tried to run each and every McDonald's restaurant himself, he would not have been very successful. For maximum growth, you need to involve others.

To attract affiliates, make it worth their time. Offer a high commission per sale. The higher the commission, the more affiliates will join your team or business or program. Provide the tools they need to successfully market your program. For example, provide them with articles, banner aids, email text, and anything else that might make the program easier for the affiliates to operate and help increase sales.

You can set up your Affiliate Program yourself through Affiliate Tracking Software that resides on your hosting account. This software provides a method to track affiliate sales. It also allows affiliates to view their progress. The disadvantage of using this option, however, is that you are responsible for making the

payments. If you don't handle the accounting correctly it could wind up costing you a lot of headaches in terms of legalities, paperwork and tax compliance.

If you enroll in an Affiliate Tracking service, they will do all the tracking work and payments for you. This is a bit more sophisticated, and it's a good option to use if you are a beginner or a busy person. It's totally affordable, since most such companies only charge a relatively small fee. Whichever way you decide to run your affiliate program, it is sure to increase profits for your business.

If you are unsure about this money making opportunity or the responsibilities that go with it, well, at least, give it a try. Odds are that the success you find will outweigh the investment of time and care that you'll need to put into your affiliate program. As you gain experience, you'll find even more ways to promote your products and profit from real online business success. And I should add that teamwork is the name of the game here. It starts with being a worthy player.

### **Never, Ever... *Ever* Take Off Your Blindfold**

So, what's the key ingredient to making money online - that one factor that makes it all possible to live the Internet Money lifestyle? In order to make significant profits through the Internet, you have to run your enterprise like a non-profit organization. What entrepreneurs and non-profits have in common is that they both have passion for their work. They have courage. They have vision. They have heart.

One of my favorite illustrations of this concept is a famous scene from the recent movie "Facing the Giants." A young quarterback named Brock on a high school football team is only going through the motions during an afternoon practice - he's already written off the upcoming game as a loss. His coach calls him on it in front of the whole team. Brock's discipline for his mistake is that he has to repeat a really intense drill on his own in front of the whole team, and this time he has to do it blindfolded. The drill is a tough type of crawl down the football field while he's carrying one of his teammates on his back.

At the outset, he thinks he can go to maybe to the 30 yard line if he pushes it, but he promises Coach to give it his best shot.

"You're gonna show me your best? Your very best?" says the coach. I'll never forget those words. "Your very best. Don't you quit on me."

See? You already know what happens. Even if you haven't seen the movie, you can guess.

With the blindfold on, Brock can't see where he is and he does give it his best. Coach won't let him quit. You watch him crawl down the field inch by inch and falter, his teammate nearly falls off his back, his arms are burning with the pain, sweat pouring off his face.

But he just goes on and on.

Coach keeps after him and just won't let him quit. It's a tremendous struggle and he nearly doesn't make it. Brock goes the distance - a full 100 yards! When he finally collapses without an ounce of strength left, he's in end zone. Not only does he have the awestruck admiration of every single teammate privileged enough to witness this miracle, but he's won something that he never even knew he was missing: *his self-respect*.

This is the kind of passion, courage, vision and heart you need in order to succeed in business. The alternative is wondering what would have happened if you had given your best. Why not find out where your dreams really can take you?

## Internet Affiliate Marketing - Selling Other People's Products for Fun & Profit

Quite sometime ago, in the early part of the 20th century, an author named Dale Carnegie wrote what is now a very famous book called *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. Carnegie enjoyed a long and celebrated career, and he's considered one of the founding fathers of the self-growth industry. But the irony of it is, the original intent of this work was to train executives and salesmen in the art of influence. It was about making sales. At the time of his first published work, *The Art of Public Speaking* published in 1915, Carnegie was Professor of Public Speaking at the Baltimore School of Commerce and Finance.

Now, what should be no surprise to you is that the principles he professed so long ago are alive and well today, and they're just as relevant as they were nearly 100 years ago. Why is that?

Because they deal with the very core of human nature and what it means to be a member of Western society. From the early days of civilization, people have wanted to trade the products of their labor for the goods they can't or won't produce on their own. More to the point, whether it's through barter or direct sales, people want to make these trades with someone they know, like and trust. In fact, the whole topic of influence revolves around this principle. This is the crux of Carnegie's teachings.

As an online business promoter, that means that you need to be worth knowing, you need to be likeable and you also have to be trustworthy. The way to put this across to your prospects is to start with genuine interest in them. Your care and concern for them will shine through, even in the seemingly cold reality of the digital realm.

The first thing to decide, before you can have a body of customers to influence, is what type of products you would like to promote. Each of us has an interest or a hobby. Whether you're an armchair adventurer and you love all kinds of books, music, and movies, or you're more active and you like sports and traveling, there's a way for you to make a comfortable living through affiliate marketing using your hobby. Now, you have to know where your strengths are, the things you're good at and the abilities that relate to your chosen field.

In the chapter about **Product Marketing Management**, we cover the step-by-step process for determining your market and your niche, then choosing a product to develop and promote. These same steps apply to affiliate marketing or any other sales paradigm where you're promoting someone else's products. While affiliate marketing shares many sales factors with promoting your own product, there are some distinct advantages and disadvantages to marketing someone else's goods as an affiliate. We'll be covering them in this chapter.

## **Get Clear On the Rules of Engagement**

Now let's take a look at a few different types of partnership, as well as some basic ground rules. There are a number of ways you can engage with a vendor to promote products without having to invest in physical inventory or digital product creation. Let's take a look at them now.

Affiliate marketing is a revenue sharing partnership between a web merchant and one or more sales affiliates. The affiliate is paid a commission for referring clicks, leads or most often sales to a merchant. The advantage is that the affiliate can make money in a business without the upfront costs of creating a product. There's no worry about e-commerce, bookkeeping, or even customer support. That's the merchant's responsibility.

Affiliate marketing can include opportunities with multiple vendors through the likes of Clickbank, Amazon, the CPA networks, Bravisa and affiliate malls. There are also direct resale opportunities through individual vendors, such as web hosting companies and publishers.

There's also drop shipping, which means establishing a relationship with a reliable distributor who will fill your customers' orders for you. These types of suppliers can either be domestic wholesalers or import companies. There are websites such as Alibaba.com that serve as a clearinghouse for opportunities of this type.

Direct sales and network marketing involve yet another type of sales program where you can promote others' products and get paid for your marketing efforts. Although traditional MLM companies tend to discourage their associates from independent promotions online, the tide of modern marketing is changing all that, and we're seeing a shift to more and more online promotion with these companies.

Finally, in this chapter we'll take a peek into Master Resale Rights products. These are typically digital information products that you can purchase and promote, keeping 100% of the profits for yourself. Master Resale Rights products can be very appealing, though they're not without their limitations as well. We'll look a little closer at all these ways to ring your cash register coming up in the next half hour.

## **Good Fences Make Good Neighbors**

Whether you're taking orders for beauty supplies or fishing reels, or even promoting the latest top-selling guide for Internet Marketing, there are some pitfalls to be aware of if you're selling someone else's products. The first thing to know is that anytime you involve someone else in your business, there is a potential for some disappointment. However slim the chances may be of someone letting you down, the potential does

exist, and the smart business person will take precautions to minimize their risk. Even someone with the most sterling character is still a human being, subject their own foibles and frailties. Hey, life happens, and that means it can happen to your business partner as well. Partnering with another entity - whether it's an individual, a team of joint venture partners, or a corporation - means that the success of your business is vulnerable to their mistakes. Oh, how well I know.

Here are some ways that you can cover yourself before you ever get started. Be clear in the parameters of your legally binding agreements with anyone you'll be sharing revenue with. If it's a company, read their terms and conditions. If it's an individual, put your agreement in writing. It's very difficult to have a handshake reviewed by your attorney. And whatever the agreement, you should have it reviewed by your legal counsel before you sign on the dotted line. Call it preventive maintenance.

When you're entering into a business partnership, you're at the height of optimism. You're excited, and you want things to work out. You want to display your trust to your new partner. But that doesn't mean you should be unprofessional. My older brother once told me, "Good fences make good neighbors. And a good contract is like a good fence." Do you think he knew what he was talking about? It's great advice, and I'll never forget it. It's saved me a good deal of trouble more than once.

Of course, the best approach to any legal partnership is conducting your due diligence first. Look into the background of the person or people you'll be partnering with. Do a web search on their name, their product, and any business names associated with your opportunity. In most cases, you'll be pleasantly surprised. And the few times you're surprised in a less-than-pleasant way, well, you'll be glad you took the time to conduct a little research.

### **Do You Speak *Consumer-ese*?**

Now let's take a closer look at what's involved in marketing other people's products. As with promoting your own goods, when you decide to offer someone else's wares, you need to do some market research. You'll not only want to get a feel for the needs of your customers, but you'll want to take a close look at how people are buying what you want to sell. In more than half of all cases, a purchase begins with an Internet search. You'll want to be very clear on how your prospects are thinking about your marketplace.

Do a little brainstorming and check your results using the Internet. Take a good look at the categories and sub-categories in the Books section on Amazon.com. Amazon spares no expense on market research, and you can take advantage of their deep pockets without obligating yourself or your business. You may be surprised by what you find. Also, browse around the Internet using the Big Three search engines - Google, Yahoo and Bing. Sometimes a keyword that you imagine would be popular hardly gets any traffic at all.

Likewise, a keyword that you expect to be overrun with search results may actually lack competition. Never assume your own opinion is typical. Verify your assumptions, and you should do just fine.

What this means is that your research should help you locate low competition / high search keyword terms. One way to do this is to use Google's external keyword tool, which you can access for free at [Adwords.Google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal](https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal). Enter the keywords you're considering, then see how they popular they are.

Next, take your best keywords from that list and head over to the Google search engine. Find out how many results there for that specific keyword term. Make sure you use quotation marks in your search to get an exact match. I personally use this information to come up with what I call my Blue Ocean Index. Here - I'll explain what that means.

When you're fishing - or making sales - you don't want to cast your net where everybody else is. You want to be in the blue ocean, where there's no competition and plenty of fish, right? To find your Blue Ocean Index, take your number of searches for your keyword term, and divide it by the number of search results. Using Microsoft Excel, you can translate that number into a percentage, and you've got your Blue Ocean Index. If it's 30% or more, you're in great shape. That means you have a good chance of getting found by the search engines if you do your marketing correctly. If the number's upside down - that is, if it's higher than 100%, you've got a winner on your hands. Time to get to work! People are waiting for you to bring that product to market.

When you do your keyword research, choose buying terms - keywords that are specific and indicate that your prospect is looking to make a purchase. It's like the Blackberry example. If somebody's searching on the term "mobile phone" it means they're curious. But if somebody's looking up "Blackberry 8830 T-Mobile" it's a pretty safe bet that they're ready to buy that smart phone. They've made their choice, and they're just looking for a safe place for their credit card to land. Those are the kind of people you want to get to know.

Once you have chosen keywords for the product or service you want to market, now you can research where your customers spend their time online. Get a feel for what makes them tick from a personal as well as business point of view.

You may be wondering why you need go to all this trouble to promote someone else's products when most other marketers don't. Well, that's just it. Most don't. And affiliate marketing is a competitive field. You only need to be a little bit better than everybody else to set yourself miles apart. You want to offer solutions your customers are looking for and speak in terms they understand.

## Hang In There – You’re Just Warming Up!

Once you decide on a market, you'll need to practice a little perseverance, patience, and determination. Too many online business promoters miss their opportunity because they become impatient and they give up before they get started. Despite the ease of entry, this is a business and you need to keep that marathon mindset. Having a strong desire to succeed in affiliate marketing will see you through.

As with any business, being an online marketer is not necessarily an easy task. You have to learn a few core techniques and put them to work over and over again. Learn how to market your site effectively, and it will enable you to convert visitors into customers.

There are a couple of down sides to promoting affiliate programs. Let's get those out of the way before we dive too deeply into this topic. One drawback is that with affiliate marketing, you're competing with other marketers in order to sell exactly the same product for the same price. The key differential is that the traffic you're driving is uniquely your own.

So, what else is on the negative side? For one thing, merchants offer lower commissions to affiliates who partner with them through a third party or CPA network. This is because they still have to pay for the use of service and the technology provided by the network. Direct partnership with the merchant cuts the cost of advertising through the network, and a direct relationship like this means the affiliate has greater potential to earn more. Also with using a network, it's possible that your payment may be delayed for a month or more since program networks will pay you only after the advertiser or the merchant has paid them.

Another element to be aware of is that if your business is solely focused on affiliate marketing, you have no real assets. If the product you're promoting suddenly goes offline, then your website immediately has a link to nowhere, and that means lost revenue. Also, in the event of changes in regulation, an entire niche market may suddenly become unavailable or difficult to conduct business in. We saw this happen in the U.S. with government regulation of the solar power industry back in the '80s. What seemed like a solid market went bust overnight. You'll want to keep your product offering diverse, and have at least a handful of your own products to promote. As with all investments, the key is to diversify.

Another drawback to affiliate marketing is that some affiliate programs may not be completely honest, and they might decide not pay you, keeping the money that you generated for themselves. The best way to protect yourself is to go online, do some research, and see if you can find any complaints about the program. Fortunately these types of vendors are in the minority.

## **Affiliate Marketing Can Be Fun & Easy**

With these precautions, you may be wondering, why use affiliate marketing at all? Well, simply because affiliate marketing is the easiest and possibly one of the most liberal ways to earn profits online.

While there are these couple of pitfalls to be aware of with affiliate marketing, it's still a great way to do business. Whether you've signed up as an affiliate with the Marketplace at Clickbank.com, you've enrolled in a CPA network like Commission Junction, or you're a reseller for HostGator or Blue Host, affiliate programs have some awesome advantages. If you implement them correctly, you can make a great income and even land some nice bonuses in the process.

Now that you know what to look out for, here's what it takes to succeed selling other people's products and why it's worthwhile.

Most often, the vendor whose product you are promoting does all the administrative leg work for you. They'll handle all the customer support, payment processing, product delivery, and refunds. All that you have to do is direct people to their sales page by providing a link through your site, blog, article or advertisement. Once a customer clicks your link and makes a purchase, you earn a percentage of that sale. That's it. You just have to wait for your commissions to come in. If you want to make money online, the right affiliate program can be a very clean, efficient way to do that.

You don't have to develop or carry the product. You don't even have to know everything about the product - just enough to be excited and to make a sincere product recommendation. Product fulfillment is up to the vendor. When you join an affiliate program, your main concern is getting traffic to your site, and then influencing those visitors to click on your affiliate links. Any good affiliate program will provide the materials you need to promote their products. Usually this includes emails, banner ads, text links, and sometimes even free reports that you can use on your website to promote the offer.

The best programs will even offer you training for effective marketing techniques.

I can tell you from first hand experience that product development is time consuming. Even when you take shortcuts in acquiring content through private label rights or outsourcing, you still need to devote time and interest in developing your product. You have to put your personal stamp on it. Affiliate marketing, simply said, is a relationship or agreement between a merchant and a promoter. It's beautifully simple. The product development is strictly hands-off for the affiliate. There's no way to become involved in product development - and that means pure simplicity. The game then becomes all about promotion.

When it comes to selling other people's products through affiliate programs, you have several types to choose from. For instance, a one-tier affiliate program pays on one level and generally offers you a larger commission. As an affiliate you'll get a pre-determined amount per sale. A two-tier affiliate program means affiliates get paid on two different levels, so you can recruit others to join your sales team. A lot of people like this model because it offers leverage - kind of an affiliate sandwich, with your merchant on one side and your sales team on the other. Profiting from affiliate marketing programs, however, does not depend so much on the method of compensation as it does on the traffic to your site. As an affiliate, your focus is on the traffic side while you leave both the product development and conversion to your merchant.

[Clickbank](#) is almost synonymous with affiliate marketing, and they've staked their claim as the web's most trusted digital marketplace. The commission rate is pretty substantial, around 50% or more, making it very attractive for affiliates to do business with them. The company has paid out nearly \$2 billion in commissions over the years, and they've never missed a payment. With a record like that, it's a safe bet that Clickbank is a great place to find quality digital products to promote.

[Amazon.com](#) is also known as the world's largest online marketplace, and they offer an affiliate program as well. While their commissions are typically in the single digits, one very sexy appeal of working with Amazon is their visitor tracking. Not only will you receive a commission on the product that attracted your visitor to Amazon, you'll also get a piece of any other purchases your customer makes on the site. I call that very sexy!

Besides Clickbank and Amazon, there are hundreds of other affiliate networks. The best way to locate them is to do a Google search on the term "affiliate networks". You'll find more than enough opportunities to engage in. As a business person, it can be risky to focus on promoting a single product. You need to promote multiple products or services and generate multiple streams of affiliate income. While you want to opt for quality over quantity, diversification is the surest path to your business stability. Here are a few ways that you can diversify.

### **Generate Multiple Streams of Affiliate Income**

First, take a look at promoting real-world products through your website. You don't necessarily need to endorse only online products. There are products or services offered offline that can be really lucrative for your affiliate business. For example, you might do well promoting satellite TV subscriptions, fitness club memberships or even personal development programs and seminars for a commission.

Another way to generate revenue through your online business is through joint ventures. Usually, you will need to prepare the sales tools, including ads, product images, text links, and a brief email series. Your joint

venture partner should offer you the same for their products. Provide a bonus product that your JV partner can use to promote to their subscribers.

One of the most popular truisms of online marketing is the term "Rinse and Repeat." I always thought this was kind of a funny expression, but it is apt. It means making money online can be as simple as shampooing your hair: "lather, rinse and repeat." Once you find a system that works - that is, once you've found a way to make a small amount of money online - all you need to do is repeat the process. This often means creating multiple websites.

By creating more opportunities to generate revenue, you can make sure that your income will continue to rise. And speaking of generating income, another source of promotional revenue is hosting a series of online stores through merchants like [Bravisa.com](http://Bravisa.com). Bravisa is an online retail channel that specializes in selling products from small suppliers into targeted markets. Through Bravisa you can create an ecommerce page and embed it into your site. This is truly set-it-and-forget-it merchandising.

Like affiliate marketing, you can leverage the product development of other vendors. However, unlike affiliate marketing, the price structure lies within your control. You set your own mark up, and you can host unlimited stores and products. What's really great is that Bravisa's technology is enabled to work with different social networks, like Facebook and Twitter. With such a huge portion of the population spending their discretionary time connecting online, this means greater opportunities for you to bring value to the marketplace and get paid for it. Bravisa goes one step beyond advertising and solves the revenue problem beautifully.

### **CPA Networks Mean A Paycheck Without Sales**

Now let's take a look at CPA Networks. This is another great way for generating revenue from your site. So, what is CPA? While most small business owners think of a certified public accountant when they hear the term "CPA," most online marketers know that CPA in this context means "cost per action" or "cost per acquisition", depending on who you're talking to. CPA is simply another way of getting paid for promoting somebody else's stuff. The CPA Network is basically like a clearinghouse that connects publishers - that's you and me - with advertisers like global corporations, and everybody wins.

What makes CPA so attractive is that the publisher gets a piece of the advertiser's expenditure. Often there's no selling involved. The action referred to in "cost per action" typically doesn't involve sales. It can be something as simple as having your website visitor enter their zip code into a form. In other words, it's very easy to get paid if you use the right technique. Like standard affiliate marketing, when you become affiliated with a CPA network, you're promoting someone else's offer to your own prospects. With affiliate marketing,

your site visitor actually has to buy the product you're promoting in order for you to get paid. The beauty of CPA marketing is that, while sales conversions do apply in some cases, your site visitor usually has to take a lesser action - simply clicking through the link and entering a zip code, or their name and email address or combination of those. CPA Networks allow you to get paid without making a sale.

Now, why would an advertiser want to pay for information like this? Well, the answer's pretty simple: so they can market to them again and again. They're building a mailing list.

These offers are easy to convert because they create no obligation for the user. Don't do what everyone else is doing; be creative. You can sign up for 3 or 4 networks, and stay on top of the offers - keep the ads fresh. Use the ads that are most applicable to your demographic. Like all other forms of advertising, CPA requires a good amount of traffic in order to see real profit.

Some of the most popular CPA networks include [LinkShare](#), [Commission Junction](#), [ShareASale](#), [PeerFly](#), [Affiliate Future](#) - the list goes on. Joining a CPA network can be effective in building your online marketing business. On the plus side, joining a CPA network helps you manage and maintain sales records and other web business statistics. The network handles your commissions and gives you a monthly accounting along with a check.

### **MRR: The Ultimate In Selling Other People's Stuff**

We mentioned that one way to make money online without developing your own product is by promoting Master Resell Rights (MRR) products. This is another way to make money by selling products that you didn't create. A lot of people believe that you have to be trained in a particular field or have a special talent in order to promote a product in that niche. The reality is skills and training will increase your odds of finding a legitimate money making opportunity. However, they are not actually required. You certainly want to have some familiarity with your topic, but you don't really have to enjoy expert status in order to present a worthy product. Master resell rights products are most commonly e-books, software, graphics, and articles.

The first step is to find a resell rights product in your chosen niche. You can do a standard internet search on the term "MRR" or "Master Resell Rights," and you might even find some for free if you look. Be careful, though - you want to make sure that your product hasn't made the rounds yet, and that it contains updated information that's not widely available.

Another great resource for free products with resale rights is through JV Giveaways. You can do a search on the Internet for these extravaganzas, or you can simply take a look in forums like the [Warrior Forum](#) and watch for announcements. Get onto some mailing lists while you're at it, and watch how these marketers

promote their products as well. Although getting the resell rights to a product won't require a great deal of work on your part, it is important to remember that you will have to put out some effort.

Once you've decided on an MRR product, make sure you're clear on the sales and copy restrictions. In some cases, you can add your name to the sales page and the product, along with the original author. In other cases, you're limited in how you can present the product. Certain products have restrictions on the price you can charge, or even whether or not you can give it away. These restrictions are intended to keep the value of the content high, and they actually serve you.

To effectively sell your product, you'll need to reach your customers. At this stage, you should have a pretty good idea of who your customers are, what they like, and how to communicate with them. Now you have to figure out how to get your product into their hands. In deciding among your options, consider how your customers will recognize the value of your product, and what it will cost you in time and money to offer your goods. Direct sales methods online allow you to tailor your message to your customers, allow you to answer questions, and get direct feedback.

Products are easier to sell when customers recognize the benefits. This starts with offering a product that they urgently need. Recognize that buyers may resist your product if you try to make them alter their habits. Offering greater convenience, lower cost, and higher quality all lead to the ringing of your virtual cash register.

As an online business promoter, you need to be worth knowing, you need to be likeable and trustworthy. The way to put this across to your prospects is to start with genuine interest in them. By selecting quality products that meet your customers' needs and demands, your care and concern for them will shine through, even in the seemingly cold reality of the digital realm.

## Checking Out Online - eCommerce, Cart Selection & Merchant Accounts

In today's global economy, e-commerce and e-business have become an increasingly essential part of any business strategy. That means businesses and people are connecting in ways that they've never been able to before.

What that means to you as an online business promoter is that you can start a business with less capital and you stand a greater chance for success than in times gone by. It's easier to connect with your customers - find out what they want, deliver it to them, and make sure that they like what they've purchased from you. You can also enlist them to help spread the word about your business at a level that was previously almost inconceivable. Coupled with the right strategy, eCommerce allows small scale shops to compete with large, well-funded corporations - and to compete successfully.

To say that the world is shrinking moment by moment doesn't really capture the essence of what's going on. Technology has transformed not only the way we live our day-to-day lives, but the big picture of what we're actually doing with the time that's given to us. While they're also addressing many of the same problems as before, the typical consumer is seeking more elegant solutions.

Let's take a closer look at that. When I was very young, my family had one phone. We didn't even call it a land line - there was just nothing to compare it to. It was simply the phone. When the phone rang, someone in the family would walk briskly or even run to the den to answer it. *"Hello. This is Olivia. Who is this?"* (I've grown a little more informal since then.) There was a sense of urgency to get the phone, because you just never knew who was calling or if you'd get another chance to talk to them. No caller ID. No \*69. No voicemail - not even an answering machine. Certainly no Call Waiting. A phone call really was like an event. The person receiving the call was suddenly elevated in stature. *"You have a phone call." "Oh. I'll be right there."*

The same was true of the mail. At that time, my mother complained that the mail was only delivered once a day, unlike when she was growing up. I remember so many wonderful things came in the mail - mostly letters from friends and family far away... in the next county. When one of us got a letter in the mail, it was a big deal, and the whole family had to hear what the sender had to say. Also, sometimes parcels would come in the mail, like having Christmas in the middle of the year. The mailman was a popular guy.

These days, forget the mailman. The only thing he delivers is junk. Shopping, banking, bill paying and connecting with other people is almost all done electronically. And if your phone has a wire coming out of it, it's because you're charging the battery. If all you can do with your phone is talk - and not send digital photos to your pal in Australia or find the best eatery on the way to Mount Rainier - well, then... your phone's just

not that "smart". Worldwide connection has become so easy, so instantaneous in such a short amount of time, that consumers have come to expect it - even demand it. It means there's nowhere better for business to be than online.

### **eCommerce: Let's Talk Turkey**

Not convinced? Here - let's take plumbing for example. This is one service that's definitely real world. So how does a business like plumbing translate to the world online?

Let's say it's Thanksgiving Day. You're roasting a turkey, and your whole house smells like mincemeat pie. Most of your family's already arrived for the feast, maybe even had a couple of aperitifs to get into the holiday mood. Some friends give a call to say they're on their way, just took a wrong and got delayed, but you can hardly hear them on the phone because the dog's in the kitchen barking at who knows what. There's an odd rushing sound you've never heard before, and Champ just won't be quiet. So, phone in hand, you cross the family room, round the corner in the hall and step into the kitchen where you find that the floor is covered with water pouring from a broken sink pipe in the upstairs bathroom. There's a small fountain coming out of your kitchen ceiling.

Now. Do you need a plumber? Undoubtedly! When's the last time you called one? Six months ago. Does he work on Thanksgiving? Well... not from Tahiti! He's on vacation. So you're stuck with a house full of people, a kitchen full of water, and a real household emergency on your hands. You need help fast, but the last time you called one of those "rooter" guys he smelled like a sewer and he charged you double.

While this sounds like a nightmare scenario for homeowners and renters alike, (and I might even have lost you for a moment because you're thinking of your own sad story like this), the advent of the Internet means that a person can go online, look up a handful of plumbing contractors in moments, check out their reviews and their rates, go to the website, put down a deposit using a credit card, and have the leaky pipe fixed before the mincemeat pie comes out of the oven.

Now, let's say you're that plumbing contractor. You get the emergency phone call while you're sitting on the couch with a brew, watching the big game. You're stuffed - you can hardly move - because you couldn't wait and you ate Thanksgiving dinner at noon. The last thing you want to do is go fix somebody's leaky pipe. So you send a text message to your nephew, hire him for the job, and go back to the big game before half-time's over. Your website has landed you a paying customer on Thanksgiving Day, and you didn't even have to complete the job yourself.

Does that work? Sure. Is that eCommerce. You bet! eCommerce is more than just selling ebooks for people to download online. There is a whole world of possibilities you can use to bring value to the marketplace. It's scenarios like this that allow us to take advantage of technology to get results faster, to make our lives better, not just for the business, but for the consumer as well - for the community. By leveraging the Internet to get the word out and bring in business, as a society we're living our lives in a whole new way. And people have come to expect it. Your job as an entrepreneur is to deliver it them.

## **Defining the Five Types of eCommerce**

There are different types of e-commerce, and we'll be taking a look at them in this program, along with some of the technology needed to enjoy real success online. First let's define some of the major types of e-commerce. These include business-to-business, business-to-consumer, business-to-government, consumer-to-consumer, and mobile commerce or m-commerce.

E-tailing or electronic retailing is the first thing to come to mind when we talk about eCommerce. This means selling retail products on the Internet, usually in the business-to-consumer model. Amazon.com, which opened its virtual doors in 1996, is a great example of this type of sales model. Obviously it works - they've been around for a long time.

Sales between companies and consumers involves a few predictable steps. Customers gather information and then make a purchase, whether it's a physical item like a car or a house, or an information product such as content, software or e-books.

Business-to-consumer online sales, or B2C, is actually the second largest type of e-commerce, even though it's the earliest and the most visible. The most well known vendors in the B2C arena are companies like Amazon, Drugstore.com, Beyond.com, ToysRus, E-Trade and Travelocity.

Putting up and maintaining a Website is much less expensive than starting up and operating a "brick-and-mortar" business. Consumers can find the most competitive price for a product or service, or even find the best solution for their problem.

Business-to-business or B2B e-commerce simply means e-commerce between companies. In fact, recent statistics show that about 80% of e-commerce is B2B. Most experts predict that B2B e-commerce will continue to grow rapidly as more local businesses develop and increase their web presence - like our friend the plumber.

IBM, HP, Cisco and Dell are great examples of B2B eCommerce companies. For instance, Cisco takes in more than 90% of its product orders over the Internet.

Business-to-government e-commerce or B2G is generally defined as commerce between private companies and the public sector. Using the Internet for public procurement, licensing procedures, and other government-related operations typically involves a bid process.

Web-based purchasing policies increase the transparency of the procurement process and reduces the risk of irregularities - like paying a thousand-dollars for a hammer. So far, government procurement systems remain underused, and the size of the B2G e-commerce market is fairly insignificant. But it's something to be aware of.

Consumer-to-consumer e-commerce or C2C is simply commerce between private parties, and this is actually a big deal. Remember the hoopla about eBay? Some people are asking if eBay is in its twilight. Well, this eCommerce cyber-forum is still hanging in there, trading about \$2,000 worth of goods every second as of the time of this recording, and they accept a modest fee for each transaction. You and I should do so well, thank you.

Consumer-to-consumer e-commerce has three major models. The first is the online auction through the likes of eBay, which allows 90 million active users to bid online in real-time for stuff in 45,000 categories.

The second model is the peer-to-peer system, like Napster. What Napster offers is a protocol for sharing files between users through chat forums. Other file exchange and money exchange models are included in this category as well.

The third type has been around forever. Classified ads at portal sites like Craigs List, Excite Classifieds and iOffer are as big as ever. Craigs List features posts in dozens of categories in cities and communities around the world. While some complain that the posting requirements on Craigs List are unnecessarily stringent, I personally think Craigs List and other similar sites are doing a great job and filling a much needed service in the global community.

A few minutes ago, we touched on M-commerce or mobile commerce. This is something that you may not have thought much about, but it's a market sector that's definitely on the move. M-commerce is the buying and selling of goods and services through wireless technology - that is, handheld devices like smart phones. Japan is currently seen as the global leader in m-commerce, but this type of marketing is on the rise everywhere.

The industries most affected by m-commerce include a number of sectors. Financial services is the most notable, including mobile banking, where customers use their handheld devices to access their accounts and pay their bills. Brokerage services are also accessible through m-commerce. Stock quotes can be displayed and trades can now be made over chicken Kiev at your local bistro.

Besides the financial sector, the Telecommunications industry has pioneered m-commerce. Consumers are able to make changes to their phone service, pay their mobile bill and review their accounts. The Service and retail industries are now enjoying some popularity with m-commerce. You can place and pay for orders on-the-fly. Of course, advertising in all of these sectors is on the rise as hosting tools and development technology become more widely available through traditional web hosts and other vendors.

As an online merchant, you have an immense opportunity to market your products to the public. Compared to owning a physical store, hosting your business in an online setting heightens the potential for customers finding you. You stand a much greater chance for success by promoting your business online and allowing your customers to transact with you while they're in the buying mood. Although with eCommerce you will still have to ship the purchased goods, you have a greater chance to reduce your overhead and make a profit.

### **What Makes A Good Shopping Cart**

Now let's take a look at the technology you need to transact business online. We'll compare a few different eCommerce shopping carts.

Not all e-commerce shopping carts are the same; and choosing one can be a bit tricky. Since this is one of the most important decisions you have to make as an online merchant, you have to make sure that you choose the perfect shopping cart for your needs and the needs of your potential customers. To successfully find the perfect one, doing some research is a great help here.

When comparing different shopping cart vendors, consider cart features vs. business scale. As a merchant, what are you getting from your cart's vendor? More to the point, do you really need all of those functions? It may be more advantageous to choose a less expensive or even a free option while you're eCommerce business is still young. You can migrate to a more sophisticated solution if the need arises.

Having a wish list, registry, site search, real-time inventory, payment options, express checkout, product reviews, website security, and order tracking – these are just some of the features that may be included when purchasing a shopping cart. If you are not careful, these features may define your choice for a shopping cart vendor. Instead of allowing yourself to be hypnotized with all these attractive options, ask

yourself, "Do I really need all these things?" Some of them, the answer is definitely yes. Others are a little more dispensable.

Deciding whether or not such feature is important requires understanding the needs of your business. The decision should depend on the size of your business, number of products you have to sell, and your budget.

Since sophistication determines the price of the shopping cart, make sure that you only get the features you really need. Decide on the features that are right for your business. Make a list of the things you need for a shopping cart and rank them in order of priority. Then, find different shopping cart vendors that offer the features you need. If the price is higher than what you can afford, take a few features off the list that are least important.

Review different cart vendors and focus your attention on the ease of use. If you're satisfied, then you can add it to your list of possible items.

Most buyers are more impatient when purchasing items online than when they buy from a store. They'll stand in line 10 or 20 minutes to buy a shirt from a department store, but they'll click away from a website with a 10 second load time. Isn't that funny? But it's true! This is really ironic since all they need to do to buy online is click their mouse and wait for the UPS guy. It's a plus if the shopping cart looks good but this is really not your main priority. You want check out to be fun and dirt simple.

In the world of e-commerce, shopping carts are composed of four important parts. These include the storefront, the checkout procedure, the catalog for the products, and the administration panel.

The storefront is your front end, the part of your online shop that your customers can see. Your storefront needs to include categories, products, and other useful services like search, best seller lists, and frequently asked questions. These pages are dynamically generated by your store's software based on the information that you've entered into the store database. The look of the storefront can be enhanced by the store owner so it blends with the rest of the vendor's website.

The administration area of your online store is used to manage the shop. The amount of store management features changes, depending on the sophistication of the shopping cart software. At a minimum, the store manager should be able to add and edit products, categories, discounts, shipping and payment settings. As an online merchant, you should also be able to control the order fulfillment, whether you're selling digital products or physical merchandise.

As the name itself suggests, the product catalog is the part of that online store which presents all your goods. It comes either as a hand coded HTML page which displays a handful of products, or as a multi-category section of your site that contains products in a variety of categories.

The catalog is powered by a database that can be updated whenever inventory needs to be deleted or added. If you're tech savvy enough, it's possible to load a complete list of products into your catalog by importing the raw data into your database. But this is not something to fool around with. If you're an amateur developer, at least take the precaution of backing up your data before you fiddle with it. Or choose another route, such as manual entry through the Admin panel. This may not be as exciting, but let's face it: when it comes to code development, boring is good. The only kind of excitement you really want is the sound of your virtually cash register ringing up sales!

Apart from these four features, you'll want to be sure to optimize your site's searching and browsing features. Customers do not stay too long on a website if they cannot find the products they are looking for. Your main goal, therefore, is to give them the right tool that will let them search and browse from your list of products fast.

Use search functions to let customers find what they are looking for fast and easy, especially if you are holding a large inventory and multi-page site. Place the search function above the fold where customers can find it.

Give the power to your customers to narrow down their search options by using search category refinement. Customers should be able to refine according to size, shape, color and other features. Make sure that they can clear these refinements anytime.

Making an eCommerce shopping cart user-friendly is your top priority. Setting up an online shop is easy. Marketing the products you sell, while it requires a bit of online skill, can be done. But your job is not finished once you have accomplished these two things. You can't just wait for traffic and hope that your visitors become potential customers. You need the right tool that converts traffic in to sales. You need a shopping cart. But getting a shopping cart is one thing; maximizing its benefits is another.

While a lot of people go online to purchase merchandise, it doesn't necessarily mean that you can get complacent if they happen to stumble upon your website. You have to please your customers and please them well. You need to know what they want – not necessarily the things they need to have but the right tools to guide them through the entire online purchasing process. And with tougher competition now, you need to raise the bar and stand out among the rest.

Thus, your online store needs not only to look good, but also to have efficient shopping cart system. Here's how to maximize your website and shopping cart and convert traffic into buyers.

Use large headings and sub-headings to let your customers know where they are; and breadcrumb navigation to help your customers know how deeply they are on your website.

Let your customers remove or change items from their cart easily. Help them find products that are related to the items they have already chosen. Never allow your customers to go on a lengthy process of shopping, only to find out that the products they have chosen are out of stock. Show only products that are in stock.

Cart abandonment rates are high simply because many shopping cart services don't allow shopping before registration. Wherever possible, allow your customers to add items to their cart before they register for an account.

Show your customers every detail of the product they wish to buy including the price, discounts, applicable taxes and added fees. Don't hide any of this information from your customers.

The key to any online store is usability. Many online shoppers get irritated even on the tiniest hitch on your site. This is the main reason why many abandon their cart even on the last step in purchasing product. Keep your customers fully satisfied by making everything easy. This extra effort may require time but the pay offs are definitely worth the trouble.

## **Your Shopping Cart Options**

Now let's take a look at the types of shopping cart software. There are a variety of free and paid shopping carts available, and they offer different features. Let's hit the highlights.

We'll start with the one I use. Even though I offer dozens or even hundreds of products on my online stores, I still use free shopping cart software called OpenCart. It's feature rich, search engine friendly and it has a clean, easy to use interface. There's simply nothing about it to confuse my buyers. You can see my shopping cart in action at [Store.eCommerceGal.com](http://Store.eCommerceGal.com). I strongly urge you to put my eCommerce system to the test many, many times to get the benefit of learning from the experience of shopping on my website. *(Can I say that? Was that too pushy?)*

Seriously - OpenCart is great. It's free, and it's available from [OpenCart.com](http://OpenCart.com). It uses PHP technology, and the license is General Public License (GNU).

Now, why do I use free shopping cart software? Well, it's because I practice what I preach. You'll have many opportunities to spend money on your online business. Why do it unnecessarily? Moving on.

osCommerce provides a basic set of functionality that meets the common needs of the online businesses. Beyond the basic functionality, osCommerce is able to be augmented through either community-supplied add-ons or custom code, meaning that it can be customized to meet the specific needs of any business.

Like Zen Cart osCommerce is free with free updates. It uses PHP technology, and the license is General Public License (GNU).

Zen Cart branched from osCommerce as a separate project in 2003. Beyond some aesthetic changes, the major differences between the two systems comes from Zen Cart's architectural changes (such as a template system). Among the modules already included are a Gift Certificate/Voucher module which allows a user to create, send and manage the digital coupons. A module to sell downloads (like pdf or other media files) is included as well.

Zen Cart is an online store management system that's PHP-based, uses a MySQL database and HTML components. Support is provided for a number of languages and currencies, and it's freely available under the General Public License (GNU). With the release of version 1.3, Zen Cart moved from a template-based system to one that is largely CSS-based. Zen Cart is free, and it's available from Zen Ventures.

X-Cart is another shopping cart, and it's available from Qualiteam. Currently the standard license is \$115 – so definitely not free. Updates are free for Life. The license is proprietary, and the technology that X-Cart uses is PHP.

Infinite Power Publishing offers its own eCommerce shopping cart software. Like osCommerce, it uses PHP technology, and the license is General Public License.

[PayPal](#) is a great option for anyone just starting out in eCommerce. They offer both one-time purchase processing as well as subscription payments. If you're looking for more options, than what we've covered here, check Wikipedia or do a Google search. What we've covered here should be more than enough to get you going.

The software you choose plays a vital role in running your eCommerce site. As you set your budget, you have to include the payment that has to be incurred by purchasing or leasing the license of the software.

Online shoppers are always concerned for the security of their personal information, and they value the security of their account and credit card numbers. With the escalating cases of fraud and identity theft, it's your responsibility to provide your customers with the level of security they need.

### **Offer Safe, Easy Check-Out**

Enhanced website security is available from your web host for an additional fee, but your customer's peace of mind is worth it. SSL or Secure Socket Layer data encryption assures customers that their personal data is kept confidential. Once properly set up, SSL certificate seal can be seen on the home page of your website.

When customers are ready to buy, make sure that you handle them as quickly and simply as possible. If the process of purchasing items online is lengthy, it can be frustrating and can drive customers away. Don't create delays during checkout. The fewer the clicks between their product choice and the customer's ownership, the better. You can eliminate the risk of losing sales by using a shopping cart express checkout option.

Order tracking is an essential part of the process of eCommerce. Have you ever bought anything online and then wondered where the heck it went? Order tracking is one great feature that Amazon offers, along with all other accomplished online merchants. Your responsibility to your customers doesn't end once they've checked-out and paid you for the products they have purchased.

A good indication that you are a good merchant is the personal touch you provide to every customer. Order tracking automatically sends order confirmation and shipping information via email. Customers should be able to monitor where their purchased items are by logging into an account created during the registration process. Order tracking helps your business and your brand build reputation and customer confidence.

### **Using Turnkey eCommerce Sites**

If you're not sure that you want to go to the trouble of creating your own eCommerce website but you see the value of selling goods online, you still have options. The simplest form of shopping cart is not actually a cart at all, but a merchant-generated webpage that contains products and prices with a purchase link. The "Buy now" button transfers the customers to a third party payment provider like PayPal. This option is best for merchants who have simple needs and few products. However it's not suitable for big businesses with several products that require constant monitoring.

Fully hosted eCommerce sites provide everything that the merchant needs, from shopping carts, checkout, payment system and even shipping. [Bravisa.com](http://Bravisa.com) is a prime example of this kind of arrangement. This product can be integrated with your website and can be customized to adapt at your website's appearance.

With hundreds of eCommerce shopping carts to choose from, selecting one is really a matter of preference with careful product evaluation. But what makes one provider stand out from the rest?

Different shopping cart providers offer similar and unique features that are useful to the consumers and beneficial for you as a merchant.

### **eCommerce: The Bottom Line**

With the right shopping cart, you can increase traffic and increase sales virtually over night. Shopping carts affect the customer's response to your website. The more useful tools it has, the more it can attract new customers and persuade existing customers to buy your products. Through integrated marketing and promotional tools like catalog and product comparison, your customers are able to make easy and smart decision on which products to buy.

The bottom line is to understand the types of shopping carts available and identify your needs. Shopping carts are not all created equally. They may appear the same but thorough research will reveal their differences. Knowing how shopping cart services differ from one another is important when choosing what you really need. However, the key when choosing which shopping cart to buy is to know your business and know what your customers are looking for.

There are a number of merchant services offering free-trials for their products, say a 30-day period. You may want to take this opportunity to test the and see if it suits the needs of your business. However, recognize that features in free-trial versions are very limited to the most basic. If you know that your business requires more, I suggest that you take a look at your options to paid merchant accounts that offer a good package at an affordable cost.

If you really don't know which type of shopping cart service to take or, if you just have no time reading product reviews and risk your money to buying an unknown product. Popular shopping cart services that offer free account like PayPal allow you to send and receive payments online. Once you get the hang of using these free online merchant services and you find that you've outgrown them, then it makes sense to upgrade to a premium merchant account.

Whether you've already got a brick-and-mortar business and you're looking to move it online, or you're just starting out as an online business promoter, knowledge is power. When you become aware of your technology options in the realm of ecommerce, there's no telling how far you can go.

## Conclusion

That's our look at Social Marketing – Business Marketing Online With Social Media. You can use these tactics to make a real difference in your marketing and your bottom line. But really we've just scratched the surface of eCommerce here in this half-hour. Now you're ready to put these powerful tools in context as an online business promoter. And I'm ready to help you do that.

The next step is to download my audio program called Online Business Promotion, 16 half-hour programs like this one, a full 8 hours of quality insights and potent Internet marketing tactics, plus an action guide and step-by-step instructions on getting the most from online promotion for your business and dominating your market. It's like getting a one-day seminar in a box - without the hotel ballroom or the travel headaches.

Getting to the top spot on Google is really pretty simple, and with my Online Business Promotion program you'll learn what it takes to get there. What will your business look like next month? How about the month after that? What kind of year-end sales numbers do you finally want to achieve? If you keep doing what you've been doing, you can be sure that you'll keep getting what you've been getting. My program Online Business Promotion will help your business break free of mediocre performance and lackluster sales. But you have to take action. I can't do that part for you. To put the power of eCommerce to work for your business, you'll want to get your hands on a copy of my Online Business Promotion.

To get started right now... go to my website at [eCommerceGal.com/OnlineBusinessPromotion](http://eCommerceGal.com/OnlineBusinessPromotion). You'll be so glad you did.

Thanks for joining me!

All the best,

*Liv*

Liv Montgomery  
The eCommerce Gal  
[www.eCommerceGal.com](http://www.eCommerceGal.com)



# **SOCIAL MARKETING: BUSINESS MARKETING ONLINE WITH SOCIAL MEDIA**

**Liv Montgomery**  
**The eCommerce Gal**  
[www.eCommerceGal.com](http://www.eCommerceGal.com)

## **Terms and Conditions**

The information contained in this guide is for information purposes only, and may not apply to your situation. The author, publisher, distributor and provider provide no warranty about the content or accuracy of content enclosed. Information enclosed is subjective. Keep this in mind when reviewing this guide.

Neither the Publisher nor Author shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages resulting from use of this guide. All links are for information purposes only and are not warranted for content, accuracy or any other implied or explicit purpose.

© 2010 Liv Montgomery

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Social Market Domination - Mastering Your Market With Online Social Networking</b> .....	101
<b>Social Optimization - Social Bookmarking SEO for Your Business</b> .....	111
<b>Blogs and Marketing - Using Blog Marketing for Your Business</b> .....	124
<b>YouTube Marketing: Social Marketing Media for Your Business</b> .....	136
<b>Twitter Mania – Following the World Online In Real Time</b> .....	151
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	164

## **Social Market Domination - Mastering Your Market With Online Social Networking**

Increasingly in recent decades, we've been living in a world somewhat bent on disconnection. During the Space Age, some people believed that by the 21st century we'd all have 20 hour work weeks. Technology would be so advanced that we wouldn't have to work so hard. I don't know about you, but for me technology in the Information Age has created a greater dependency on machines and less chance for personal interaction. I'm not sure I have 20 hours a week of personal down time.

Where once drivers used time on the freeway to listen to the news, sing songs, tell stories and play games like 'I Spy', now busy parents are on their cell phones finalizing plans, business details and family functions. Kids are in the back seat watching a movie, listening to music on headphones or sending a text message. As an online marketer, you face the challenge of building trust and loyalty without the benefit of a physical handshake with your prospect, a face-to-face meeting, or even a smile. With the advent of social networking, though, technology has been able to fulfill the potent need we all have to connect with others. Our global society is using the computer now more than ever to connect. It is precisely this connection deprived world that allows social networks to act as powerful tools for personal interaction.

It seems that every other article or guru tip you read extols the benefits of one technique or another as the absolute best way to enhance your internet marketing business. In reality, there are plenty of tricks and techniques to boost your business online - writing articles, search engine optimization, blogging, getting "link love" from the top sites on the Internet, and even traditional advertising such as display ads and press releases - the list goes on and on.

Social networks, social media, bookmarking sites and online forums are all excellent ways to build meaningful relationships with like-minded people and attract hundreds, or even thousands of new customers to your business. By the end of this program, you're going to know step by step how to find people and connect with them through social networks, then present them with your business offering in an appropriate, comfortable way.

With Social Marketing you have the chance to locate and connect with real people at a meaningful level, help them address their needs, and generate traffic to your website. Now if you consider yourself a wallflower in the dance of online business promotion, don't worry. I'm going to help you step out right now.

## **Building Your Online Money Machine**

There's a virtual sea of information about how to build a successful online marketing business. What's my opinion? Well, having reached that coveted top spot of No. 1 in the Google search results, I can tell you: online business promotion is a machine, and all the parts need to work together.

Online marketing requires, first of all, that you have something to market - a product or service that provides real people with real value. You also need a way of reaching those people and getting them to stride in step with you. With few exceptions, that means you need a website to go along with your product offering. And then your website needs to be found. Google and the search engines use algorithms, mathematical formulas to calculate the quality score of your site and point people to it. This mathematical analysis is a complex array of factors about your web page.

Ultimately, what the search engines are looking for is the quality of the experience that you provide the visitors to your site. The search engines gauge this quality factor by the type of content you provide, its relevance to what people are looking for, and the number of inbound links from top sites on the Internet. In other words, online marketing is a popularity contest. The way to become popular is to provide value, build relationships, and recommend solutions to your site visitors.

So using only one method to get noticed online is not going to get you where you want to go. Since the search engines - especially Google - look at an array of factors, it takes an array of efforts on your part to win this popularity contest. None of these methods are not hard, but they can be time consuming and they require long term vision and even a marathon mindset.

Having said all that, I'll tell you there is one technique that encompasses most of the elements of a successful online marketing machine, and it's free. That method is Social Marketing. Whether it's creating a web presence, attracting new people into your business, or generating "link love" to your site, Social Marketing delivers. With the powerful technology provided for free by Facebook and other social engines, your ability to set yourself apart is limited only by your imagination. If you are looking for ways to enhance your web presence significantly in a meaningful way, develop strong bonds, attract tons of customers, and dominate your niche without spending a fortune - then social marketing can be the quickest path to your online business success.

## **Social Networking Defined**

First, let's take a look at what we mean when we talk about social networks. According to Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia, "A social network is a social structure made of individuals (or organizations) called 'nodes,' which are tied (connected) by one or more specific types of interdependency."

Uh... right.

That's a great definition if you're a professor at MIT, but how about something for the rest of us? Here's my definition. A social network is an online hub for people to get together through common connections to share information, ideas, support, media, entertainment and solutions. Social networks offer the ability for their members to join groups within the network, send direct messages to each other, and generate common bonds.

When you join a social network, you gain access to a huge community that shares your interests, as well as a pool of potential customers.

Now let's look at some examples of social networks.

Facebook currently has hundreds of millions of active users. Likewise, Twitter has an active fanbase with similarly staggering statistics. YouTube and Flickr offer user generated media content, boasting millions of visitors each day. Other popular social networks include MySpace, Friendster, LinkedIn, Biznik, Yahoo! 360, and Orkut. Any one of these is a rich resource for your social marketing campaign.

What this means to you as an online marketer is that you have the opportunity to quickly and easily locate a pool of targeted traffic.

Establishing meaningful relationships online is a lot like making friends in the material world. After all, on the other side of the monitor is a real person just like you. If you're an honest and agreeable person in real life, the personal qualities that make you likable in the material world will also make you likable in cyberspace.

With Social Marketing, you have instant access to a tremendous pool of like-minded people who know you, like you and trust you. You can add that instant, real-time personal touch that's missing in traditional marketing. Even celebrities will use Twitter for one-line replies to fans nowadays – a personal contact that instantly creates deep loyalty, and a positive perception. Goodbye wallflower, hello eCommerce!

With Social Marketing you can help customers figure out what they need – and provide it. Social networking is ideal for this friendly, conversational approach. Instead of sales pitches, sincere product recommendations become natural extensions of informal conversation.

As social networking sites have increased in popularity, so have the number of social networks that can be found online. You can find and familiarize yourself with social networks by talking to people you already know and getting their recommendation. Get a feel for which networks they like and why. You can also get feedback online through review sites and forums, giving you tips about which social networks are worth your time. You'll find a list of social networks on my blog at [eCommercegal.com/Blog](http://eCommercegal.com/Blog). Look for the page called Social Marketing.

Now let's take a look at the steps involved in harnessing the power of Social Networking to Promote Your Business.

Just about everybody knows that Facebook is one of the top sites on the internet, and you can use it to increase traffic to your blog or website. Facebook is free to use, but it's not without its limitations, rules and regulations.

Now, Facebook has hundreds of millions of active users, and its 12-month growth cycle is tremendous. For the purposes of this discussion, it makes sense to use Facebook as our pointed example. I'll leave it to you to investigate whether you want to join Facebook or another social network. If you decide to go with another network or networks, you can easily adapt the ideas presented here to your own chosen social marketing venue. What I'm giving you here are the steps involved as well as the philosophy behind them. You can apply these philosophies in your business and adapt as the market changes. By learning the core concepts, you're now an empowered online marketer.

The key to social marketing success is branding yourself as a leader, providing loads of valuable content, and encouraging interaction and discussion among the people in your network. Social Marketing is incredibly powerful. But it only works if you use the right strategy. This strategy includes observing proper etiquette, creating a strategic personal profile, developing your network, and promoting your business by launching a Group or a Page.

Let's cover some basic social networking etiquette right now as part of your Social Marketing strategy. Here are tips on etiquette for success in social networking. Break them, and pay the price. Observe them, and reap the reward.

The foundation of social networking rests on the concept that when you have an interest in other people first, they'll show an interest in you. As you invest time in social networking, show an interest in the activities of others. Promote information, ideas and links that will help other people in your network. In other words, be a servant leader.

When you invite someone to be your friend, send a personal message along with the invitation. Your message should be only a few sentences and relate back to the Page or Group where you found them. Ask them open ended questions like, "Where are you from?" and "How long have you been interested in this topic?" Your invitation acceptance rate without a personal message is only about 10%, but it increases to about 80% when you add a personal message. There's no point in having thousands of random friends if they don't know anything about you - and vice versa.

When you invite people to become friends, don't include any links in your personal message. Facebook will see this as spam, and they could actually delete your account. Focus on the other person first before promoting your business. Keep things personal.

Don't promote your blog, website, business or opportunity on the first introduction. You wouldn't propose marriage on the first date, would you? Take time to build the relationship. If someone does take an interest in what you do, give them key points but keep it tactful. Show an interest in them.

Comment on and share people's posts and updates. Say something like, "Great post - thanks for sharing!" Interesting videos, notes, events, links, and status updates all deserve to be acknowledged. If you don't comment on other people's profiles, why would they return the favor? Keep the 90/10 rule in play - 90% valuable content, 10% promotional recommendations. Gain trust and build rapport first, then promote.

A great way to do this is to share your friends' content. Then when you share your own, your friends will be more likely to take a look. You can also share valuable content by posting links from Digg, eZine Articles, and other high-ranking websites - what Google calls Authority Sites. You'll actually increase the amount of sales you make - and you'll be showing your new friends a good time.

Here's a word of caution for you. Don't post advertising on other people's walls, groups or pages. It's completely random, and it doesn't make any sense. In fact, it can really harm your reputation. So why do it on Facebook?

Use these tips for online etiquette to build relationships and trust, and you'll have an army of friends to promote to.

## **Your Profile Is Your Primary Branding**

Let's take a look at your Personal Profile. This will become your primary online branding within the social network. This is the solid foundation upon which to build your business. You'll have plenty of friends in your network in no time using the strategies I'm giving you here. The people who become your network of friends will refer to the information you provide here time and again. You'll want to be sure that it only says about you the things that you wouldn't mind reading in a newspaper article about yourself. You're crafting your public image.

When you begin your Social Marketing campaign, use a professional head shot if possible as your profile photo. At the very least, you should use an attractive picture of yourself, full face, good lighting, smiling but not too much, and make sure you're the only one in the picture. Don't use any logos or product symbols in this all-important profile image.

Next, add your personal information that you want to appear in the box below your profile photo. On Facebook, you can edit any module by clicking on the pen icon next to it. Invest a lot of time with developing your personal information. Add a few snapshots of your family and friends, and pictures you've taken in your travels. You want people to relate to you as an individual. Round out your Likes and Interests using keywords related to your product offering and your business.

Your Favorite Books section should include books within your niche. For Favorite Quotations, quote people famous within your industry or people who will naturally appeal to your demographic. In the About Me section, use links to your blog and website with the emphasis on adding value through your content. Don't send people straight to a sales page. Also, be sure that all of your links are clickable and include <http://>.

Here's a tip for you. Don't indicate your political persuasion or your religion in your personal profile unless you're sure you want to attract only people who agree with you. By completing these sections, you'll be narrowing your options. When you're developing your social network, you want to be inclusive.

When you want to add more pages to your profile, click on the plus sign next to your tabs. One of the first pages you'll want to add is a video page. A YouTube Box is one of the more powerful applications that you can add to your profile. If you invest the time to include dozens of relevant, entertaining videos on your site, your Facebook friends will tend to come around more often. In fact people will come to your profile page just watch the videos you've collected. It's like having your neighbors come over to watch their favorite sitcom because you've got the cool TV - except they won't make a mess on your couch or stick you with the pizza bill.

Using the Notes feature is another great way to share content. You can add lists of your favorite books you've read and other valuable information. You can write essays, articles or reviews as well.

Now let's look at the Boxes Tab on your Profile Page. This is a powerful tool that allows you to display a collection of all your different applications. You can include a Twitter application, profile HTML, and custom HTML. Later on, as you develop a broader network, you can add a link to your Business Page.

Facebook allows you to install a custom HTML profile box. You can use this feature to put up a banner, promo or clickable photo that leads people back to your website. You can put in an opt-in form and offer free products to your friends with no obligation.

To take advantage of this feature, you'll need to install the appropriate application onto your profile. Here's how to do that. Select Applications from your sidebar and do a search for "HTML Profile Box." Follow the steps in the installation wizard. Next, add it to your wall by editing the settings in your profile applications.

This feature is so powerful. You can create a link to anywhere on the Internet, build your mailing list with opt-in forms, add value through content, promote webinars - the list goes on and on.

You can also add a Networked Blogs application using the Blog tab on your profile. This terrific application links your blog or site with your Facebook profile. You can set up an RSS feed so that when you update your site or blog, it posts to your Facebook account.

Play around with these applications, and don't be afraid that you're going to break something. You can do so much with them, always keeping in mind that your intent is to add value.

### **Build Your List Of Friends**

Now that you have a solid personal profile, you can begin to build a targeted list of friends within your social network.

To find people you want to connect with, go to the groups and pages within Facebook where your targeted market hangs out. Search on your main keyword. You can also search on the names of celebrities within your industry. When you get the search results, click on the Groups option on the left hand side of the page to filter your results. Click the Heading then take a look around to see if this is a group that you want to join. You're looking for large groups here - over a thousand, if possible - with an active membership. When you

find them, click on the Join button. Now, you only want to join as many groups as you can reasonably keep up with. Take it in stages at first, joining maybe one group per week or so.

Next, go to the list of people in the group. Starting with the top of the list, click on Add as a Friend. As we said in our section on etiquette, you'll want to include a personal message with your invitation. Tell them how you found them, and mention the group by name. Remember: never, ever include a link in your invitation - it will look like spam to your new friend and Facebook. Show interest in the other person, and offer a little personal information about yourself, such as, "I'm from Seattle. Where are you from?"

Send no more than 35 to 40 friend requests a day. This is a manageable amount, and you can spend a little time with each new person you're connecting with. If you send out 40 invitations a day and three out of four accept your invitation, you'll have close to a thousand brand new friends by the end of a month. Think about that one.

As your list of friends grows, you'll want to segment your list into different categories such as prospects, friends, JV partners and so on. To do this, go to your friends list and select Create A New List. Enter the name of your list, and click on Create List. Then start adding people to it from your master list of friends.

## **Create Your Business Page**

Now let's take a look at building a Facebook Page for your business.

After you've built a solid foundation with your personal profile and developed a targeted list of friends, you can create a Facebook Page for your business. To be clear, these used to be called Fan Pages until Facebook changed the name. Whatever you want to call it, you have to go about creating your Business Page in the right way, and that means standing out from the crowd. You also want to have momentum as you build your business network. If you launch your business Page before you're ready, you may not get the results you're looking for. It's important to build up your network first through your personal profile and get that solid foundation in place before you launch yourself as a leader in the social networks. You want to capitalize on the excitement that goes along with the launch of your Business Page. You can take your time developing it, but don't launch the page until you're absolutely sure you're ready. To give yourself time to set up the page and do the development on it, check the option "Do not make Page publicly visible at this time". That should keep you covered.

Having said that, here's how to get started building your own Facebook Page for your business.

When you go to [Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com), underneath the Sign Up box on their home page you'll see a prominent link that says "Create a Page for a celebrity, band or business." Click on that link and follow the given steps. Answer the questions about your business and category. Give your Page a name - and be clear about this. The name you give your page is permanent. Press the Create Official Page button, and you're set.

Facebook wants people to set up these pages, so they make it as simple as possible. You can access your Facebook Business Page in the future simply by logging in and clicking "Pages" in the sidebar.

When you develop your Page, you'll want to give it all the care and attention that you would confer on your business's main website. With Facebook Pages, you can customize the tabs, add HTML to the pages, and you can even duplicate your entire website or blog on your Facebook Business Page. You can use color, graphics, photos, links, RSS feeds, and audio and video from all over the Internet to build value and provide rich content for your visitors. This is where you'll want to promote your product offering, special incentives and upcoming events. With all of these possibilities, you can see why business owners have become such fans of social marketing!

When it comes to building out your Business Page, you have a world of options. There are only two tabs on your Page that are static and can't be removed. These are your Wall and Info tabs. For your landing page - the tab that people land on when they navigate to your Business Page - be sure to create a welcome tab and include a video that welcomes your visitors. Now you don't have to get fancy with this. If you want to know more about creating videos for your online marketing, check out my website at [eCommerceGal.com](https://www.ecommercegal.com), and click the link for Audio and Video.

On your welcome page, lead directly into your content and your prime message. Offer something of massive value first, then make sales after you develop the relationship. Give an irresistible offer, something that people can't say no to, and get them onto your mailing list as soon as possible.

Once you've built your Facebook Business Page and you've checked it for quality and functionality, you're ready to invite all your Facebook friends to join you. If you've already built a substantial network, launching your Business Page should foment a froth of activity and get people excited about your business. Obviously, the more excited you are, the more infectious your enthusiasm will be.

As you develop your list on contacts, you can find like minded people on Facebook and recruit them as joint venture partners. This means joining forces and cross-promoting to each other's network. For example, if you both have 10,000 Facebook friends, then by working together, you have a base of 20,000 people to promote to. This gets very exciting and has the power to take your business to a whole new level. This is

why we call it Social Market Domination. With hundreds of millions of people engaged in social networking, you'll never run out of people to connect with.

Now, let's talk for a moment about Social plugins. Besides using Facebook to develop your personal profile, build your social network, and launch your Business Page, you can take advantage of social plugins and use them on your existing website. These plugins allow you to link certain Facebook features with your site and create continuity among your users. Social plugins add credibility and take referral marketing to a whole new level, and there are nearly half a million sites online that feature some of kind of interactivity with Facebook widgets, plugins and applications. That means users now expect to comment on your website, and if you don't offer this feature to them, at some point your business is going to be left behind. These tools show that you have a "social voice".

To get started using social plugins from Facebook, go to [Developers.Facebook.com/plugins](http://Developers.Facebook.com/plugins). Some of the plugins currently available include the Like button, Comments, Recommendations, the Activity Feed and a host of others. Just use one or two of these plugins. You don't need all of them. Once you've successfully installed them onto your website, these tools let you see what your friends have liked and commented on across the web - not just on Facebook.

Let's recap what we've covered. First, we took a look at bringing a personal touch to the often impersonal Worldwide Web. Relationship marketing takes time and effort, but the investment you make today will pay dividends tomorrow in your online business.

We also looked at the many types of social networks, from specialized venues like LinkedIn and BizNik to the more general and ultimately ubiquitous Facebook, Friendster and My Space. We said that perhaps the greatest reason you should join a social network is that it's effective and free to use. We looked at specific techniques you can use to attract people into your personal network, offer them value up front, and present them with options for becoming your customer. By joining a social networking website, especially one that is popular and has a large number of members, you can start an online revolution for your business.

Despite the fact that social networking has rapidly become a huge hit, its popularity is only expected to keep on rising. The market projections for Facebook alone during upcoming 12-month cycles are astronomical. The tools you've been given in this program allow you to position yourself ahead of an evolving trend and capitalize on it in an easy, enjoyable way.

The beauty of it is, you don't need any venture capital to get started. With a quality domain name, a hosting account, and a handful of superior affiliate products, you can bring real value to the marketplace and be compensated accordingly. When you combine that with Social Marketing, the world is your oyster.

## Social Optimization - Social Bookmarking SEO for Your Business

Just in case you missed it... the Worldwide Web has changed.

I think a little history of the Internet is in order to grasp the big picture and get a feel for how social bookmarking fits into it. A little more than fifteen years ago I had a dial up Internet connection that allowed me to log onto various College computers, bulletin boards and newsgroups.

The Internet was a lot different than it is today. There were few graphics in the early days... it was mostly text based and everything was dial up. You could post to a newsgroup, post messages on some bulletin boards and send email. That's about it.

Internet Marketing as we know it today did not exist. In fact, at about that time I was living in the San Francisco Bay area, doing some web programming in the global marketing department for the largest design software company in the world. It was a really exciting time, not to mention a little stressful. There were regular meetings among department executives, trying to figure out if it was possible at all to make money on the Internet.

The concept of Internet Marketing was something that the corporate sector had yet to wrap its collective mind around. Was it possible to accept credit cards over the Internet? Did the responsibility of site maintenance fall into the traditional marketing sector? Was it sales? Or was it even tech support? Who would track the metrics of this fledgling website? Who would take those statistics and translate them into a story and then into a plan? Other companies in the tech sector were similarly in a quandary, suffering from paralysis by analysis as the phenomenon known as the Worldwide Web grew up around them.

Meanwhile during that era a few brave souls ventured out of the shadows and began marketing within the newsgroups. This started wars between the "Purists" and new "Marketers".

You see, the Purists considered the Internet to be their own playground, and they viewed anyone selling something as evil. After all... Marketers had TV, Radio, Magazines, and Newspapers as their outlet for sales and promotion.

The purists viewed the Internet as a way for them to communicate with each other without having to wade through all the advertising - and they could control what was being said. When the Marketer entered the picture, this all changed - and it changed very rapidly.

Once the Marketer had discovered the Internet as a new marketing medium, the timbre of the Internet was changed forever. To the purists, the Internet was becoming another medium for Marketers to sell their wares. It was inevitable and only a matter of time before this happened. But the Purists fought it tooth and nail.

The Newsgroups and bulletin boards were soon inundated and overrun with advertising. There was so much spam that you could hardly follow a thread or make any sense of it. The thread may have started out discussing a subject such as "Visual Basic" as it's first post... but it was hard to make sense of it as Marketers would post "off topic" spam and ads for their wares throughout the threads.

As we all know things have changed a lot since those early days... the Marketers persevered and the Purists lost the War. Or did they?

Jump to the present day...

The soul of the Internet has persisted with Web 2.0, interactive sites where people can socialize, network and comment on popular trends. In fact, popular trends can be molded by social media. Naturally, marketing and advertising live on, but in a role that's secondary to content - much to my own relief. After all, people don't log onto the Worldwide Web so they can check out the latest ads, unless it's the Monday morning after the SuperBowl. People are still looking to read their email, check the news and other information, and connect with their friends and colleagues.

Welcome to the Internet.

I don't consider myself an Internet "Purist"... after all, I am a marketer. But I do feel strongly that a marketing message must provide useful information that the site visitor can evaluate and take advantage of as they would a piece of news or research. Whatever it is you're marketing must provide value in the marketplace, or there's no point in making the effort.

If you're not doing this already, then the way you market your products and services needs to change in order to keep abreast of a changing world. Marketing as we know it today on the Internet is dying a slow death. Only those who adapt and change will survive. But as business owners in the brick-and-mortar world will happily tell you, commerce is all about building relationships with your customers. Business is built on relationships. The more value you provide, the stronger relationships you'll have with your customers. Not only that, providing valuable content is the just right thing to do.

Interruption Marketing has given way to Relationship Marketing, and the Social Marketer is prospering with these changes. It is no longer about forcing messages onto people - the days of ad pollution and in-your-face messaging are approaching their twilight. The phrase "buy now and save" has become something of an in joke. People get enough of that with other media. The Internet is all about relationships, subject matter authority, conversations and participating in discussions that other people deem important. It's about service and servant leadership.

The noted marketing author and speaker Seth Godin has been telling us this very same thing for years with his concept of Permission Marketing. But there's still a sizeable portion of Internet Marketers who've been slow to change.

Why is that? Because it takes work and discipline to build relationships and participate in meaningful conversations. Many marketers consider it easier to do what I would call "method of the day" or "hit and miss" marketing - at least in the short term.

Like Seth Godin, Jack Humphrey has been telling Marketers for years now that they need to adapt and change their marketing methods. His message is about Social Power Linking. Jack saw this paradigm shift coming before a lot of other people did. He began joining in with the "conversations" while most people and companies were still doing their marketing basically the same way as the in-your-face marketers of the past - forcing their message onto an ad weary public.

Social linking tells us that the voice of the people is now the key determinant in the success of a product or business. Social bookmarking not only identifies trends, it helps create them. And the Google search engine algorithm agrees.

This is not a fad or a "method of the day"... it's here for the long term.

With the direction that the Internet is heading and where we are already, Social Bookmarking, Social Networking, and other social interaction form the key to success for the Online Marketer. Maximizing these tools for your business and your website is a process called Social Optimization.

## **What is Social Bookmarking?**

Some days, it seems that we are quickly evolving from a digital world where information was THE marketable commodity to a communications market, where new methods of communicating, networking and socializing are being introduced in increasingly rapid succession. These venues are the new consumers of online time and attention. Blogs, wikis, RSS newsfeeds, podcasts, social marketing media built around

applications like YouTube... all of these are recently formulated methods of communication that seemingly overnight have attracted hundreds of millions of participants.

One of the networking methodologies that has evolved from Internet architecture is the phenomenon of "social bookmarking." The object is that you, the web surfer, share your interests with others who have web access to your bookmarked URLs. It's the same concept as bookmarking favorites with your browser, but the collection of favorites has a coding system and is shared with others. You build a library of website addresses that reflect your interests and that you consider worth visiting. You add a personal "tag" with a keyword that characterizes the site.

The idea was first launched back in 1996 as 'itlist'. Other similar sites quickly followed but that all went away when the dot-com bubble burst in 2001. The idea is new again now with the advent of Web 2.0, and this time around it is thriving.

According to Wikipedia, social bookmarking is defined as: "an activity performed over a computer network that allows users to save and categorize a personal collection of bookmarks and share them with others. Users may also take bookmarks saved by others and add them to their own collection, as well as subscribe to the lists of others - a personal knowledge management tool."

You can see here that it's possible to "subscribe" to tags on the social bookmarking site so that you see every new post associated with that tag. It's an easy way to keep up-to-date with new developments on your favorite subjects. That in turn can take you to an entire list of favorites which may prove to be a new treasure trove of information for you.

Others on the social bookmarking site have access to your library and thus you can be seen as an authority on a topic merely by expressing your opinions and personal interests. Utilizing these web based applications, participants are able to search through sites that others have bookmarked, using not only a standard search term but the tag that has been used to characterize the site. Tags form a collective body of knowledge, and thus, collective access to those tags forms a community of people with common interests. To take it a step further, included in this process is an optional personal profile, which provides your email address and allows others to communicate with you personally.

## **How Does Social Bookmarking Work?**

The basic concept of Web 2.0 is that it is user-directed, and social bookmarking is an intrinsic part of the Web 2.0 experience. So it is, of course, user directed. Social bookmarking is a way of organizing and categorizing information with the use of tags, much like keywords.

Tags are user generated and are based upon keywords that identify and categorize the bookmark, so this is truly a user-directed way that information is organized.

When a user clicks through to a bookmark, the social bookmarking site identifies the person who created the bookmark - in other words, the source of the recommendation - and provides the user access to other sites that the same source has bookmarked.

If you're a member of a social bookmarking site, you'll be able to track how many times your bookmark links have been clicked on as well as who clicked on them. This system makes it very easy for like-minded people to make social connections and to identify others who have the same interests. That's why they call it social! Over time this develops a community of users. Sometimes the results is a truly unique set of keywords that define resources of common interest. These unique keywords sets have come to be referred to as 'folksonomy'.

What is that?

Wikipedia defines the term, folksonomy as: "a neologism for a practice of collaborative categorization using freely chosen keywords."

*Huh?*

In other words, a folksonomy refers to a group of people cooperating spontaneously to organize information into categories. In contrast to formal classification methods, this phenomenon typically only arises in non-hierarchical communities, such as public websites. What that means to Google is Social Optimization - a collective or group identifying trends, desires, and site popularity. What that means to you as an online business promoter is opportunity.

## **Social Bookmarking for Your Business**

Let's take a look at the Social Bookmarking phenomenon and using it to promote your business.

First, who is Using Social Bookmarking? In a word....everybody! Researchers have found social bookmarking sites to be an invaluable tool as they conduct research and find they need to share information about their research with their colleagues. Professionals like doctors, lawyers and engineers are using social bookmarking services in record numbers.

But social bookmarking is far more than simply a tool for research. People from all walks of life are using social bookmarking. Users of popular networks like Digg, Delicious and Reddit have found that it is very easy to share information about websites that they find to be of mutual interest.

Networks can be set up so that whenever a new posting is made to a social networking site other members of the network are notified immediately by RSS feed.

With all of this instant communication happening, you can see why those who are involved in Internet marketing are keen on Social Optimization and very much in touch with social bookmarking sites.

These innovative marketers join such sites as Digg, Delicious and Reddit, and while they are having a lot of fun, keeping their finger on the pulse of their market, and building relationships, they're also selling their products and services.

The added benefits of using social bookmarking includes getting visitors to your website and improving your Page Rank. These social marketers have found that social bookmarking is one of the very best search engine optimization tools to come along in a very long time.

## **Social Bookmarking - Word Of Mouth on Steroids**

After its false start in the '90s, Social bookmarking has finally got a foothold. Social bookmarking is being seen by many marketing experts as a cost effective method of augmenting distribution of content, branding, image building and marketing. According to a recent survey, it has been seen that almost 28% of users on the Internet on a normal day have been tagging online content. That's a whole lot of bookmarks.

Some of the top social bookmarking networks include StumbleUpon, Delicious, Google Bookmarks, Reddit and Digg. For a current list of social bookmarking sites, see my blog at [eCommerceGal.com/blog](http://eCommerceGal.com/blog). Look for the Social Bookmarking page.

For social bookmarking to be a real success, you need to have engaging or interactive content that users will find useful, interesting or entertaining. It should be the kind of content that most users can recommend to others or forward to a friend. The content should be attractive users and this is where creativity plays an important role. You will have to look at your content from the perspective of an internet user to gauge what he or she might be looking for and then provide it. There are certain tips you can follow to make social bookmarking a marketing success for your online business. Here are a few tips.

Understand the requirement of your audience and try to focus on topics that will interest your readers, audience or users.

Content should be interesting and at the same time easy to read. If your content is difficult to read, you might be driving away traffic. The title should be interesting and hint at what the article is all about. Using keywords is a factor that drives search engine optimization. Keywords are extremely important in bringing traffic to your website.

Contrary to popular belief, search engine optimization is extremely easy. You need to think about what it would take for you to become the renowned expert in your field. You have to offer content that is original and valuable to a consumer, right? When you apply this concept to your website, only then will you conquer the major search engines.

For more techniques on Search Engine Optimization, visit my website at [eCommerceGal.com](http://eCommerceGal.com) and click on the link for the SEO page.

Social bookmarking is the new link building for Search Engine Optimization. One way link building is the core part of search engine marketing. There are many simple ways to obtain one way links: directories, articles, press releases, and most importantly social bookmarking. When you submit your website to a directory, the directory has an editor take a look at your website and either approve or deny your submission based on their rules. If you are approved, you will gain the all important one way link pointing to your website. Directories need to accept new submissions to keep their content fresh. This makes the search engines and consumers happy.

On the other hand, Social Bookmarking gives YOU all of the power. You select your site and use a social bookmarking website to gain one automatic back link. It does not stop there. Then, you add tags to the listing. The secret here is that you get a link to your site on every single tag page as well. That can result in anywhere from 10 to 20 one way links per social bookmarking site. You must make sure that your website offers unique, relevant, highly valuable content. If it does, other people will bookmark your website as well. The more people bookmark your site, the better traffic you will gain from that one social bookmarking website.

Social Bookmarking is the best way to create an internet buzz about your products or your company. If you offer unique content that people will find useful, you have outstanding odds of ending up on the front page of social bookmarking websites. If your link is on the front page, you will get a large amount of traffic for the effort.

If you do not offer outstanding content on your website, you will still gain the all important one way link. Even negative reviews of your site will not change the ways the search engines see your link. Search engines look for new relevant content. All you have to do is provide it to them.

The most important aspect of social bookmarking is spam. Most sites allow their users to either vote on the importance of a site, or allow them to ignore you, and your site slowly goes away. Don't ruin this great opportunity for the other internet marketers. Social bookmarking is based on the idea of a site's popularity being decided by the visitors of that site. Make sure you are adding important sites that you use every day, as well as your own personal websites. Social bookmarking is meant for the entire community to enjoy. Cater your bookmarks to a person that would find them, not the major search engines. You can be sure that the search engines can figure out how to identify social bookmarking spam.

Link exchanges are a thing of the past. The only time when link exchanges work is when they provide useful information and products to your customers. Otherwise, link exchanges are nearly useless. Search Engines have figured out the idea behind the link exchange and have lowered the value of exchanged links to almost nothing.

Links are the most important aspect of search engine optimization, according to all three of the major search engines. Even the links you use inside of your website count. MSN, Yahoo, and Google all analyze your site's inner linking structure to figure out what keywords are most important to your website.

Use your head and you should be soaring to the top of the search engines in no time!

## **Tips For Social Bookmarking Success**

Web-savvy analysts and SEO's can't say enough about just how important social bookmarking sites are when trying to increase traffic to a new blog or website. Often however, many great articles go unnoticed on social bookmarking sites since their front pages or headlines just are not catchy enough.

Making a good impression on web users starts with the way your headline sounds. A site's headline is the first, and most often the main thing users will see from your article, so if you don't make the effort to provide a catchy headline, your chances of getting to the main page are nil.

Create Attention-Grabbing Headlines. Crafting the headline is crucial in drawing web traffic. However, if you want to keep that attention, create a meaningful description. The description has to generate curiosity since and draw the reader's.

Crafting an Interesting First Paragraphs is also crucial. But remember, the first paragraph is not key to everything. Going further along the chain - attracting and retaining the users' attention - is key, and it takes top-level content. If your articles are just plain bland, then bookmarking them would be pointless. You might get away with it once, but don't count on any readers coming back for more.

Make Full Use of RSS Feeds And Newsletters. RSS feeds, newsletter subscriptions, and affiliate marketing are all venues where the traffic from social bookmarking sites could be of great help. A lot of people who come to your site and like it will subscribe to RSS feeds and to your newsletter.

To use social bookmarking to your best advantage, you may want to concentrate your efforts on getting to the front page of the major players, with the aim that the snowball effect will drive you to the top on other sites.

## **What's the Quality of Social Bookmarking Traffic?**

This brings us to the question of quality about Social Bookmarking Traffic - Is It Useful?

Here's a look at the pro's and con's of social media site traffic, and how it could be utilized in your own website or online marketing efforts.

First, it should be said that any sort of internet traffic, should not be considered useless. Visitors to your site should all be welcomed, as any visitor is a good thing. In saying that, however, it should be noted that traffic in all its greatness, is not created equally. Great differences become apparent when you start to analyze its source. Let's take a closer look at the traffic generated from social bookmarking, from the perspective of internet marketing.

A lot of social bookmark traffic will originate from the top networks like Stumble Upon and Digg. Sites such as these are immensely popular, and flow traffic that the average website owner can only ever imagine having. That's a lot of traffic, isn't it? But is it really useful?

All this traffic and hype must be a good thing, right? But is it really worth your time? Should you integrate active promotion to these types of social media websites? What about concentrating all of your online marketing strategies on these types of sites? The question more at point is, what are the real pros and cons of getting your website listed on the front page of sites like Stumbleupon or Digg?

Social media site traffic can be likened to customers at a drive-thru fast food restaurants; they come and go as quickly as they can. The visitors will basically view your content, and before you know it, have already left, surfing back to the main site to venture onto the next item or listing. Social bookmark traffic will always behave differently, to a large extent, when compared to organic search engine traffic, or your newsletter traffic, or even other social media.

The choice traffic will always come from the visitors generated by the search engines, at least when compared to the traffic from social bookmarking sites. The question still remains, however-- is social bookmark traffic really all that useless?

First, you need to remember that no traffic should be considered useless. Any type of visitor to your website should be counted as a good thing. Any website owner should realize that getting traffic and visitors to your website is a must; otherwise the game's over.

When someone searches for a particular term in a search engine, and they end up at your website, that means that your visitor is there because you have what they're looking for. This type of traffic is essential to your website. Visitors like these are considered to be "targeted traffic"; that is, they're more likely to read your pitch-page, overlook your information, sign up for your newsletter, or even buy a product. Additionally, they may also become repeat visitors. Traffic like this is ideal. These are the types of visitors you really want.

However, its not all bad news. Social bookmark sites do have a bright side.

How would you like the possibility of your website gaining exposure to millions of people? Sounds good, doesn't it? Even though you may not get sales, for instance, this traffic can help you in getting your websites name out there; branding it, creating a buzz.

If your website appeals to a more mass market, then you are even more in luck. Social bookmark traffic in this case can be an excellent source of traffic and visitors.

Social sites such as these also have another added bonus; gaining a link on high PR7 and PR8 websites, with high traffic flow, can't hurt your search engine rankings. In fact, Google will give a link from this type of site priority even over the content of your website. After your website is featured on a social media site such as Digg, your link can also appear on a large number of secondary websites on the web, as much as 1,000 or more. Much of this traffic will also be analyzed by Alexa and improve your traffic rank.

To take better advantage of this type of traffic, gear your website and its content to more mainstream internet users. Whether or not this enables you to achieve a greater level of success, is largely dependant on what you offer and how it is offered.

With tactics like these you really can bookmark yourself to SEO success.

## **Helping Others Bookmark Your Content**

Now that you know how to bookmark your site, the next logical step is to make it easy for others to bookmark your site. To do this, simply add a Social Bookmark applet to your site by visiting [AddThis.com](http://AddThis.com). They offer a small piece of Javascript you can add to your site in the form of a button.

When users click on the Bookmark button, they can select their specific book marking tool and book mark your content. This makes the process of book marking simple and easy to do..

What's even better is that you can use a site like [AddThis.com](http://AddThis.com), [Social Poster](http://SocialPoster.com), [OnlyWire](http://OnlyWire.com) or other similar services to bookmark with multiple networks - all for free. These tools let you post multiple bookmarks from one location. You will need to register for each of these sites, but once you do the submission process is really simple.

There are so many ways to use bookmarks to improve your overall site popularity. What I personally like about social bookmarking is that it's easy to do and very similar to other optimization methods that I use. Every bookmark is vote for that content, and the content increases in popularity. The social bookmarking site ranks it higher than other content on the site. These bookmark sites also let you see the bookmarks of others. That's what makes it a "social" bookmark. Not only is the general web populace rating Internet content collectively, but they can also see what others are bookmarking.

After bookmarking your home page on each of these sites, use social bookmarking to create deep links into your site and enhance your overall Google rankings. And of course, make sure to use the proper link text in your site title and description.

## **Is There A Downside to Social Bookmarking?**

There's usually a downside for just about anything, and social bookmarking is no exception to that rule. The very fact that social bookmarking is user driven is one of the potential downsides to it. Users are not

professionals. Users are just people and the ability to use social bookmarking sites for fun as well as for profit does not require a great deal of technical knowledge.

And because users are 'amateurs' (for lack of a better word), keywords used in tags are not consistent. The information is sometimes scattered and keywords that seem logical to amateurs don't necessarily lead to related topics.

Yet another potential downside is that users are abusing the system. Just as with the early news groups and the conflict between the purists and the marketers, social bookmarking has its share of tainted recommendations. Since it's a user driven system it is more susceptible to abuse and misuse.

For instance, there are spammers who are bookmarking the same site multiple times. Their idea, of course, is that the more times the link appears the better the search engine spiders like it. However such abuses generally lead to the search engines coming up with ways to spoil these tactics - and even penalize the perpetrators' sites by delisting them. Best not to engage in shady practices anyway, and this is one great reason.

## **How Will Social Bookmarking Impact the Internet?**

Actually, it is pretty clear right now that social bookmarking is having a huge impact on the way information is being classified, categorized, stored and exchanged. It is not impossible to believe that in the future the impact will be even stronger. In its infancy, the Internet was all about the exchange of information. The Internet started in the late '60s as the Arpanet, a means for government agencies and university research centers to exchange information. As the Internet evolved, websites became static, enabling only one-way exchanges. But Web 2.0 is fluid, harkening back to its roots in the Arpanet, the news groups, and the forums in the time before shopping carts and banner ads. Though the face of the Internet is ever changing, one thing remains clear: the path to business longevity is paved with popularity.

The technology that social bookmarking is based upon is really pretty simple... there isn't anything complex about it. It is user friendly. The level of knowledge required to gain huge benefits from social bookmarking is low. We're talking about a tool that's meant for everyone.

People don't have to be computer gurus to make use of the technology at all. It's so simple and so easy to use that it will continue to grow in popularity on into the future.

Because of the inevitable growth of social bookmarking and the easy-to-use tagging for such things as multimedia files, it may even impact the design and function of databases themselves. In fact, databases

may have to change just to be able to accommodate this new way of managing information. You've heard that necessity is the mother of invention. Here's one way that critical mass is driving technology.

The Internet has come a long way since its early days of the Arpanet and the news groups, or even the days when top corporations were wondering if it was possible to make money online. But the soul of the Internet remains unchanged.

It's always been about connecting people with each other, sharing information, and adding value. Since business is built on relationships, using the Internet to promote your business is a natural step in the progression of worldwide commerce. Social bookmarking is an obvious outgrowth of that progression.

Using social bookmarking to optimize your web presence, improve your PageRank, boost your performance with the search engines, and develop meaningful bonds with your marketplace all contribute to your online business success.

## **Blogs and Marketing - Using Blog Marketing for Your Business**

Nowadays, blogging is synonymous with online marketing. Bloggers not only publish content on a given topic, but also promote products and create solid communication with their core audience.

The humble term "blog" has gone from being a catchy buzz word, to enjoying the limelight as the industry status quo. Not only does just about every website feature a blog or web journal, the blog structure as an interactive web presence is supplanting traditional HTML development and the static communication style. Blogs are interactive. As part of the social revolution known as Web 2.0, the blog has become an intrinsic part of the online experience. It's not only the wave of the future for Internet marketing, it's part of the ubiquitous present. Blogs are everywhere.

You may be wondering about the advantages of blogging for your business. Why should you start blogging if you haven't already? Your business is getting along fine without it, right?

I myself resisted blogging for the first year after starting my own enterprise. I didn't want to be tied down to a writing schedule. I didn't think people would want to hear what I had to say. And I certainly didn't see the need for pleasing the search engines - I figured if I built a great website, my content alone would attract organic traffic. And I was right - all of these factors would have been relevant... about ten years earlier.

One thing I can tell you: the status quo... isn't. That's a funny way of saying that the marketplace is changing now faster than it has ever changed in our lifetimes. Businesses that don't adapt to those changes will be left behind. But the bend in the road is not the end of the road, unless you refuse to make the turn. The good news is that, even as I am not the only one who resisted blogging, all of my objections to it have been overcome through technology. And the rewards are rich and varied. In I'll be showing you exactly how to take advantage of it. There's simply no reason not to blog in this ever-changing business world.

The constant, however, is that being in business requires you to establish a clientele - build business relationships with people who want your services and are actively seeking them. Blogs address this problem in three ways.

First, they provide an easy way for you to put your message in front of a broader marketplace. No matter how competitive your market may be, you can always attract people who will resonate with you and your message.

Second, the interactive nature of blogs allows you to get immediate feedback from your customers and prospects. Marketing to them is easier than ever since they now tell you what they want in real time.

Third, blogs are a crucial part of your website's search engine optimization strategy - your SEO. Google loves blogs, and there's just no getting around feeding the search engines if you want your business to thrive through organic traffic. Being the excellent medium for marketing that it is, keeping a blog is essential for businesses.

Blogging for business presents an excellent opportunity since blogging itself is such a great medium of communication. Any business promoting a product or service can use their blog as the vehicle to drive traffic as well. Blogs are highly effective for this. Because they're often text-based and light weight with regard to the code they use, that means they have shorter load times. Blogs minimize the crawl time of search engine spiders - something that's popular with the search engines. Your readers will appreciate the quicker load times as well, and they'll be much more likely to return in the future.

Blogs are dynamic because they can be updated frequently. By frequently publishing content on your blog, the search engine spiders will visit more often. The result is that your blog will be ranked higher in the search engine results than a business competitor who has a static site. Now you've got the edge. This is very good thing indeed.

So you see that blogging can enhance and support your online performance as well as your communication. The main reason to start blogging is that it's a great way to communicate with a large number of people. You can share your expertise and earn credibility as an authority on a given topic. Blogging gives you leverage - you can cover a topic once, and refer people to it again and again. It can also be an excellent outlet for your frustrations and excitement. Not only that, it can be profitable at the same time. Blogging is an excellent opportunity for generating income.

Before we talk further about why blogs are important to your online business success, let's define exactly what a blog is. The word blog is actually derived from the term web log, also known as a web journal. That may sound pretty personal to some people, or even self-indulgent, but the truth is a little more scientific than that. Back in the late 1990's, Web logs were maintained by users to track updates and references to other resources online. They served as journals, which made them useful as a publishing tool for the user's stream of consciousness, if you will.

Technically, blogs fall under a category known as a Content Management System, or CMS. A CMS is simply the collection of procedures used to manage work flow in a collaborative environment - say, a business. Content Management Systems were spawned in the real world, and obviously the need for exchanging

information was established long before the Information Age began. With the advent of computers, networks, and then the Internet, it simply makes sense that tracking, sharing and communicating information moved online.

In the digital domain, a Content Management Systems - and therefore a blog - is designed to allow a large number of people to contribute to and share stored data. They can control access to that data based on the role of each user, as well as the ability to view or edit the information. The obvious advantages include reducing repetitive input or duplication of effort. The system makes it easy to retrieve and compile information, do research, and improve communication between users. When you look at blogs in the context of a CMS, you can see why they've become so incredibly popular. This powerful method of distributing information connects like-minded people around the world.

Now, here's a key piece of information. In a CMS, data can be defined as nearly anything - documents, movies, photos, scientific data, editorials, specifications, phone numbers, or any other discrete piece of information. Think about that one.

Not long ago, this kind of power was reserved only for radio, television, books and direct mail - all very expensive means to get your business message in front of the buying public. Can you imagine anyone 10, maybe 20 years ago shooting home movies with their video cam and broadcasting them on prime time TV? People would have thought you were nuts. The expense alone to reach a national market would just about break the bank for any small business. But go to nearly any blog on the Internet now, and there's a better than 50/50 chance you'll see someone's welcome video, telling you in 2 minutes or less why they want you to stick around, join their mailing list, and keep coming back for more. Odds are if you like what you see, you'll do just that.

In terms of managing content, blogs allow the writers to easily publish to a Website and manage the content without having to deal with any programming. Publishing software also provides users with an intuitive user interface for easily pointing and clicking their way to publish content in all types of media. Blogs are simple to set up and use. Blogging tools can automatically organize your articles by keywords, dates and categories, and even schedule them for you ahead of time whenever you want to publish them. We'll get into this topic a little more later on.

## **What Is Web 2.0?**

Bloggging is part of a new paradigm in technology that collectively makes up what is known and Web 2.0. You see that term used frequently, but what exactly does it mean? And was there ever a Web 1.0?

Well, the answer is, of course not - no more than there was a World War I. At the time, people just called it the Great War, because nothing like it had ever been known before. During the early 20th century no one could imagine that there'd be anything to compare it to. In 1917, no one would have believed you if you'd said there'd be a World War II.

Now, I'm not saying that Web 1.0 was anywhere near as dramatic as a global conflict - but the advent of the Internet really was a worldwide revolution, and we're still living with the consequences of the meteoric rise, fall and resurgence of the Internet beginning especially in the last decade of the 20th century.

Back in the murky, dusty past of the Digital Age, way back in 2001, there was a happening that is now referred to as the Dot Com Bomb. For those in the tech sector, it was a cataclysm and there were even people claiming it was the end of the worldwide web. In a sense, it was - or at least, it was the end of the world as we knew it. So how did this come about?

Back in the '90s, people who had a great deal of technological know-how built websites, promoted them and made millions of dollars on speculative ideas. The notion was that if you built a website, traffic would simply flock to it - "If you build it, they will come," to quote the movie *Field of Dreams* - and actually this wasn't far off the mark.

At that time, I was working in the tech sector in the San Francisco Bay area at the largest design software company in the world. I was steeped in the digital culture - all my friends, family, neighbors and colleagues were wrapped up in the technology revolution. I can tell you it was like witnessing the outbreak of an epidemic - "digital fever" - as chronic overwork and employer abuses flourished hand in hand with the rags to riches stories of Internet start-ups. The tales that my in-laws told me as executives in the Silicon Valley are legion. My own friends - computer programmers, graphic designers, audio engineers, web developers, and quality managers - would suddenly disappear for weeks at a time, quarantined by their product managers, who'd slide a pizza under the door for them once in awhile! Entire staffs at start-up companies were working 18, 20 hours a day, sleeping in their offices or on lunch lounge sofas to beat inhuman deadlines and shorten the technology's time to market. For many, it paid off.

What perpetuated these backbreaking demands was the incredible success and the gobs of money that people were making through these start-up companies. The stress that these unrealistic demands placed on otherwise sane business people fueled an escalation - the Dot Com Boom - that can be only be likened to a pretty, glistening, delicate soap bubble. It popped when Wall Street, the venture capitalists, and the buying public found out that the bubble had been over-inflated - that not all of these great business ideas were not founded in reality, let alone hard numbers.

Fortunes were made and lost overnight. There are those who blame the Dot Com Bomb on nothing more than technological breakthrough... and it could be that they are right.

The internet in those days was a one-way street. Those who had the technical know-how to build websites posted what they thought their readers wanted to know and nothing more. The Internet was a relatively new thing and people bought into this one-way communication but only for a few short years.

As technological advances started making it easier to build websites, more and more people grabbed a piece of virtual real estate and jumped on the Internet marketing bandwagon. They began sending out millions and millions... and millions of unsolicited marketing emails daily. These cheap and fatty emails were known as SPAM.

SPAM got so bad that the Congress of the United States actually passed a law, what we know as the CAN SPAM Act of 2001, and it became the law of the land in early 2002. This was actually the final puncture to the already deflating Internet bubble, and it meant the implosion of Web 1.0. Internet marketers were now required to get permission from recipients before they could send out marketing emails, and many of the companies just couldn't survive the blow. Those who did survive, began building opt-in lists amid the digital rubble. These lists are a huge part of all successful Internet marketing operations that are alive and well today.

Taking the marketing conversation with customers one step further, the all-important opt-in mailing list has been supplemented now by blogs. Now Internet marketers who have blogs can give potential list members the one thing they all want... a voice.

Welcome to Web 2.0.

This current Internet paradigm means providing web users with information, just like Web 1.0, but also with the opportunity for participation, social interaction, and access to media. Fonts are larger, and websites overall are easier to read and access, with quicker load times. Display advertising and even contextual ads like Google AdSense are on the wane, replaced now with relationship marketing and sincere product recommendations. Blogging plays into every aspect of Web 2.0 for the online marketer.

Web 2.0 sites are user-driven unlike the old days. Before the Dot Com Bomb information and ideas flowed only one way (from the website to the visitor). Web 2.0 sites allow for information to flow both ways. The blogger does have control of content but he also allows visitors to add comments, and some sites - called Wikis - even allow content to be edited by users.

Many bloggers enhance their blog sites with RSS feeds, podcasts and webcasts. Of course people still read, but they also like to get information through audio and video as well. Bloggers don't even have to record their own audio and video products. There are websites that supply audio and video, and some of these are even free of charge. For more on adding media to your blog, check my website at [eCommerceGal.com](http://eCommerceGal.com), and look for the Audio & Video section. That ought to keep you busy for awhile.

Blogging requires dedication and patience, even with the automation that's available today. No aspect of successful Internet marketing is truly set it and forget it, though you can come close. Your blog has to be updated on a regular basis in order to keep your readers happy and develop a quality relationship with them. The pay-off is that doing so will keep them coming back for more to see what fascinating new things you have to offer. The good news is, the work involved can be reduced to a minimum, freeing you up to spend more time on your business promotion.

I mentioned earlier that adhering to a blogging schedule was one of the reasons I chose not to blog for the better part of a year after starting my business. What I've found, though, is that there are several shortcuts you can take. When it comes to content, there are a variety of resources that are quick and easy to use, and provide real value for your site visitors. Let's take a look now at my system for blog marketing.

Web 2.0 technology now allows even novices who have never thought of building their own website to do exactly that and to do it very quickly and very efficiently as well. One of the better known blog platforms is WordPress, but there are a lot of others available. WordPress technology is also the engine driving a wide array of sites on today's Internet. Templates are easy to come by, and plug-ins are everywhere, little bits of code that automate all aspects of blog maintenance, from your privacy policy to your daily posts. Other blog platforms include Serendipity, Movable Type, Typo, Telligent Community, Kentico CMS, and Drupal.

When you're blogging, using the correct software tools can help you manage your blog administration. When it comes to publishing your blog content, there are two kinds of blog software tools that you can use: the server-based tools and the client-based tools. Both of them have their own advantages and disadvantages, and it's up to you to choose the one that is right for you.

First let's look at Client-based Tools. Client-based tools have text editors that allow you to perform word processing applications from the comfort of your desktop. Client-based tools are geared toward small blogs that are able to run from your hard drive. Obviously, the first advantage of using client-based tools, like the text editor, is convenience.

Now let's look at the Server-based Tools automatically provided by your blog hosting service provider. Hosted blog software tools are very easy to use and you do not have to install any software or manage any

configuration too difficult to comprehend. These types of tools can help you focus on publishing your content.

With the use of hosted software tools, you are also provided with an assortment of design templates. These can help you to quickly in creating a great layout that suits your blog. More so, the layouts can be easily customized, including the fonts, columns, colors, and other aspects of your blog, and make custom layouts and pages.

Now, I highly recommend using WordPress as your blog engine. You can get a subdomain through WordPress.com, and that will serve you well to get started. Make sure you use your main keyword as your sub-domain if you go this route. If you're just starting out, this option will be fine to get you up and running. However, the better option is to load the WordPress engine onto your website because WordPress has a few marketing restrictions when you host your blog with them. It's best to have complete control. Also, having the blog on your site and updating frequently will get your site ranked higher in the search engines. Here's a quick overview of what hosting your own WordPress blog looks like.

First, go to WordPress.org and download the latest version of WordPress for free. There's a big Download button right in the middle of the page - you can't miss it. It comes with clear instructions, and there's loads of help with this on their site. Upload the contents to a folder on your hosting account; call it Blog. Use a Linux account if you can. It lets you do more with your blog.

Whichever type of hosting account you have, you'll want to set up a database. Take it easy - this is pretty simple, and after you do it once, you'll be spiking the ball in the end zone. I mean, you will be hooked!

Follow the instructions from WordPress to do the installation. Make sure you change your wp-config.php file to include your database info, and then upload that as well. This will all be clear once you get started. Using your browser, when you navigate to the blog folder on your website, WordPress should automatically walk you through setting up your blog.

If you get stuck, don't worry. You'll find plenty of help and information about setting up a WordPress blog on... you guessed... my blog at [eCommerceGal.com/blog](http://eCommerceGal.com/blog). Look for the Blogging page.

Once you have chosen your keywords, you can set up your blog with some great content. Here are two quick tips I want to give you about blogging with WordPress.

The first thing is that you don't have to publish in real time. WordPress allows you to schedule your posts in advance. Just change the date and time before you publish it, and your blog post will keep your publishing

appointment for you. What that means is you can upload 15 articles, tips, images or videos into your blog and tell the WordPress engine to publish them every other day. Once you've gotten your material ready, that's a month's worth of content that you can post in less than 30 minutes - an hour or two if you're a little pokey or you're new. By blogging every other day, your traffic rank will rise, Google will love you, and so will your fans.

The second thing I want to tell you is that you don't have to come up with content all by yourself. There are a ton of ways to get around writing text for your blog, and most of them are free. One option is to post interesting images, audios or videos related to your topic. You can get free stock images from Flickr, Getty Images, Dreamstime and other stock photo sites. For video, check out YouTube, Google Video, Vimeo, Metacafe, or any of the other thousands of video sharing sites. When you embed your image or video into your post, make it nice and large - not a thumbnail - and add a few descriptive sentences of your own to the post to make it relevant and add value.

When it comes to posting text articles on your site, you have a number of options besides writing your own. You can do an Internet search on the term "free PLR" plus your main keyword, and you're likely to find some great resources for content. Make sure you do a little editing before you post, and fact check the information.

Article directories are another great source for guest content. Make sure you comply with the directory's reposting guidelines, and give the author credit. The penalties for plagiarism can be really steep - besides, it's just the right thing to do. You don't want to get struck by lightning, do you? I didn't think so.

Another way to leverage the writing of others as guest posts for your blog is to use plug-ins. These are applications that work with your WordPress blog, and they'll automatically post content for you. If you do use plug-ins, make sure you supplement the content with your own posts to add your own personal touch.

If you write your own articles, you don't have to be long-winded. Just a few hundred words should do the job; 500 words is plenty, and 700 can be a bit much. If you have an article that runs a bit long, try breaking into 2 posts. You'll keep your readers in suspense like a 2-part episode of their favorite show... plus you'll only have to work half as hard.

After establishing communication with your audience, the content must also be credible. The blog must have authenticity even though credibility takes time to build. The key to good blog posts and building that credibility is getting people's attention with the first sentence. Once you get their attention, then the rest of the post should keep them reading. Keep your posts consistent and relevant. Show some personality in your writing.

The moment you begin publishing your content - that is, content which is of high value and useful to readers - you also start establishing yourself as an authority. There will come a time when your readers ask you for advice or seek for your opinion; this is the time when you have achieved some kind of credibility. Not only is this an opportunity to establish your reputation, it's also a covenant with your reader, something not to be taken lightly. Frivolous answers and tacky humor could harm your reputation and your business - not to mention, the feelings of someone who's trusting you. Always use business decorum, and err on the side of restraint. You want to be supportive. Respect is earned, and when you win the respect of your readership, they'll bring their friends.

As you develop relationships with the loyal readers on your blog, you can start making sincere product recommendations and earning some cash. Of course you can always develop your own products, but that tends to be time consuming. Private label rights and other resell rights products for digital download are a great way to get started. If you don't have any of your own products to sell, you can include affiliate links in your blog and market products for other companies through Clickbank and the CPA networks.

You can also offer physical merchandise under your own private label. This is an exciting way to generate revenue and offer people real value. You can even develop a drop-ship relationship with suppliers who will fill your orders for you and collect their fees on the back end. For more on this opportunity, check out the marketplace at Alibaba.com. A word of caution here - always do your due diligence before engaging with a company like this. Make sure to get references and check their customer satisfaction ratings.

Once you've gotten some content published on your blog, you will be ready to promote it. Your first task with this is to get the search engine spiders to visit the site so that it can become indexed and appear in search engine results. Social marketing, social media, and social bookmarking are all excellent methods to get the word out about your blog, and create backlinks. That's why Facebook, YouTube and Digg are all so popular. I cover these methods in my other half-hour audio programs, so for a complete overview, you'll want to check them out. I'll tell you how at the end of this program.

Forum postings provide another great way to build relationships with like-minded people and create backlinks to your blog. Article marketing is another terrific venue for driving traffic and creating backlinks. You can even repurpose your blog articles and repost them in the article directories, but if you do, make sure you rewrite them by at least 30%. The search engines frown on duplicate content. You can do this with the free tool located at JetSpinner.com. See their site for details.

RSS feeds are great for promoting and getting your blog noticed. Using RSS feeds, you can allow other websites and blogs to publish your blog content. When you do this, they are creating a link back to your blog, and also promoting your blog to their readers. And speaking of RSS, one of the promotional tools I use

is a free program called RSS Announcer that's widely available. You can get it at Download.com, for example. RSS Announcer automatically submits your RSS feeds to all of the major RSS feed directories on the Internet.

Commenting on blogs that are relevant to your own will also help your promotion. Find a blog that is on the same topic to yours, or close to it, and leave a comment. Commenting on blogs that get many comments will make yours to be seen by those interested in that market. You will gain traffic and readers that way, and it is easy as well as free.

To determine whether or not a specific blog will count as a link back, you can download a free plugin for your Firefox browser by going to <http://www.quirk.biz/searchstatus>. For every site you visit SearchStatus lets you view its Google PageRank, Google Category, Alexa popularity ranking, Compete.com ranking, SEOmoz Alexa incoming links, Alexa related links and backward links from Google, Yahoo! and MSN. This combined search-related information means you can view not only the link importance of a site (according to Google and Linkscape), but also its traffic importance according to Alexa and Compete, so providing a balanced view of site efficacy. The SearchStatus Mozilla Firefox/SeaMonkey extension appears unobtrusively at the bottom of the browser on the status bar.

It's also important to use anchor text within your blog comments, and point your visitors back to specific keywords within the inner pages of your website. This is especially true if you want to rank for those keyword phrases. Not sure how to add anchor text to your site? Well, you can find out by going to my blog at [eCommerceGal.com/blog](http://eCommerceGal.com/blog). Look for the tips on web development.

One key in getting noticed more by the search engines is to publish faster. Since the search engines look for the freshest, high value and relevant information, it is important for you to publish frequently. This will get your blog more visits from major search engines and others.

Since blogs are natural search engine magnets, the search engine spiders will visit your blog more often if they detect an update from it. In addition, the content of your blog does not have to wait for months before getting into search engine result pages but instead, your content will be displayed in a matter of hours or days.

Interviewing people and posting the interview on your blog is an excellent way to market. Just be sure that the people that you interview pertain to the market of your blog. You want all of your posts to be relevant, including any interviews that you might do.

If you hear any news about the market of your blog, be sure that you post it. Everyone loves news, and your readers will appreciate you posting about the current events. Something to keep in mind when blogging about the news is the more current the news, the better. No one wants to reread yesterday's news, so it is a great idea to try and stay as current as possible.

Contests are another way that you effectively market your blog. Having contests on various things would be a lot of fun, and something that will keep your readers coming back. Everyone loves to win things, and you can also make the prize that you are giving away relevant to the market you are promoting on your blog.

Press releases are also an excellent way to market your blog. Sending out a press release or having one made for you is a great idea. You will find that it's pretty affordable for most budgets, and some companies even offer a package deal.

Marketing a blog comes naturally for some people and it can be a little harder for some people. With Blog Marketing, you have a host of benefits. Here's a look at the top reasons to use Blog Marketing for your business.

Passion – Blogging gives you a platform to share your passions. Choose a domain name that reflects your passion and your main keyword, then start writing about why you love the subject. You can also find other blogs in your niche and creating conversational posts. You'll attract people to your blog who love your topic as much as you do.

Authority – In time, after you've written several posts on your topic, the site will differentiate you from other people in your field. The posts you've written can be edited as articles to post in article directories. This will drive traffic to your site as well as create backlinks.

Relationships - Business is all about building relationships with your customers and prospects. The new paradigm of Web 2.0 allows you to connect at a deeper level with the people who are actively looking for what you're offering.

Search engine value – Your blog will quickly be getting some link love from the search engines for targeted keywords. Blogs are quick to load, and frequent posting means providing the fresh content that search engines love.

List Building – WordPress and the other blog platforms are powerful and flexible tool that you can use to entice people onto your mailing list. All you need is a free report, audio, or video tutorial relating to your

niche - something juicy that people can't resist. You can add a link to your opt-in page from the sidebar, at the end of each post, in the footer, or a combination of all of these.

Income – You can promote your own products and services on your blog, plus you can use your blog to promote affiliate products and offers from the CPA networks. When you combine a blog with social media you can really stand out from your competition, provide customers with a direct interaction, and add real value to the marketplace.

## **YouTube Marketing: Social Marketing Media for Your Business**

YouTube – You’ve heard about YouTube.com, haven’t you? Of course you have. Sounds like a show you might see at midnight on the Strip in Las Vegas, doesn’t it? “Cirque de Soleil presents YouTube – now appearing on your computer!”

Okay. In reality, YouTube.com offers something for just about anyone. You see, YouTube is many things to many people, depending on how they want to use it and their purposes for its use.

However, YouTube.com, like many Web 2.0, sites is much more than a site allowing individuals to share video clips. It is a place for public commentary, a place where people can review the latest and greatest info products, a place where people can network and share common interests, goals, and opportunities.

The best part? YouTube.com is not too complicated to use. In fact, the opposite is true. YouTube.com is easy to master. The website allows just about anyone to sign up for an account, upload, share video clips, and view other people’s video clips. Sounds neat, huh?

Just like many popular sites, registered members can rate videos, or find out how many times other people link to a video clip for their viewing pleasure. YouTube.com provides and publishes this information for its loyal fans.

Have you heard about Netflix? The idea is the same. Netflix is an online video “store” if you will, like Blockbuster. Registered members can log in and rent videos and them sent directly to their home. They can also rate and review the videos they see. That way, the public has a better feel for what videos are worth watching (and whether there are some videos they shouldn’t bother with).

The big difference between a site like this however, a static site, and YouTube.com, is that using YouTube, and you can watch video clips right from your home computer. There is no renting, no late fees and no charges to become a member.

Will you watch a full video on YouTube? No. You will watch a video clip. In the ten minutes of time a user has to make a video clip however, you can be sure they will input as much valuable and telling information as they possibly can. So, a visit to YouTube.com is well worth it.

YouTube has become immensely popular, and not just among the young. In fact, the young and old alike are enjoying their newfound celebrity status by posting their own video clips to the Web. And, speaking of celebrities... YouTube is popular among web fans, your average Jane or Joe, and celebrities getting in on

the action. Just like Facebook.com attracts many public figures interested in connecting with their fan base and their audience, so too does YouTube appeal to the same crowd for the same reasons.

If you're looking for a great example of popular videos, you can do a search on Google or any of the top search engines. Search on the term "Top YouTube Videos." You'll see that Page One is loaded with lists of top videos. If you're not already familiar with YouTube, you'll want to play around with it and get to know what's on the site. Odds are high that not only will you find videos by top performing artists, you'll also find videos about your favorite hobby, videos by your industry competition, not to mention a few surprises. For instance, you'll find loads of videos featuring pets doing the most amazing tricks – be careful or you could get hooked!

So why offer this program on YouTube? I'll tell you why. While YouTube.com is fun, it can also be an extremely useful tool for promoting your business, your website, and for networking and connecting with people around the globe.

Here's the point.

YouTube isn't just for fun, though we have focused so far on some of the funnier and entertaining features offered by this popular site. But, just as YouTube.com is fun, you can just as easily use it to promote your website, advertise your business or simply publicize what it is you have to offer. For that reason, large corporations including CBS, NBC, Sony BMG and others, people that once opposed the site, are clamoring to get in on the action. The reason?

Millions of consumers are logging in every day to catch a glimpse of what YouTube has to offer...

YouTube has become one of the most popular Web 2.0 site on the Internet. The sooner you get in, the faster you will start realizing the benefits YouTube has to offer.

Want to see just how useful YouTube.com can be to the ordinary politician, small business owner or marketer? Consider how YouTube was used in the last presidential election. YouTube.com is a platform. You can use it to connect with others in a meaningful, directed and intimate way.

Among the materials posted on YouTube include many TV clips, multiple music videos, and lots of amateur content, content from bloggers, and content from Internet Marketers interested in getting in on the action. Celebrities, news organizations, and even musicians are now allowing users to share video clips of their works to this incredibly fast-growing website.

Here are the facts about YouTube.com as a business and rapidly growing enterprise. Started in February of 2005, the site gained massive media attention and popularity, in part because it was something fresh and new. Time Magazine suggested it was the most popular invention during 2006. Of course, it is not to say YouTube is not without its share of controversy. Quite the opposite is true. We'll learn more about the ups and downs YouTube has experienced in the next section.

What is important for you to know now is YouTube is a powerhouse, a powerful tool anyone can use to gain free publicity. It even captured the attention of industry giant Google, Inc. Google bought the company for just over \$1.5 billion dollars in late 2006. Infusing the company and website with even more capital and resources, there is almost no limit to what YouTube can do in the future, and where it can take its customers.

Okay, now that you know what it is, if you are an entrepreneur, business owner or marketer, chances are you want to know how to use YouTube to connect with your target audience. The good news is you can easily do this. In fact, joining YouTube is easy, it's just as easy as it is to sign with other popular site.

Now, to get in on the action, you will need to register. If you just want to find out what all the fuss is about, you can tour the site and check out popular videos free of charge. That's right... you can watch videos free on YouTube, you don't need to register.

But if you want to upload videos, promo your site, brand your name or get the attention of others, you will have to register. Don't worry, registration is easy. We'll talk more about that later too.

Now that you have a better idea of what YouTube is about conceptually, let's learn a little bit more about the history of this incredible site. In the next section we'll provide you a small history of YouTube, so you have a better sense of where it came from and where it may go.

Technology affords us new and interesting abilities every day. YouTube.com is just one example of how technology is helping us in our endeavors.

By now you probably have a high-level of interest in finding out more about YouTube. Before we talk more about getting in on the action at YouTube and making it work for you, let's review YouTube's brief history, as it is.

YouTube was born from the creative minds of former PayPal employees. YouTube first became active on February 15, 2005. As you can imagine, despite its enormous success the site is still growing.

The start-up received funding in the form of venture capital from Sequoia Capital, raising \$3.5 million dollars for the site. The venture capital firm later invested another \$8million dollars into the company, helping spur its popularity. This just shows you how attractive YouTube's business model was and how many people instantly recognized the promise this site had to offer.

YouTube is one of the biggest Web 2.0 sites in history.

Over 100 million visitors watch clips everyday. YouTube did face many copyright infringement lawsuits, one reason it agreed to the huge settlement deal with Google.

Who Uses YouTube? Everyone. Even your local politician. Yes, it's true, political candidates and fans alike now use YouTube as an informal medium for advertising. Many political commentators are joining in, realizing that millions may hear their voice and message, and even candidates abroad are using YouTube as a platform to market their campaigns.

YouTube restricts individuals from uploading material with known copyrights. YouTube imposed several extra cautionary measures, including limiting video clips to a brief 10-minutes. This lessened a lot of concerns, but added to YouTube's popularity.

Think about it... word of mouth is one of the best ways to promote anything. YouTube you see, is an exceptional outlet for promoting just about anyone. A short 10-minute clip is more likely to garner increasing interest than it is to damage a corporation's ability to sell its products and services.

Many major media moguls now provide content willingly to YouTube. Among them include CBS, Sony BMG and even Warner productions.

Moving Forward... Now that you understand more about where YouTube originated and how people are using it, it's time to learn how you can use YouTube for your personal or business needs.

In the next section, we will provide details about setting up your own account and video clips on YouTube. This section will provide you with quick start information about using YouTube to your advantage. From registration to uploading videos and more, you will find all the answers to your most pressing questions right here in this part of the program.

## **Registration**

You are welcome to view video clips freely at YouTube.com. But, if you want to become an active member of the community, you will first have to join. You can do this easily. If you're at all familiar with using the Internet, registering with YouTube will be a snap.

First, you will have to log onto the main YouTube.com sign up page.

Visit: <http://www.youtube.com/signup>

Registration is simple, just enter your user name, set up a password, provide your e-mail address, and provide some personal details needed by the site. These include your phone number, the country you live in, your gender, date of birth and a confirmation number that's provided by YouTube.

Worried about your privacy? Don't. YouTube.com provides an extensive privacy policy you can access by the bottom navigation bar, or just visit:

<http://www.youtube.com/t/privacy>

YouTube values their customers' privacy. While they may not share your personal information intrinsically, YouTube may use information such as your name and e-mail address if you choose to engage in activities offered by the site (like uploading your video clips).

YouTube often sends cookies out to users computers, so visitors returning to the site can log in more easily. You can always delete the cookies on your computer, this has never been an issue for most people.

The company will not send you marketing material or other advertisements without your consent, and they won't share your personal information with third-party companies. This means your information is protected.

Remember, here are the benefits of registering:

- You get to watch millions of videos presented by people throughout the world.
- You can set up your section so you can share home videos with family members and friends that may live faraway.
- You can connect with people around the world that share common interests, likes and dislikes.
- You can have fun.
- You can upload and promote your videos to a global audience, a huge benefit for any entrepreneur, marketer or small business owner.

## **Confirmation**

Note that when you register YouTube will send you a confirmation note to confirm your e-mail address is legitimate and that you own it. Remember to confirm your email address or you will not be able to use the full functionality of the site.

## **Getting Your Video Featured**

Now that you are registered, its time to start making movies. One of the first questions people have is about getting their videos featured. Everyone wants their turn in the spotlight. The real key to getting your videos featured is nothing more than creativity and good luck.

Visitors on YouTube rank the videos they like. So, like any review system, if people like what it is you have to show, they will rate your videos better, and your videos are more likely to be featured.

## **Using TestTube**

Some people are generous enough to want to offer feedback and improve any site they use, including YouTube. If this sounds like you, visit:

<http://www.youtube.com/testtube>

Here officials of the site try their newest features and ask users to provide them with feedback so they can make their products and services more appealing. You will get the opportunity to “test-drive” new features or programs before YouTube launches them.

## **Make Your Video “Watch Worthy”**

Apart from making a great video, there are many ways you can express yourself and get noticed on YouTube. Unfortunately, YouTube doesn't let registered members upload personal avatars of themselves, small thumbnails of their likeness.

You can however, create a brand simply by using your video cam. You can provide an intro clip, a short bio of yourself if you like. Otherwise, use your full creativity to help brand your name, your products or your services. You can even brand your message if you place enough time and energy in creating your videos!

## **Making Your First Video**

Since YouTube is a relatively new concept, there are still many people that are not certain how to go about making a great video. First, you will need the proper supplies. You can make a video using something as simple as a digital camera, your cell phone or a traditional camcorder.

If you don't have a camera, you can download free software called CamStudio to create screen capture videos. PowerPoint and Open Office also provide the opportunity to create slideshows from still photos.

Whatever tools you use, simply record a short, 10-minute clip of your video. Then, download the video to your computer just as you would any digital pictures you would take. YouTube then allows you to upload your videos to the site. If you want to shine, you can edit your videos before uploading them. There are many software programs readily available that allow you to edit videos relatively easy, even if you are a beginner. Some examples include Windows Moviemaker.

Software applications are a big hit, in part because you can add subtitles to your video, you can incorporate special effects, and you can zoom in and out and take advantage of many other features. Since optimizing your video is essential if you want to attract attention on YouTube, let's take a look at how to do that.

The next section will help you learn how to create and maximize your videos' potential so they captivate your audience.

## **Optimizing Your Videos**

Optimizing your videos is essential if you want to stand out in the crowd. You don't have to have fancy technology to make a great video. Use the tips below to learn how anyone can create compelling and interesting videos for their YouTube audience.

Remember, YouTube provides even novices the ability to create videos and upload them as simply as possible.

Here are the features of a good video. YouTube.com only gives you ten minutes to make a good impression. So, you want to make the best impression you possibly can, right?

How do you do that? There are many features "good" vs. "bad" videos have. Consider the last time you watched a movie preview? Was it intriguing? Did it get you asking questions? Did you want to see more?

When you create your online videos for YouTube, you should be thinking along these lines. Pretend you are creating a movie preview.

Here is what you want to do:

- Get your message out.
- Make a point.
- Entice visitors to come back for more.
- Provide clear shots and well-recorded audio.
- Keep it short and sweet.
- Graphically improve your video to keep the viewer intrigued.

Remember, ten minutes is not much time. You want to record a sharp video, one that is dynamic, unusual and anything but ordinary. Some of the most popular videos on YouTube are popular for no other reason than the creator did something unique, different and interesting.

Think you can't come up with something creative for your video? Think again.

Here is a simple activity to try to help you start your journey. Take out a piece of paper. You are going to brainstorm. First, list the top 10 ideas you have for making a great video.

Next to each idea, write down what makes that idea so appealing. If you can't come up with at least five reasons the idea is compelling, scratch it off your list. Narrow your list to your top five choices.

Now, define how you will present the information to highlight your video in a unique and unusual way. Will you dress funny? Will you record atop the highest mountain? Will you use some beautiful music in your sound track?

Whatever you decide, make sure you try something unique. People have every opportunity to watch something boring on television. They turn to YouTube.com to find interesting and intriguing things to view.

Even if you are branding and promoting your website, you must be careful to make sure you do so in an interesting and creative way. No one wants to watch an infomercial on YouTube. So find a fun way to get your message out.

## **Making Videos With Your Camcorder**

If you have a digital or analog camcorder, then you probably already know how to use it. It is easier to post videos to YouTube if you use a digital camcorder. All you have to do is shoot your video, download it, and upload it to YouTube.

If you use an analog video recorder, like the kind that uses older VHS tapes to record videos, you will probably have to use a converter box to create a digital copy of your video, which you can then upload to YouTube.

Once you upload your video, it's time to improve on it. Sure, you can leave it as is, but remember, if you take even a small amount of time graphically strengthening your video you are likely to attract a larger audience. So, here's what you do.

First, make sure you have access to some video editing software. You can get this inexpensively or even for free on the Internet. One of the more common tools people use is Windows MovieMaker.

Once you have the right software, upload your video to the application. Once you do this you can edit your video all you want. Try saving multiple versions of it and testing it with users to see which they like best.

Now it's time to make your video stand out. Add special effects, like interesting color schemes or fade ins. Try adding titles or even chapters to your video. Put some music in the background. There are plenty of sites on the Internet that offer royalty-free music and sound effects for free, so do a little homework. All of these small elements will encourage more people to look at and review your video.

If you are not sure what makes a good video, go to YouTube.com and check out their featured videos section. Find out what makes these videos stand out. Is the content outrageous? Does the author use multiple special effects? Are subtitles or category titles included? Take some notes about what you like and what you don't like. This will help you when you brainstorm ideas for improving your personal video.

## **Time To Upload**

Now that you took some time to play with your video, it is time to upload it to YouTube. Make sure you save any changes you made to your video before you upload it. You also have to save your video in a format YouTube can use. YouTube.com recommends you save your video with the following file formats for easier uploads: .MOV, .AVI, or .MPG files. These are common video formats most people find easy to use. YouTube also recommends you use a video with a 320x40 resolution and one with an MP3 sound track.

You should be able to upload your video any way you like. If you use a digital camcorder, you can upload your video from the device directly to the website.

Once you upload your video, you will need to provide some description for it and tags so people can easily find it. The best way to create tags for your video is to come up with some catchy keywords people are likely to search for when looking for videos like yours.

You will also have to specify one or more categories under which YouTube.com lists your video. Remember, the goal here is helping other users find your video quickly and easily. With millions of videos uploaded each day, you have to take time to ensure you label, categorize and tag your video correctly, so it stands out from the crowd.

## **How to Drive Traffic to Your Site by Posting Videos on YouTube**

Web 2.0 offers many cost-effective ways of promoting your website, and YouTube is no different. And that's just one part of YouTubing. It is also one of the most fun ways of promoting your website. There is music, there is video, there is creativity, and there is marketing. A terrific mix, isn't it?

YouTubing is not going to sell your product. What it can do, however, is get people interested in your services. How? Let's take a look.

### **Browse around**

If you are new to YouTube, this should be your first step. It's a fascinating world out there. Plunge right in and look around a bit. Look at the kind of videos others have made. You'll find some of your favorite music videos, movie scenes, vintage videos, personal videos, documentaries, and of course, a glut of marketing videos. If you find something in your niche, make a note of it. When you make your own video, you'll need to come up with something different from your competitors.

### **Create a video**

That's what you're there for. Grab a video recording device – say your camcorder, digital camera, webcam, or your cell phone, and get started. Like anything else, you won't get it right the very first time. If you look at your first video and feel like pulling your hair out, remember that you're not alone. Making a video is much easier in your mind than it is in practice. Over a period of time, you'll get better at it.

Which brings me to another point; just one video won't win it for you. Once you've uploaded your first video, start working on the second video and then the third. Yes it's not easy but it's much easier than some of the other marketing techniques, and you'll get better as you go along. This will also give you an opportunity to experiment with a variety of techniques. Some may flop miserably while some may enjoy wide popularity and may turn into a rewarding viral distribution.

### **Spare a thought for the viewers**

YouTube is free but viewership has to be earned. So here is humble advice. Do not make videos that take forever to load. People have other things on their minds. And a site like YouTube has many choices for them to choose from. A study on video-sharing websites suggests that a video works best when it is under 5 minutes in length. So even though YouTube allows you a maximum of 10 minutes, try to keep it under 5 minutes if you can.

Before you upload your video, ensure that the file format is accepted. YouTube accepts .WMV, .AVI, .MOV and .MPG formats.

### **Entertain**

I'll say this a hundred times over – YouTube is not your marketing collateral. DO NOT sell your product on YouTube. Use it wisely to get people interested. Once they start flocking to your website, you can sell all you want. The minute you start boring them with your 'Buy Me' messages, they'll turn the other way. The best way is to come up with something entertaining that the viewer would want to sit through. When you have six interesting videos on something, the viewer will surely want to know you. That's when your marketing can begin.

### **Add your website URL**

You've made a great video and you're getting a lot of comments. All of it will count for nothing if it doesn't result in increased traffic to your website. So add that all-important URL with your video. You may add one before the video and one after the video. Add your URL to your YouTube profile as well.

### **Market through others**

Whoever said you need your own videos to attract traffic? If you don't want to spend time creating a video, approach a popular YouTube user. Offer them a payment for displaying your link on their videos. That's

encouragement for them to come up with interesting videos and a marketing platform for you without sweating too much.

### **Put up a video of your social networking profile**

This may not seem relevant at first but it will surely help you get popular. Put up a bunch of hit YouTube videos on the other social networking profiles that you use. A few examples are Digg, De.li.cious, Orkut, and Reddit. That will make your profile attractive and help in getting new contacts.

### **Participate**

If you want others to visit your profile on YouTube, start visiting their profiles. Browse through videos, add comments for their videos. Don't spam their profiles. Offer genuine comments and try to initiate a dialogue.

### **Spread the word**

If you have uploaded your own video, get your friends and family members to view it and rate it. Nothing works like a five star rating. Ask them to chip in with a few good comments as well. The biggest mistake is to assume that uploading a video is the end of it. It needs a lot of promotion to make your video visible.

### **Tag your video**

Now this one is the most obvious ideas. Use appropriate and relevant tags for your video. You wouldn't want a person to miss out on your video if he is looking for something similar.

What we've covered here are just a few ideas you can use to drive traffic to your YouTube profile and thus to your website. You'll find more as you go along. As you see what other users are doing, you'll pick up techniques along the way.

Now that you have the basics down, it is up to you to make extraordinary videos. The bottom line – be creative, be innovative, be observant, be smart, and have fun!

## **Common Questions**

Here are some common questions new users have when starting with YouTube.

If you do not find the answer you need, check out YouTube.com's help section, where you will find a comprehensive listing of hundreds of questions users have about the service.

Q. Can I comment on other people's videos?

A. Yes, you can. Much like blogging, you are able to place comments about a video. The more often people rate and comment about a video, the more likely it is to achieve higher ranking on the site. Keep in mind however, once you make a comment on another video, it is permanent. Only the creator of that video can delete it. You can however, delete unwanted comments from your own video clips. You should in fact keep an eye on the kinds of comments people make to your video so you do not have Spam comments posted to your clip.

Q. My comments are not showing up, and sometimes I can't comment at all. Why is that?

A. The chances are high either (a) you did not confirm your e-mail address, so you are not showing up as a registered member, or (b) you haven't given it some time. There is a slight delay in the time you post comments to the time you can see them on the website. If you find you are having other technical difficulties, sometimes it helps to simply clear the cache on your Internet browser. Typically, to do this you will want to delete any temporarily files, your search history and any cookies stored on your computer. Next, be sure to log out, and then log back in again.

Q. I want to save a video clip to my computer. How do I do that?

A. You can't actually download and save any videos to your computer, except for your own videos. YouTube created a structure that allows all clips to run on the site, but on the site alone. Sometimes you can save a video in your "save videos" list on YouTube, and watch them when you log back in later. You can also bookmark videos much like you would your favorite sites, so you can come back to them later.

Q. What are playlists and how do I use them?

A. Playlists are lists of your favorite videos. When you bookmark videos you add them to your playlist. Typically, creating a playlist is as simple as clicking on the "save to Favorites" button. This link is just below the video you're watching. You can classify your favorites into separate playlists by using the dropdown menu. All you have to do is create a title and the properties for each playlist you create.

You can even share your playlists for others. When you go to your playlists page, located at:

[http://www.youtube.com/my\\_playlists](http://www.youtube.com/my_playlists)

You simply select the playlist you want others to see, then click the bar that says share this list. It's that easy. You will need to add the e-mail addresses of people you want to share your list with. When you click send, the people you indicated will receive a message telling them they can log on and view your playlist.

Q. Why are Playlists of use?

A. Playlists can serve many purposes. If you want to get a marketing message out to many people, you can create a series of videos that talks about your products, services or one you are promoting. You can then send a link to your mailing list.

If you have a series of products you sell, or a book series you want to promote, you can provide audio clips about that series on a specific playlist. You can then create other playlists to market and show off other products you want to promo. Remember, the list of possibilities is endless when you use YouTube.com as a promotional tool.

Q. What if I do not want other people to see my video?

A. YouTube allows registered members to keep their videos private, meaning only people you invite will be able to view your video clip. Simply visit the following link:

[http://youtube.com/my\\_videos](http://youtube.com/my_videos)

You will want to go to the "Edit" section, and select the private button. You will then need to choose the contacts you want to allow viewing rights.

Q. Is it hard to watch videos on YouTube?

A. Watching a video is simple, anyone can do it. All you have to do is visit the site. Remember, anyone can watch video clips without registering. Click the video and you are in business. If you want to save videos to your favorites list, you will need to register, but remember, registration is free!

Q. I want to use my cell phone to upload a video. How do I do that?

A. A lot of cell phones allow you to record short video clips. Before uploading to YouTube, you will have to set up your account so it can receive videos from mobile devices. To do this, simply log into your account.

Then, follow the account settings choice and click on the link to “Mobile Upload Profiles.” Here you can enter information about the mobile unit you plan to upload from. Then you create a file for your cell phone. YouTube.com will provide you with a specific e-mail address you can use to send your videos to.

That’s our look at YouTube Marketing. As you can see, YouTube is making life incredibly fascinating. Using YouTube for entertainment, as a promotional tool or to learn more about a subject you are passionate about is easier than ever.

You do not have to be a technical wizard to figure out how to use YouTube to your advantage. In fact, YouTube provides detailed instructions for all the features, including the advanced features it offers on its site.

Before you seriously consider using YouTube as part of a self-promotional campaign, log onto the site, create a profile and try uploading a few test videos. This will allow you some time to get used to the site features and figure out exactly what you need to do to get your videos up and running. Don’t forget to check in often with the featured videos section, so you get a better idea of what others are doing.

And remember – have fun!

## Twitter Mania – Following the World Online In Real Time

Have you ever found yourself mocking a new idea only to have to eat your words? See if you can put yourself in this picture.

A couple of years ago, a sophisticated, successful friend of mine – someone in my master mind group – invested a total of nearly twenty thousand dollars in cash and business equity into an online marketing program offered by a web guru that I'd never even heard of. I was a little chagrined. I couldn't imagine that any amount of coaching from someone less than globally famous would be worth twenty grand. But I listened patiently to what my friend had to say about the seminar he'd just attended. After all, I am a marketer. Plus I have respect for what this guy, my colleague, has to say on the topic of business and promotion.

So there we were on this particular afternoon sitting at my kitchen table, noshing on rye crackers and brie over a nicely aged bottle of viogner. If you'd been sitting next to me, you would have needed sunglasses as the noon sun shimmered off the waters of Puget Sound outside my picture window. I listened a little incredulously to my friend while he told me his story. He was pretty animated, and I mused to myself that he might have been better served investing twenty thousand dollars into some good, quality psychiatric counseling. It wasn't so much the high price tag he'd paid to learn about topics like article marketing (which, by the way is free and sometimes called Bum Marketing). And I admit I was a little impatient when my friend mentioned some strange neon-orange critter called Squidoo as the next best thing for page rank since getting listed in the DMOZ directory. By the way, he was spot-on about both of these marketing methods.

But when I heard my esteemed colleague mention the topic of micro-blogging, I thought he'd been had. "Micro-blogging? Does that have anything to do with micro brewing?" I asked him. The idea of micro-blogging seemed cloyingly cute and self-conscious. "What will they think of next?" Then my friend told me that this micro-blogging thing had a name: Twitter – a little blue bird with a big following. That was it. I knew right then he was crazy.

"Twitter? You've got to be kidding me," I just about choked on my wine. "You wouldn't catch me dead on site with that name." Uh huh.

Fast forward to the present day, and I'm using Twitter to follow and connect with people all over the world. The funny thing is, now I'm having to sell the idea to my friend – he tried it, and he just didn't get the point. Meanwhile, my profile is tricked out like some '63 low rider Chevy Impala, fake fur on the dash and candy apple paint you could just about dive into. Don't even think about touching my chrome wheels.

Twitter? Who ever said Twitter wasn't cool?

Of course I'm kidding about the fake fur... maybe. Follow me, and you'll find out.

But much like its heavier cousin Facebook, Twitter has a fan base that's not merely avid – it might even be called rabid. Of course, there are still those who relate more to my initial reaction than my endorsement of this micro-blogging site. To those critics – like my friend – I can only say this: try logging onto Twitter some Monday evening between 5:00 and 9:00 pm Pacific time. The odds are high that you'll see a cartoon of a whale and the message "Too many tweets!" Twitter has become so popular that sometimes you just can't log in.

It's difficult to say just how many new Twitter users there are each day, but as I create this program for you, estimates put it over 300,000 people daily – some states in the U.S. don't even have cities with that many people in them, and we're talking about a daily increase by that number. With more than 100 million Twitter users, Twitter's search engine gets 600 million searches daily. If that's not the very definition of "mania," I don't know what is. Now, call me optimistic, but I imagine that in all that traffic, surely you can find someone who's looking for you and your business. Do you see the point?

Twitter allows you to connect with the world online in real time. How? Well, you're about to find out. In this program, I'll show you the ins and outs of using Twitter as an essential marketing resource for your online business. Twitter in a nutshell is a simple social networking site that lets you share with your friends and followers what you're doing now – right now! Twitter is a messaging service that has a lot in common with other modern communication tools, including email, text, instant messaging, blogging, RSS, social networks like Facebook, and a number of other methods that people use to keep in touch electronically. The difference with Twitter is how all of its unique ingredients come together.

Twitter works around a continuously updated stream of news from people all around the world. As a member, you can add your own succinct message to the time line, up to 140 characters long. These messages are known as a "tweets" – yes, really. Sorry. I didn't name that one, either. You'll just have to go with it.

Now, this doesn't mean you're going to be able to see every single Twitter user's tweets. You can choose whom you want to "Follow" and there's no limit. Others can choose to follow you, and it's these followers you'll converse with through your brief messages. You can also choose to look at posts by anyone who's on Twitter – you don't have to be following them to see what they have to say and communicate directly with them.

You might not be impressed with this simple formula, but there is massive power in this social networking site. You can meet other like-minded people, share information and website links. You can keep up with significant newsworthy events as they happen around the globe. You can locate in real time people who are actively seeking the solutions that your business offers. And you can connect at a meaningful level with people you never would meet otherwise. In fact, this extraordinary level of connection is the key to your success using Twitter. It is this very fact that Twitter's critics are failing to see. All of these factors, combined with the ability to grow your list of followers, make it a perfect platform for business and for socializing in the new millennium.

Here are a few more benefits. You can use Twitter to send exclusive direct messages to a single user instead of broadcasting to everyone who's following you. Mobile options allow you to send and receive messages via SMS and email from your cell phone. Search options allow you to find Twitter users in real time who are posting about a specific topic – and this is especially interesting to people who solve problems for a living, people like you and me.

## **How To Communicate 140 Characters At A Time**

We've said that Twitter is best described as a micro blogging platform. The limit of 140 characters for each of your updates may initially seem like a small amount. However, as you become more experienced, it's amazing what you can fit into 140 characters. The essence is atmospheric – not specific. I think of writing tweets as a challenge that's similar to writing a haiku – the Japanese form of poetry that limits you to 17 syllables using a 3-line, 5-7-5 format. Like this one:

Twitter tweet stream

The sound of one wing flapping

Time's swift river flows

That's only 74 characters – If I were to post this drivel on Twitter, I'd still have room for a URL, driving traffic to my ebook of haiku poetry! I'm joking, of course, but you get the idea. You can say a lot in a small space.

That said, Twitter is much, much more than a micro blogging platform. It's many things to many people. It all depends on how many people you follow on Twitter. If it's in the thousands, then your "tweet stream" will be more like a "tweet flood," running constantly with verbiage coming in from all over the planet. If you are only following a few hundred people, or even less, then things are much easier to keep up with. Twitter is also a great way to meet new people online, particularly those with similar interests to yours. I'll show you how to do this and more a little later on.

All kinds of celebrities use Twitter on a regular basis to communicate with their fans and followers, from musicians and actors, to professional athletes and even political figures. Twitter allows us to sneak a peak at what our favorite public people are up to. Even large corporations and television networks use Twitter, such as CNN, Amazon, Dell, and ESPN.

In fact Twitter has been recognized as serving a significant role in journalism. When US Airways Flight 1549 crash landed into the Hudson River without losing a soul, the first photograph was taken by a Twitter user – long before the media arrived on the scene. This kind of immediacy is unprecedented.

## **Twitter Acts As A Conversation**

Twitter's extremely simple interface and ease of use are among the reasons why it has caught on like crazy. The key to effectively using Twitter is to understand that it is a conversation between people. It's more like being at a cocktail party than it is like standing on a speaker's dais. It is about connecting with people and sharing information. It is not a sales platform although some will disagree with me on that point. I am not saying that you can't use it to promote, but you need to do it the right way.

If you are planning to use Twitter merely as a platform to send out links to your product offering, well, you're not going to be satisfied with your results and you're probably going to be bored silly. If you merely post links, very few will continue to follow you. Just like a blog you need to supply useable information and build your reputation as a valuable resource. Do that, and when you occasionally recommend something such as a product or service, people will be hanging on your every word.

Twitter works like any other type of networking protocol. It is most valuable when you are sorting information about your niche for other people. You don't go to a local Chamber of Commerce meeting and simply introduce your business. You also talk to people and show genuine interest in their enterprise. Yes, it's important for your business to locate a pool of targeted traffic. They need to know you, like you, and trust you before they will choose your service over the competition. In order to market a service successfully online, you need to attract and establish credible relationships with your prospects. Do that, and you'll develop relationships that will boost your business – not because you pitched your company, but because you've proved to be a valuable resource that others will recommend.

Twitter is indeed an incredibly powerful tool capable of reaching out to thousands or millions of people. Twitter may have a frivolous name, but its power and reach are indisputable. Think about that – and its application for your business.

If you've signed up with Twitter only to stare at a bare, lonely screen with zero followers, it might be difficult for you to see the potential. But once you get started and you use Twitter correctly, things have a tendency to snowball.

Here are just a few of the ways Twitter can benefit your business:

You can establish rapport with your customers and prospects: Twitter allows for a bit more personal, less formal, more fun mode of communication. It allows people to connect and relate to you on a personal level – it makes you look like just a regular guy or gal. Show some personality.

You can build a loyal, steady customer-base. As a marketer, building a list is one of the most vital steps you can take in the advancement of your online business. Twitter offers pretty much the same thing as building a list. With Twitter, your followers will see all of your tweets. They'll digest the information in about two seconds and if you include a link, they might even be curious or engaged enough to click through.

You can build up excitement for a product launch. Just like with an email list, you can start with occasional Tweets about your new project. By keeping your followers up to date, you'll build trust and anticipation. When your product launches, a well-timed Tweet may likely be just as effective as a blast to your email list.

You can drive traffic to your website. Wouldn't it be great if you could instantly notify hundreds or even thousands of people every time you update your blog? Twitter makes this possible. If your blog is high-quality, your followers will keep an eye out for more of your Tweets.

You can build relationships with business contacts. Most savvy internet marketers use Twitter as their primary social networking tool. So take advantage of this fact! Hook up with your contacts so you can work on building a closer relationship.

You can take advantage of crowd-sourcing, calling on your friends, fans, followers, and email subscribers to contribute ideas and solutions. Basically, it is a form of "group intelligence". By listening to the crowd, marketers and business owners can figure out the exact thoughts, needs, and wants of their customer base.

For many marketers, Twitter has become absolutely essential for the growth of their business and their exposure on the internet.

## **Getting Started With Twitter**

Setting up a Twitter account is easy, but there are a few things to be aware of when organizing your account. The first thing to do if you don't have an account is go to [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com) and choose the option to sign up. The Twitter sign up wizard will walk you through the process, and it's fairly intuitive. I'm sure you'll get the hang of it – after all, hundreds of millions of people (including me!) have done this already. Here are a couple of things to be aware of.

Give some thought to your user name, because it's how you are going to present yourself the world on Twitter. It isn't absolutely crucial that you register your own name, but do so if you can, particularly if your name is an unusual one. I'm sure the last thing you want is for someone else to be using your name on Twitter. If someone has already beaten you to it, try using "the" in front of your name, such as "TheJohnSmith." Celebrities do this all the time.

Next you'll be asked for your email address. Now, you may set up more than one account on Twitter, but you will need a different email address for each account. Also remember that each account will have a separate list of followers.

All you need to do now is add friends from your email address book, choose people to follow on Twitter, and confirm your account through the email that Twitter just sent you to finish the registration process.

A word of caution here: don't go overboard when it comes to following people at first or you'll soon find that your Twitter page is far too noisy. You might miss some good Tweets amid all the noise and clutter. It's best to start out following only people you know or news feeds related to your industry.

Once you've set up your account, Twitter lets you customize the look and feel of your profile page. You will want to pay close attention to your one line bio. Besides your tweets, this is what people will read and use to decide whether or not they want to follow you. Start your Bio with the words "I am" and then describe yourself. Using keyword terms in your bio will mean that your profile comes up in search results as people are looking for like minded individuals to follow.

It's essential that you use a real photo of your own image. People want to connect with other people, not some logo. The exception is if your company is an industry leader, such as the Wall Street Journal. Then it's okay to use a logo. In fact, it's a good idea.

You also have the option to upload a customized Twitter background to your profile. There are loads of free Twitter backgrounds that you can download or even edit with Photoshop or other graphic design software package.

The next thing to do is fill out your settings. You can access your settings through the link at the top right of your screen. Select the Account tab. The information you entered when joining is already populated here, but now it's time to flesh this out. You want people to find you on Twitter, and you also want to make yourself appear to be an interesting person so people will follow you. Much of what you enter here is searchable on Twitter and through various third party applications – like Google.

Enter your web site name or blog into your Account information. Make sure you include <http://> in the address. Next, add your location. People who want to connect with locals will appreciate being able to find you on Twitter. You can enter your mobile phone number here if you want Twitter updates sent to your phone. You can also elect to receive email notices when someone sends you a Direct Message. Likewise, you can receive notifications that you have a new follower if you like.

## Twitter Lingo

Now let's take a look at Twitter language and symbols. As with most modern inventions, there is a certain "language" you'll have to learn when it comes to using Twitter. Fortunately it's about 8 terms, so there isn't really a steep learning curve. Trust me – it's much easier than pig Latin. I quickly got the hang of it, and so will you. All of these terms are used by inserting them at the beginning of your post.

- **@ symbol:** Placing the @ symbol directly before a username shows that you are directly addressing that person, but the tweet is still public. This is similar to starting a letter with a salutation, such as "Dear Jane."
- **Direct Message (DM):** Typing DM followed by a username will allow you to send them a Direct Message rather than having your Tweet appear publicly. Be careful with this – you never want to say anything privately that you wouldn't say publicly. In the off-chance that you make a formatting mistake, you don't want everyone to know you think your local librarian is a bit bookish. Ooo, can you say "social taboo"?
- **Hash tag (#):** Typing # followed by a keyword will categorize your Tweet so that others can easily find it when they do a search on that term. Once you start using Twitter, you'll realize that many people use the hash tag in their Tweets. Watch for it – this can indicate that a trend is quickly spreading.
- **Retweet (RT):** This means that the Tweet was originally posted by someone else and you are reposting it because you want to spread the word, you think it's funny or especially interesting. Careful – using RT counts as 2 characters in 140 character allotment.
- **Overheard (OH):** OH at the beginning of the Tweet means that you overheard something funny or interesting that is not your own original idea.

- **Nudge:** Typing Nudge followed by a username will send the user a reminder to update and start tweeting again. If you get one of these, make sure you respond right away – it means your public is waiting.
- **FAV:** Typing FAV followed by a username will favorite that user's last Tweet, telling the world you like it best.
- **GET:** GET followed by someone's username will retrieve the user's last few updates for you and display them on your screen.

## Social Marketing Management

As an Internet marketer one of your main promotional goals should be to become a dominant force in social networks, and what better way to access the global market than through Twitter? Simply by attracting followers and making friends you can quickly build a list of valuable leads – not to mention create strong bonds.

To use Twitter successfully, you'll need to post good content often – that's daily, not weekly. Believe it or not regularly updating your tweets will help you drive more traffic to your site. Avid Twitter users like people who post regularly. If you want to gain active followers through your tweets set up a schedule for posting, and stick to it.

Besides keeping to a regular schedule, you will also want to make sure that you reply to the tweets addressed to you. I don't recommend that you stay on the site all day or spend long hours tweeting away your time. Just pick a few good times during the day, and log in for ten minutes.

If you're not able to keep to a regular schedule and you do see the value of using Twitter, consider using the services of a social marketing manager for your business. This is a consultant who manages all of your social marketing for you – Facebook, Twitter, social bookmarking. In fact, I know a couple of really good service providers.

For more information on this type of service or to get help with managing your social marketing, see my website at [eCommerceGal.com/socialmanager](http://eCommerceGal.com/socialmanager) or drop an email to [SocialManager@eCommerceGal.com](mailto:SocialManager@eCommerceGal.com).

By taking the time to build good relationships with your followers, you will be laying the ground work for converting them into lifetime customers for your products and your business. Establishing a good

relationship with your followers is vital if you want to take advantage of the massive flow of traffic that pours through Twitter every day.

## **What Good Content Looks Like**

Write eye-catching, interesting tweets. Twitter won't do you much good if no one bothers to click through your links. Posting eye-catching content involves the same general concept as writing strong e-mail headlines. You must pique their interest and make them curious to see what you have to offer.

Keep 90% of your tweets full of helpful content and limit your promotional ones. This way you will provide value for your followers, and they'll naturally be drawn to 100% of your messages.

If you're not camera shy, plug in your webcam and use a service called TwitCam. No, it's not just like America's Funniest Videos – you want to be interesting, not the subject of mockery. Despite its whimsical name, TwitCam is a powerful tool that allows you to stream live video on your Twitter page and chat real time with your followers. This is a great way to make an instant connection with people everywhere. You can find out more about using this service at [twitcam.com](http://twitcam.com).

Another good way to use Twitter is to offer valuable quotes. Do a search for some juicy quotations and post them on Twitter. Personal development quotes are great, and so are timeless quotes by famous people. Here's an example: "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." — Aristotle.

## **Building Your List of Followers**

Now let's look at building your list of followers on Twitter. Of course, connecting with people should be your prime directive. First of all, go to Facebook, Myspace, and any other social networking sites you use. Post a link to your new Twitter account in your status update, urging people to follow you. You can build a large network of friends, clients, associates, and customers using Twitter. After your profile is set up correctly, invite your business contacts and people on your email list to follow you on Twitter. Also, include your Twitter information in your emails, on your websites and blogs. You can even add your Twitter URL to your business card so that you can gather followers offline as well.

Don't be shy. Tell everyone you meet about your Twitter page. Make it sound exciting and let them know that, if they follow you, they'll be privy to your important updates, great tips and insider information. You may be surprised to find out how many people will click the follow button just to see what you're up too.

Here are a few tools To Make using Twitter Easier and more efficient.

**Tweet Deck:** Some people think the standard Twitter.com interface is a little slow. You can use Twitter through a free tool called TweetDeck, a free downloadable application that works from your desktop and connects to your twitter account. The main benefit of Tweetdeck is that you can see the main Twitter time line, the mentions you get and your Direct Messages all on the one screen.

Another benefit of using TweetDeck is that you can control multiple Twitter accounts from it, re-tweet with one click and follow or unfollow, all from the one place. You can also see your Facebook news feed as well.

**Social Oomph :** Formerly known as Tweet Later, this tool lets you schedule your tweets, auto-follow people who follow you, send them a direct message automatically and much more. Social Oomph offers a free service but there is also the option to upgrade for even more features.

**TwitPic:** Sharing pictures and product images is also possible with Twitter by using a tool called Twitpic. When you make new contacts there may come a time when you want to share some of your pictures with them so that they can get to know you and your business better.

**Twollo:** This is another web based Twitter tool that you can use to find specific people you want to follow. Just type in the subject or topic that interests you and the tool will find people who are talking about the same thing, and it automatically follows them for you. Now, the key is that Twollo can't actually build the relationship for you. You'll have to do that yourself. Using Twollo merely makes it easier to find people you want to build relationships with.

There are literally hundreds of tools that work with Twitter and leverage your time. As you become more comfortable with using Twitter, you can branch out and use new tools. Now, change is the constant – especially when it comes to technology. For a list of the most current Twitter plug-ins, services and tools, see my blog at [eCommerceGal.com/blog](http://eCommerceGal.com/blog). Look for the Twitter page. You'll find everything you need there.

## **Conversion Begins With Good Market Research**

We've established that you can use your Twitter account to promote your blog, products, and services, drive traffic and make money using Twitter. A lot of people don't realize that paid advertising is available on Twitter, and I'd be remiss if I didn't tell you that there are several advertising networks on Twitter. While you can make money with direct advertising on Twitter, I strongly caution you to keep the focus on providing valuable content. It is especially important in social marketing that you get to know your clients and win their

trust and confidence before making any product recommendations. If you're going to advertise on Twitter, use some restraint. Show a little class, and your followers will respect you.

With that said, let's take a look at turning Twitter followers into customers. One way to do this is to set the stack the deck in your favor at the outset through market research. Every business has a target market. However, the simple fact is that many business owners often miss the mark because they're not in touch with the true needs of their market. Twitter can be a great research tool. You can use the search feature on the Twitter home page to find the latest tweets on any topic you wish. Tapping into the global tweet stream, you're almost guaranteed to find people who are talking about your topic right now, in real time. You should be following your name, plus any product names you have, to keep track of what is being said within your marketplace.

This can be a great way to keep track of new developments on any topic. Each search has a feed that you can add to your favorite feed reader and automatically see all the new things happening on Twitter for that topic.

You can also use this information to locate people who are specifically looking for your product or service in real time. No, I'm not talking about SPAM or blatant advertising. I'm talking about helping real people solve real problems – right now.

Using the Search feature on Twitter, decide on a keyword related to your product. For instance, let's say you just posted a terrific pizza recipe on your food blog. Type your keyword "pizza recipe" into the Twitter Search box. Next, add a space, then a question mark, and hit the search button. What you're likely to find is a whole host of people craving pizza and asking if anyone knows a good recipe. Choose one person, and reply to that person using the @ symbol. Tell them about your blog post in a conversational way. Be friendly, and make sure you give before you receive. By offering this person exactly what they're looking for, you're now a hero, and odds are they'll follow you anywhere!

By using Twitter, you can easily listen to the needs of your prospects, the issues they are currently facing and learn about the kind of help that they want. Whether you're using automation or manual search, Twitter means power. You can identify what your market wants in real time, and hand it to them on a platter – or a flat 18" box. Whatever.

## **Avoid These Common Mistakes**

Now let's take a look at some common mistakes that Twitter users make. We've already seen what an exciting, cool, and extremely powerful social network Twitter is. The fact is hundreds of millions of people

are using it to connect with each other all over the world. But as an Internet marketer there are some common mistakes to avoid before you even start posting tweets.

First of all, don't tweet constantly! This should be obvious, but it's remarkable how many people tweet dozens, even hundreds of times in a single day. Be strategic with your tweets. Make your presence known, and still leave people wanting more.

Stay consistent. Tweet every day. Tweeting once a week or once a month will not accomplish your goal – some say it defeats the purpose of being on Twitter altogether. People will forget who you are and why they decided to follow you in the first place. If you get off track, just get back on again.

Only tweet about things that matter. The occasional “Wow these French fries are tasty” is fine – it shows your followers that you're human and that there's more to you than your business. Think about those water cooler conversations at the office: they break the routine and allow you to connect with the people in your circle. But they're not what brings home a paycheck.

If you want to use Twitter like an instant messaging client, make sure that you are sending Direct Messages rather than publishing your tweets publicly. Chatting with someone through the Twitter tweet stream will clog up your followers' feeds and can be very, very annoying.

Never use hard sell tactics. Constantly tweeting about your latest ebook, software or business opportunity will not yield great results. Your followers will start viewing your tweets as SPAM.

Send the right type of direct message through an AutoDM. Using a tool that automatically sends messages to people who follow you is a good idea. But direct messages can be seen as impersonal and pushy when they aren't written properly, and you can actually lose followers this way. Keep it simple and friendly. A message saying ‘thanks for following me’ is plenty. Try asking an open-ended question as well.

Don't try to build a huge following before you have done some tweeting. If you've used Twitter already, I'm sure you've seen this, too – the guy with 500 followers and 0 tweets. No, I am not kidding. Talk about the blind leading the blind! Thinking people will not be interested in following you if you don't have much of a message. Show some personality. Talk about market related news, what you're doing with your business right now – or better yet, what someone is doing with theirs. Position yourself as a valuable clearinghouse of information, what the author Malcolm Gladwell calls a “Connector.”

Just as with your blog, website, and forum posts, your main goal on Twitter should be to provide value. If you can manage to do that, you're golden. Offer links to free and interesting items on the Internet, such as

articles, images, and videos. Use a mix of your own content and others'. Comment on current events and news. Post funny, profound, or inspiring quotes. Write about interesting things that happened in your day or upcoming events that you're excited about.

Find something on Digg, Stumbleupon, or other social bookmarking sites - something that really catches your attention. You can even write a blog post about it first, and then link to your blog post in your tweet. This way, instead of linking directly to the source, you're linking to your own blog and bolstering your own web presence. If it's something that really stands out it may go viral, causing a potential torrent of traffic. It could happen.

## **Would You Follow Yourself?**

After you have been using Twitter for awhile, review your own tweet history. Are you selling too hard? Not selling enough? Are you providing value with your tweets or just rambling on about random topics every day? Would you follow yourself? Analyze your tweets carefully, then modify your strategy.

Twitter is an absolutely powerful application whether you're using it for business or pleasure. Capitalizing on Twitter's growing popularity can be very rewarding and profitable for your online business if you go about it with some tact and guile.

With more than 300,000 new users each and every day, Twitter is growing at an astonishing rate. With that kind of mania, you can expect Twitter functions and features to grow and improve long into the future. Developers are busy right now creating new tools and applications to make the most out of Twitter so keep an eye out for them. You can use my blog as a tool for helping you do this – that's [eCommerceGal.com/blog](http://eCommerceGal.com/blog), and look for the Twitter page.

Above all, use Twitter with good business sense. Offer value, keep the 90/10 rule in play – that's 90% value, 10% sincere product recommendations – and you'll love your results. Keep learning and using Twitter, and great things will happen for you.

So have you ever found yourself mocking a new idea only to have to eat your words? I can tell you from firsthand experience: Twitter is simply delicious with rye crackers and brie. Mm mm mm!

## Conclusion

That's our look at Social Marketing – Business Marketing Online With Social Media. You can use these tactics to make a real difference in your marketing and your bottom line. But really we've just scratched the surface of eCommerce here in this half-hour. Now you're ready to put these powerful tools in context as an online business promoter. And I'm ready to help you do that.

The next step is to download my audio program called Online Business Promotion, 16 half-hour programs like this one, a full 8 hours of quality insights and potent Internet marketing tactics, plus an action guide and step-by-step instructions on getting the most from online promotion for your business and dominating your market. It's like getting a one-day seminar in a box - without the hotel ballroom or the travel headaches.

Getting to the top spot on Google is really pretty simple, and with my Online Business Promotion program you'll learn what it takes to get there. What will your business look like next month? How about the month after that? What kind of year-end sales numbers do you finally want to achieve? If you keep doing what you've been doing, you can be sure that you'll keep getting what you've been getting. My program Online Business Promotion will help your business break free of mediocre performance and lackluster sales. But you have to take action. I can't do that part for you. To put the power of eCommerce to work for your business, you'll want to get your hands on a copy of my Online Business Promotion.

To get started right now... go to my website at [eCommerceGal.com/OnlineBusinessPromotion](http://eCommerceGal.com/OnlineBusinessPromotion). You'll be so glad you did.

Thanks for joining me!

All the best,

*Liv*

Liv Montgomery  
The eCommerce Gal  
[www.eCommerceGal.com](http://www.eCommerceGal.com)



# **MULTI-MEDIA & MARKETING: USING MEDIA TO PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS**

**Liv Montgomery**  
**The eCommerce Gal**  
[www.eCommerceGal.com](http://www.eCommerceGal.com)

## **Terms and Conditions**

The information contained in this guide is for information purposes only, and may not apply to your situation. The author, publisher, distributor and provider provide no warranty about the content or accuracy of content enclosed. Information enclosed is subjective. Keep this in mind when reviewing this guide.

Neither the Publisher nor Author shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages resulting from use of this guide. All links are for information purposes only and are not warranted for content, accuracy or any other implied or explicit purpose.

© 2010 Liv Montgomery

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Audio for eCommerce - Using Sound to Boost Your Business.....	168
Text & Your Business: Information Marketing through Verbal Media.....	176
Video Promotion - Using Visual Media to Promote Your Business.....	187
Conclusion .....	199

## Audio for eCommerce - Using Sound to Boost Your Business

You may be asking, "Why do I need audio on my website?" Without a doubt, audio is the most versatile tool you can use to promote your online business. Since the early days of radio when listeners were treated to the adventures of the Lone Ranger and Silver, audio has allowed us to take a sneak peak into the lives of our favorite people. Whether you're promoting a product or simply trying to put across a new idea, Audio has the power to transport the listener to another world.

If your website or blog is silent, you're leaving money on the table!

More and more online marketers and business owners are recognizing the tremendous benefits of incorporating audio into their online marketing strategy. Multimedia more easily and effectively captivates your audience and grab's the attention of your prospects, visitors, subscribers and customers. Time and time again research has shown that using multimedia increases conversation rates, buy rates, as well as subscription rates for a product or service. And I'm not sure, but I think the introduction to this program might have made my point about the power of audio.

As an online marketer, here's something to keep in mind. Without media your site appears static to the visitor. Your prospect is coming to your site after seeing hundreds of other sites, and they include media. Savvy Internet Marketers know this and they're making the most of the technology available today - in many cases for free. For example sound equipment that used to cost thousands of dollars and required an engineering degree to operate has been replaced by multi-track audio production software that you can download from the Internet right now for free, and it doesn't take a 4-year degree to use it. The sample on my program *Audio For eCommerce* was produced with nothing more than a quality microphone, some open source software called Audacity, and a handful of free sound effects I downloaded from the Internet.

Now, what you may not know about me as the eCommerce Gal is that I enjoyed a privileged career in the audio industry in New York as well as San Francisco some years back. You can read more about that part of my background at [Liv Montgomery.com](http://LivMontgomery.com), if you're interested. The point is, I know how to create world class audio productions, whether we're talking about Top 40 music, radio production, or sound design for children's software.

### Using the Power of Technology

Here's what that means to you. What was extremely costly and complicated 20 years ago is now available to you at no cost. Though I have the means to create fairly sophisticated radio drama, the sample I created for my *Audio For eCommerce* program is something I knocked off in about an hour using completely free tools

and a desire to entertain. And the reason I chose to use free tools – and the point I want to make in this program – is that you can do it too. Whether you're interested in creating a simple voice over for your site, or you want to maximize the power of audio for online business, you have the technology at your fingertips. And in this program, I'm going to show you how to use it.

You've probably noticed that a lot of web Gurus are lending their voice to the sales copy on their landing pages in an effort to increase their conversion rates, and it's not just video we're talking about here. Though it's true video is a compelling medium, audio offers tremendous power. A compelling audio draws people in by leveraging the listener's own imagination. In essence, audio has the power to captivate the listening audience to convert prospects into subscribers and customers.

Think about it...you can convince your prospect to buy your product or service or subscribe to your ezine or newsletter much more easily with a 1 minute audio that supports your sales page. Plain text just doesn't convey your passion for your product, your service or publication. The human voice has the power to influence, motivate, and persuade prospects to take action.

Audio also allows you to explain selling points much more easily and clearly to captivate your potential buyer. You can describe your product or service and the benefits of using it. Using media conveys professionalism, and most importantly it provides you with something that is essential in any business - credibility. With credibility, you can sell more of your product or service, build your opt-in list much more quickly, and convince visitors to click on a link to an affiliate program you're promoting.

As an increasing number of online marketers recognize the competitive advantages of media and its power as a communication vehicle, it's become an integral part of the web experience.

### **Streaming Audio: Some Really Basic Basics**

Now that we've established the need to make your website talk, let's take a look at how to install streaming audio on your site. If you are thinking that installing sound capability on your website might be beyond your technical capability, then I think you're about to change your mind.

There are some online services that provide full audio support but charge monthly fees, and this may be more than you want to invest. My philosophy is that there are plenty of opportunities to spend money on your business. Streaming audio doesn't have to be one of them. If you're like me and you don't want to spend any money at all but would like your website to have audio capability, then you can use the following method to install streaming audio onto your website.

First you have to record your message. You'll want to use Audacity software to record a message directly on your computer using a USB microphone. Now, Audacity offers multi-track recording capability so that you can layer your voice with music and sound effects. Once you've adjusted the sound level for each track, you can export the file to the MP3 format. You don't have to get fancy with this, but you have the option. If you want to quick and dirty job and you have an MP3 player with recording capacity, you can just record a quick message and save it to your hard drive. But that's not the method I prefer. I prefer Audacity.

The MP3 file format is currently the industry standard. The main reason for the popularity of MP3 format is that it puts music into manageable files that can be easily downloaded over the internet, and it works well with portable music players.

MP3 is a digital audio codec (that's Coder/Decoder) that can easily compress and decompress digital sounds, facilitating a much smaller file size and making audio easily downloadable over the internet. The MP3 codec works by removing certain redundant portions of the original signal. MP3 can deliver the original sound quality in a tight little package.

Let's say you've recorded your welcome message and your audio is saved as a file called myintroduction.mp3. To make it available to your visitor, all you have to do is upload the file to your hosting account and make a link to that file. In most cases, it won't stream, but it will download when someone clicks on the link.

In order to make it play when someone clicks on the link, you'll have to cheat a little bit. Here's how. The way the technology works is that it wants to see a file that accompanies your audio, telling the audio to play. Here's how to create that file.

Using Notepad or another text editor, create a text file and type the link to your audio file. We already said that our file is called myintroduction.mp3, so our link within the text file would be <http://www.eCommerceGal.com/myintroduction.mp3>. Obviously for your own file, you'll want to use your domain name. Save this text document with the file extension .m3u. That means your text file will be named myintroduction.m3u. It is only a text file but it has an extension that makes it look like a sound file. Now, upload your original audio file myintroduction.mp3 along with the text file myintroduction.m3u to your server. Now you have your streaming audio player.

Now, in the place on your web page where you want someone to listen to your file, put a link or a graphic button pointing to the file myintroduction.m3u. When someone clicks on the link on your page they will hear your voice streaming from their speakers. It will be played back on their default MP3 player, such as Windows Media Player, Winamp, or VLC Media.

This is a fairly limited option for streaming audio, but it works and it's free. The questionable advantage that more sophisticated streaming audio packages offer is that the buttons look nicer and they have transport functions – that's pause, stop and start. But if your audio is only a snippet, you don't really want your user stopping it anyway.

## **Convert Your Traffic With Audio**

Some audio services claim that adding audio to a website increases conversion rates by 300%. Audio is a tool, if you use it correctly it may indeed be just the thing you need to improve the performance of your website.

Many internet marketers agree that a conversion ratio between 1% and 3% seems to be the industry standard, and 2% is a good average. What that means is that 2 people out of every 100 visitors will actually become a customer. Because of this, a lot of webmasters often make the mistake of only focusing on ways to attract more traffic instead of also finding ways to convert visitors into buyers. However, the key to online business success involves getting traffic, and converting traffic into sales.

Sounds great but it can seem like a daunting task. Driving traffic can be expensive if you're using paid practices, and it can be time consuming for the impatient marketer. The advent of web audio has given webmasters access to a great tool for breaking the silence of the world wide web, and boosting those conversion rates.

Instead of visitors coming across a silent, static website, they can now be greeted by a warm and friendly voice that makes the website seem to come alive. Audio makes your site a lot more human and customer friendly. Web audio can significantly increase ezine opt-in rates by simply explaining to visitors in a couple of sentences the benefits of signing up for your free newsletter.

## **Offer Free or Paid Webinars**

Welcoming visitors is a great way to boost your online revenue, and it's easy enough to do, as we've seen. But what if you want to use audio to offer more value to your customers and prospects? Well, you have a few options here in the form of webinars and podcasting. We'll cover both of these right now.

First, let's take a quick look at streaming your webinar online. A webinar is a web conference that combines the best of telephone conferencing and the visual capabilities of the Internet. This is done through the services of a webinar hosting company, and they provide the technology you need to bring people together

and present to them. Most of a webinar's audio component consists of the presenter discussing an idea or topic for an hour or so while a few guest speakers chime in. The visual component is driven by whatever is on the presenter's computer screen, and then that's shared with the audience through the webinar host. With a webinar, you're literally broadcasting on the Internet to your select audience. This is why it's sometimes called a webcast.

We're not going to go deeply into this topic here, but I did want to cover it with you because it relies so heavily on the audio aspect. Now, web conferencing hosts want you to use their services, so they make it easy for you. Each service provider is a little different, and the one you choose will give you with plenty of support on how to do this. [Freebinar.com](http://Freebinar.com) offers a free plan for their video web conferencing packages. With their free webinar service, your audience will be able to hear you live and see anything you show them on your screen in real time. This is so powerful. You can use it for sales presentations, online training, or even checking in with your team of affiliates.

Once you've nailed down your web conferencing service provider, you can promote your event and prepare for your big day. This means inviting your people through email or social media. You can entice customers and prospects by offering an exclusive package available only to webinar attendees. Once they've arrived at your online event, you can share your computer screen with them through your chosen webinar host. This means you'll want to prepare a PowerPoint slide presentation or some other engaging content for them. Once you've presented your webinar, your host should be able to provide you with the option to export attendance data and survey results. This means you'll know exactly who your audience is and how they liked your presentation.

Any way you look at it, even using a free service, Webinars cost money for you to present and others to attend because of the time involved. It's an investment in your business. Don't wing it - be prepared. Write a script, and use the opportunity to make a compelling presentation. Approach your webinar with a dash of humility and a healthy dose of professionalism, and this powerful tool will pay you dividends.

### **Podcasting – Not Just for Mac People!**

Now let's take a good look at podcasting. Podcasting simply means distributing a media file by paid or free distribution channels on the Internet. Your media can be live or pre-recorded. Podcasting uses syndicated feeds, or RSS, and the podcast product is played on either personal computers or mobile devices.

The term podcasting is derived from the media player iPod created and manufactured by Apple, Inc. In spite of the word's origin, you don't have to have an iPod in order to podcast, nor do your listeners need an iPod in order to hear you. This is a common source of confusion.

What makes podcasting different from other digital audio formats is that it can be automatically downloaded. While the ability to offer podcasting has been around for quite sometime, it didn't begin to catch on with the public until the new millenium. When Napster launched, downloading music became a massive industry. Internet marketing caused a wave of interest in podcasting back then, and now it just keeps on growing.

Podcasting originally began as a way to share mp3 files, and has only recently begun to incorporate video. However, the technology that allows the files to be shared is not limited to media files and there is no reason that other file types can't be shared by podcast in the future.

Today, however, most podcasts are audio files, and the individual files that are created and shared are referred to as episodes. These audio files may contain a variety of content; there are music podcasts, comedy, news, technology, even podcasts about wine. (So far, I haven't found any about cheese, though.)

Because of the low entry cost, especially for audio, podcasting allows nearly anyone who believes they have something to say to broadcast it over the internet. This is, admittedly, sometimes unfortunate.

Podcasting is not just for the rogue college student or the zealous Internet marketer, and its status as a fringe element wore off years ago. Even established groups have found that audio podcasting works really well. Some radio stations podcast portions of their broadcast, sharing it over the internet to allow listeners who missed a specific show to catch up on it later. NPR, National Public Radio, now does this with its news breaks.

One trend in podcast feeds is the vlog, or video blog... video web log. These blogs usually contain a feed that distributes a video, rather than an audio file to feed subscribers. Most users are able to download large files, even video files, relatively quickly. Mainstream news organizations have found that podcasting portions of their content is a way to reach a wider audience. In fact, the BBC currently does this with parts of its news content.

Podcasting, unlike other media forms, almost never charges for services, and the vast majority of feed producers distribute free podcasts. This is in direct contrast with, say, online radio stations, news sites that offer media to subscribers, or the online music industry in general. Even though podcasting has very direct correlations with industries like news and music that have strong business models, podcasting differs because of its grass roots origins. There are some businesses and news sites that podcast, but they do it as a way to supplement their revenue and to gain technological credibility. Making money is often a by-product, not the end in itself.

We've established that podcasting offers value, and it's popular. The question now becomes, how do you make a podcast?

While you can leverage technology to podcast directly from your own website, it's actually much easier to take advantage of the many free podcast hosting services available. One of my favorites is BlogTalkRadio.com. It has a nice, healthy Alexa traffic rank, a reliable platform, and some very tony celebrities use their services. That puts me in good company, and I like that.

As more and more people are subscribing to and listening to podcasts, the demand comes with a need to learn how to make a podcast. Everybody knows it takes tons of money and a lot of experienced people to make a radio broadcast. I mean, look at the resources it takes just to build a broadcast tower. And while some podcasts are big-budget productions, the truth is most podcasts are created by a single person sitting in front of a computer in their own home. Making a podcast is not rocket science, and once you've mastered these few steps, you'll know exactly how to communicate with a worldwide audience through the power of audio.

Let's start by taking a look at the hardware. Other than your computer, the only piece of equipment you'll need is a microphone. And while spending hundreds of dollars for a professional quality mic will probably help with your sound quality, there are a lot of mics in the \$25 to \$100 range that are adequate for creating a podcast. Use a decent USB mic if at all possible -- your sound will be much better.

Just about the only software you have to have is an audio recording program. There are a lot of commercial options available, but there's an open source program that I've already mentioned called Audacity, and it works with Windows, Linux, and Macintosh. This program is excellent for creating your podcast, and it can be downloaded at [audacity.sourceforge.net](http://audacity.sourceforge.net). Audacity works very much like Adobe Audition, which is the software that I used when doing professional sound design in the audio industry. It's really amazing to me that you can get something as powerful and sophisticated as this software completely free. What a gift! Definitely take advantage of it.

Next comes your topic. What's the reason you want to create a podcast? Ostensibly it's to communicate a core idea to your audience. Your podcast content needs to be focused, and you need to make it relevant to a topic you're passionate about.

Let's talk about this for moment. Every aspect of your business is affected by what you bring to it. As an online business promoter, your objective is to bring value to the marketplace, serve others and get paid for it. That's your business model right there, no matter what your industry. It doesn't matter if you're a plumber

or an architect, your business model is the same. Serve others, get paid. Serve others more, get paid more. Serve others well, get paid very well.

The people who become your customers, however, will not be buying the goods you're selling. They're buying you, and everything you touch surrounding your business will reflect your own character and your level of professionalism. Producing a podcast really is a terrific way to connect with the people you want to attract into your business. You want them to feel at home with you, and you want your passion for your market niche to be contagious. There are a couple of key points surrounding this idea.

First, you want to seem accessible in your podcast. You want people to feel like you're a friend, and you're sharing good information. The excitement and genuine interest you show in your topic will carry you a long way toward meeting this goal.

Second, you must keep your podcast within the boundaries of good taste and professionalism. While it's true that you want to appear accessible and friendly in your podcast, please stay focused on your topic.

When you're with friends, you have the luxury of meandering wherever your mouth will take you. But not when you're in front of a microphone. Make your podcast interesting. Keep it relevant. And talk about what your listeners came to hear.

Here's another word of caution for you. When podcasting, some people talk off the top of their heads about their topic, and this is great if you're a charter member of the National Speakers Association. But a podcast just sounds more professional when it's scripted. No, that doesn't mean you should sound like you're reading. (*Do I sound like I'm reading? I dunno. I don't think so. I hope not. I spent 8 hours on this script, but if I did it right, you probably thought I was making it up as I went along. Uh, along... making it up as I go along. Have to fix that typo.*) My point is, you should sound like you're together. Know what you're going to say and the order you'll say it in. Mean what you say, and you'll be fine.

Making a podcast doesn't have to be hard, and there's no need to be intimidated if you've never ventured into this type of production. The best advice I can give you is to take it one piece at a time and just start making your own podcasts. You may even make some that only your pet cat hears, but each time you get behind the mic, you'll be gaining confidence and experience.

## Text & Your Business: Information Marketing through Verbal Media

You've probably already heard the credo that Content is King, a phrase coined back in the early part of the new millennium. It refers to Google's tendency at the time to favor websites rich in fresh, relevant content. While Google's search engine algorithm has seen more than one iteration since then, Content is still King in a number of ways, and not just with Google. After all, the Internet is not about Google. It's about us - Google just happens to analyze what we do and report it back to us in a ranked, optimized, pre-digested format surrounded by little bits of advertising.

No doubt about it: we're living in the Information Age. While the popularity of that information drives revenue, the content must first exist in order for it to become popular. Delivering maximum value to your prospects and customers is what will make or break your business online. And that means delivering high quality content.

This one idea manifests itself in a number of ways that translate to your online business success. Whether you're promoting a physical product, a service to your local community, or an information product that you distribute online, it's the quality of the information you provide surrounding your unique selling proposition, or your USP, that will ultimately make or break your reputation as a business person. Likewise, your ability to communicate determines your success or failure as an online business promoter. You may have a great concept and a tremendous amount of enthusiasm about it. But only your ability to transfer your ideas to another person through the power of communication will permit you to succeed. Online, all types of communication always come back to the task of writing.

I remember as a shy teenager, a couple of my language teachers suggested that I apply for a scholarship and pursue writing as a profession. But the idea of writing professionally bored me to tears. And as for discipline? Oh, spare me. Writing was very easy for me, yes, but I wanted a greater challenge and I wanted to do something that mattered more. In those days, there just didn't appear to be a lot of options for writers. There was journalism, but that struck me as a bit seamy and voyeuristic. I had visions of reporters staked out in the shrubbery of a Beverly Hills mansion, waiting for some movie star or business mogul to emerge. "Mr. Johnson, for the record: do you suppose they'll be able to make the blackmail charges stick?" Oh, shades of "Sunset Boulevard." I thought that's what it meant to be a writer. My view of the grown-up world was steeped in film noir and painted in shades of dark gray, like a cheap suit on a low-rent gumshoe. Obviously, I probably should have been reading less of the *National Enquirer* and a little more of the *Wall Street Journal*.

On the flip side of the writing coin was the prospect of writing literature as a professional author. In my 15-year-old mind, that concept went hand in hand with the words "starving" and "rum soaked." I thought you

had to be like William Faulkner or Ernest Hemingway just to eek out a living, both profoundly morbid authors. I couldn't think of any profession that was more depressing than dissecting the social ills of the modern world through fiction. I remember thinking "Man, no wonder so many writers drink!"

I had a vivid imagination but little exposure to the real world. Writing is a tool, not an end in itself. Nor is it a personality trait - let alone a character flaw. Though I didn't pursue a writing degree, this one skill has served me day in and day out since the time I learned to diagram a sentence in freshman English back in high school. No other ability has meant more to my livelihood than writing. Why is that? Because all business depends on sales, and sales requires communication. That means every business needs people who know how to write and communicate. This translates into a world of possibilities.

### **Wielding the Mighty Pen... er, uh... Digit**

Not only do opportunities abound for people who can organize their ideas and put a few sentences together, but the advent of the Internet has meant increasing demand for content and information products.

Amazon.com, the world's largest retailer, recently reported that their sales of ebooks has surpassed sales of paper published volumes. Think about that one. What do you suppose that's going to mean long term for the book publishing industry? We're definitely seeing some shifts already.

Not only has Amazon's Kindle helped push the ebook into a state of critical mass with the buying public, now the iPad is giving the Kindle a run for its money. Meanwhile a group of students and teachers in India have teamed up at the Indian Institute of Technology in conjunction with the Indian Institute of Science to develop a touchpad computer of their own, selling for a paltry \$35. It's known as the cheapest computer in the world. What this means to you and me is the demand for great ideas expressed in clear terms is simply not going away any time soon.

Now, if you think you've got to be the next Ernest Hemingway to take advantage of this opportunity, think again. In this program, we'll be taking a look at information marketing and the many ways you can design, create and promote your own text media products - whether or not you can write.

When it comes to text media and your business, you have a lot of options, and you can communicate your ideas in many forms. In fact, the more ways you connect with your prospects and customers, the more successful your business is likely to be. Some of these are promotional methods that you can offer for free, while others may be part of your sales funnel, allowing you to offer increasing value at a corresponding price. Print media can include newsletters, the content on your website, and your blog posts. You may also write articles and post them to the top article directories. Social sites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Scribd and Multiply give you plenty of chances to offer different types of value through content.

You can also offer information products for sale, such as pamphlets, reports and ebooks. In fact, this is what most people think of when it comes to generating revenue through text media online. With the advent of the Internet, though, the income you can generate with these products doesn't stop at the sale of digital content. Through print-on-demand services, you can upsell your customer to a printed version of your ebook and not even have to worry about shipping it. A fulfillment house will do that for you. This offers exceptional value for your customer, and increased profits for you.

When considering the topic of information marketing, there is one crucial element that's required in order for you to offer value and realize a profit. You need to identify a market niche where people recognize that they have a problem, and they are actively pursuing a solution. Now, I have to say that using affiliate marketing to supplement your product line is fine, developing your own product line is preferred and it just makes sense. It's worth the investment of time and care to create your own information products. The market you choose should have enough depth that you can promote multiple products.

### **What Makes A Good Product**

We'll get into the step-by-step process for developing your content in just a moment. First, let's take a look at the criteria involved in creating a good information product.

We'll start on the outside. The appearance of your product is crucial in getting past "hello" with your customer. Whether we're talking about a simple newsletter, an ebook, or a printed volume, every detail must be addressed with the most careful consideration. Typos and bad formatting tell your reader that you simply don't care. Everything from proofreading, the layout, the organization of the content, and the style of the language you use play into your relationship with the person who's reading your work. If you have a paper published book, your cover and the materials used to print it matter as much as the words inside. Everybody knows you're not supposed to judge a book by its cover, but we all do it anyway. Put your best foot forward, and you'll never regret it.

Now let's look at the inside. The content of your information product needs to be of the same high quality as its appearance. Your opening has to be engaging and relevant, getting the reader's attention, tying the concepts together to create a heightened sense of anticipation. You want your reader to be eager to dive in and suck the juice out of your material. Your opening sets the tone and the mood for the rest of the work.

The way you organize the material is also important. It needs to flow, and like elements should be treated together. Your words need to be conversational and colorful. The reader should be able to picture exactly what it is you're talking about. Avoid the use of jargon wherever possible, and never... ever use foul

language. You will lose money every time you do - no maybe about it, unless of course you're writing a book on the history curse words.

Focus on your audience's interests. Offer them valuable information that they'd happily pay for all over again. Whenever you can, treat your reader to entertaining stories and anecdotes. People have learned through parables for thousands of years. Be funny when you can, but make sure you stay within the bounds of good taste! Just as with crude language, you can alienate your reader with material that's off-color, and that means lost sales and lost opportunity.

### **Content Development 1-2-3**

Now – here's my favorite part – let's take a look at content development. Whether you're developing your content yourself, you're re-purposing existing content, or you're working with a freelance writer, there are certain basics to keep in mind. Let's cover those now.

Writing content doesn't just mean formulating a few thoughts into words then blurting them out through your keyboard. You have to capture the interest of your readers and engage them. To put your message across you have to get the attention of the reader, have a firm grasp of their interest and pique their curiosity.

The main ingredient in article alchemy is a large dose of creativity. While creativity may come naturally to many people, some need a little more discipline. But everybody has it – don't worry about that. A lot of writers suffer from writers block; they believe they just can't get their creative juices flowing. Writers block can take on the appearance of being a real problem, but when you understand the nature of the block it's easy enough to overcome. Writers block simply means that you're seeking perfection, and none of your ideas seem good enough. Pursuing excellence instead of perfection will solve this problem. Recognize that your initial ideas are merely seeds. All they require is attention and care, and they will blossom into a fully mature project. If you get stuck, just start writing on your topic. Who cares what it looks like? Even if it seems like pointless drivel at first, trust the creative process and you'll soon find your inspiration. The words will build on themselves, and your keyboard will be clacking away in no time.

Here are some techniques for stimulating your creativity.

Keep a diary or a journal with you always. Ideas can be triggered by something you hear, see, or smell. Your senses will attune you to great ideas. Write them down in your journal, and keep the book on hand at all times so it's there when you need it. Besides ideas that come through your senses or your reverie, write down anything that you have read or heard that inspired you. Someone else's words could fan the flames of your own creativity. Ideas and creativity may come from anywhere; it's the development of the idea that

makes it unique and wholly your own. If you're not used to keeping a journal, the late, great Jim Rohn has a wonderful program on this topic. You can get it at [MadeForSuccess.com](http://MadeForSuccess.com).

Relax and take time to sort out your topic. Brainstorming is a terrific way to explore the many varied aspects of the subject matter you're pursuing. If you're stuck for a topic, brainstorming can help you drill down and narrow your options. Take out a sheet of paper, set a timer for 3 minutes, and write down everything about your marketplace that comes into your head. This is no time for filtration - pretend you're getting paid \$100 for each line that you fill, whether or not your answers make any sense. The object is not to think with your critical mind but to let your subconscious take over. When your time's up, now you take a careful look at your list. Pick one item, and on a fresh sheet of paper, do the exercise all over again, but this time, your list should be focused on that one item. Repeat this exercise until you're satisfied that you have the core ideas for your information product.

Set a schedule for your writing tasks. If you're working on a longer project, set a deadline for completing the project. Figure out how much time you'll need to devote to writing daily, and set a pace for the number of words you need to write on a consistent basis. If you exercise a little discipline, you'll find that the job practically completes itself.

Now that you've sparked your creativity and set your schedule, you're ready to get down to the task of developing your writing project. It starts with organizing your message. Whether it's a newsletter, an article, or an ebook, you'll want to take the results of your brainstorming session and identify the main points you plan to cover. Even if you're working with a ghost writer or freelancer to complete the job, you'll need to identify the major components of the project. Develop an outline of the highlights. Decide what it is you want to say and how deeply you want to dive into each aspect of your topic.

The way that you write a report or even an article or even a paragraph is exactly the same method you can use to write a paragraph. Choose three points that you want to make, and state them clearly and compellingly. Then write an introduction, presenting your concept your. Finally offer a conclusion based on the points you just made. A lot of speakers and authors express this process in the following formula: "Tell 'em what you're going to tell 'em. Tell 'em. Then tell 'em what you told 'em."

### **Refine Your Work**

Once you've drafted the body of your work, set it aside and let it simmer in the back of your mind. This is a great time to write that introduction to the material and then draft your conclusion. Now you can go back through your complete article, newsletter, or manuscript and comb it out. Editing is often a process of

elimination, cutting out unnecessary verbiage, combining ideas and clearing any verbal clutter. The saying goes, "Never use two when one will do" - words, that is.

Having edited your work, you can give it a second pass, this time with a stronger focus on grammar and punctuation than content. If you have the luxury of time, give your work a third edit. The more you refine your writing, the stronger it will be. This is why I'm so convinced that writer's block simply doesn't need to be a problem. If you know going into the project that the material you start with will look almost nothing like your finished project, all anxiety and judgment should slip away like soap bubbles down a bathtub drain.

Whenever possible, have another set of eyes take a look at your work before you give it your own final seal of approval. Someone with a fresh approach will catch errors in logic or grammar that you may have overlooked a thousand times. If so, there's no need to be embarrassed - just make the correction.

Every office, desk and school room in the English speaking world needs to have a copy of "The Elements of Style" by Strunk & White. This classic skinny volume is the most concise, important guide to using the English language that has ever been written. Along with this book, you can take advantage of the resources at Dictionary.com and Thesaurus.com. These three resources combined should suffice to keep you on track. If there's anything else you need, you can probably find it on the Internet.

When it comes to engaging your reader, style is indispensable. One thing that made Mark Twain so incredibly successful as a writer - and a celebrity in his own lifetime - is that he was the first to write in the vernacular of his time and place. Other authors and scholars of his day approached the craft of writing with a stilted formality that was considered well mannered then, but it was hard to read. Twain's ideas as a journalist and as a novelist ring with a kind of clarity that literally changed the face of literature from that time forward. He was also funny, and he was relevant. While Mark Twain didn't corner the market on these qualities and you can certainly find them in other authors, he's a great one to emulate. He's also still a very fun read after more than 100 years. You could do worse.

### **Using Other People's Words**

If you don't have the time, energy or motivation to take a crack at drafting your own material, you have a few options available to you. I've already mentioned outsourcing as one possibility. You can find a pool of terrific talent through a number of online resources, including elance.com, guru.com, CraigsList, HireMyMom, and your local online classifieds. Recommendations from colleagues are also a great way to locate reliable talent.

If you do hire someone through an online resource such as Craigslist, I strongly recommend that you use an online escrow service to handle the payment process for you. Just like when you're buying a house, an online escrow service holds the money for two interested parties until they're both happy. This means that you'll need to deposit the project funds before the work can begin, which is good news for your contractor. It also means that the work will need to be complete and you'll need to be happy with it before the contractor gets paid. This is a very good thing for you!

I want to insert a word here about contractors and hiring non-native English speakers to write your material for you. While it may seem like a plausible idea at the time because of the cost savings you may realize in the short term, you will almost always get what you pay for. I know a lot of entrepreneurs who frequently dip into the off-shore talent pool, and most often they're happiest with their results for projects that don't involve verbiage - things like graphic design and programming. My approach to pricier projects that I haven't budgeted for is to barter. I'll trade SEO services or some other talent with a professional who has what I'm looking for, say video production. We work out a value schedule and take it from there. If you find that you're really strapped and your writing project can only move forward if you hire someone off-shore, it is possible to make the situation workable. Look for a contractor who teaches English in their local community. The more advanced the school, the better. In many cases, you'll find their composition skills will suit your needs adequately, and you'll be able to get your project done in a timely way.

Private label rights, resell rights, and master resell rights products are products that a vendor has created specifically designed for people like you and me to resell. In the case of master resell rights, you have the right to sell the branded product and keep 100% of the profits as long as you don't change the copyrighted material. In the case of private label rights, most of the time you can edit the work, replace the graphics if you want, and even claim authorship of the product, although, PLR products are ready to sell as they are. It means instant business - just add hosting.

Resell rights products include a wide variety of product types, such as software programs, ebooks, articles, audio and even video. These products are popular because they are in high demand. For instance, many webmasters use PLR articles to bolster the content on their website, post to their blog, or flesh out their autoresponder. Selling software is a great solution for online marketers, because software can have a higher perceived value than other types of products. As we've seen, ebooks have become incredibly popular, even more so than printed books in a number of cases.

The biggest downside to obtaining the resell rights to a quality ebook is the amount of money that you may have to spend. Depending on the vendor, the cost of acquiring private label resell rights may be fairly expensive. The fewer customers the vendor has, the better for you as the reseller - but by the same token, the higher the price is likely to be.

Whether you make the decision to develop your own information products or purchase the resell rights to someone else's is a matter of personal choice. Ultimately, however, your name and your reputation are on the line. You'll want to be sure that what you're promoting is a quality product. When it comes to communicating with your customer, always use the most professional option you have available. Show respect for your audience. If you decide to use content that someone else has developed, take full responsibility for its quality. In the end, your customer will hold you accountable and no one else.

### **Where To Get Free Content**

If you're not up to the task of writing or the expense of hiring someone to write for you, but you do see the value of offering information products to your customers, you have a couple of alternatives. Here they are.

It's fairly easy to find content that you can repurpose for free. A lot of PLR vendors will give away sample article packs to promote their services. To find them, use a search engine like Google, and do a search on the term "free private label rights" or simply "free PLR". Make sure you use quotes around your search term. You'll get thousands upon thousands upon hundreds of thousands of search results. In most cases, you'll need to opt-in to a mailing list to download your free products. But the odds are high that you'll find content on the topic you're looking for.

Like PLR, public domain articles and books are available for free. Now, not all of these are timely or relevant, but they have the added benefit of receiving less exposure online. That is, they haven't made the rounds among marketers. You can locate tons of resources for public domain works by performing a web search on the term "public domain books" or "public domain articles". A couple of terrific resources for public domain content include Project Gutenberg at [Gutenberg.org](http://Gutenberg.org) and Authorama at [authorama.com](http://authorama.com).

Obviously, the challenge with using content that is so abundantly available is that others are using it, too. You have a couple of options to work around this. One option is to use a content spinner - that is, software that rewrites your content using synonyms. There's a great content spinner that's available to use for free at [Jetspinner.com](http://Jetspinner.com), and others are widely available, too. Now, naturally, once you've spun your article, you'll want to take a pass at editing the content for style, substance, grammar and flow.

You may be wondering why you would use this material if you still have to edit it. The answer is that it's always much easier to edit content than it is to come up with the content on your own. Even if you disagree with the original author on some points, there's something about having the text in front of you that generates inspiration and creativity. If you don't like what they have to say, rewrite it. Some of my best

articles have been happy accidents born of a fundamental disagreement with the author of the original work. With PLR and public domain works, all you need is a bit of polish and a point of view.

You can also compile a series of public domain or PLR articles into a longer manuscript to create an ebook. First come up with your outline or table of contents, then find a series of articles that support your points. Again, you'll want to comb out the manuscript, edit it for style, voice and content, and tighten up the language a bit. If you're working with quality content, you'll be amazed with the speed of your work and satisfied with the scope of your results. Now you look like an expert!

To complete your ebook, you'll want to put it into a format that's easy for your customer to access. PDF is the preferred technology for this, and it doesn't need to cost you anything to get the job done. Open source programs like Open Office and eWriter Pro allow you to convert multiple file types into PDF. You can locate these programs and a host of others by doing a standard web search. If you get stuck for a product or resource, check my website at [eCommerceGal.com](http://eCommerceGal.com). It's loaded with great resources, creative solutions and product recommendations.

Once you've converted your source file, be sure to check the formatting of your finished ebook. Sometimes things can get a little mixed up in translation, especially with the pagination. You may also find that your section titles might come out formatted a little differently than you expected. Make the effort to ensure that your customers are getting the best results possible. Remember - the payoff only comes when you provide top quality to your marketplace.

### **What To Do With Your Content**

Now that you have your finished information product, you're ready to offer it to your buying public. After all the work you've done, you deserve to crow about it. Let's take a look at the ways you can monetize your content.

Your first opportunity to provide value to your prospects is by offering them a free report in exchange for opting in to your mailing list. When you give first, you'll have plenty of opportunity to receive later on. Giving away an information product that's packed with value will secure your relationship with your potential customers. Now what you need to do is work to deserve their business. Fortunately, that's not very complicated.

You can do this by offering juicy content through your autoresponder series, at the very minimum 10 emails long; twenty is better, and a hundred is great. The object of your newsletter is to deepen your relationship with your prospects - let them get to know you, like you and trust you by offering them valuable information,

helping them solve their problems. Focus on offering your prospect value through the content, and only recommend products every third or fourth time you contact them. As one of my subscribers, you know that I wouldn't recommend something to you unless it was good for you, and I offer as many creative - uh, that is, free - solutions as I possibly can. The way I see it, business is about relationships; you and I can discuss the tab at the end of the meal. I promise I'll let you pick it up once in awhile.

Besides your newsletter, your website offers another great place that you can leverage content to provide value and make sales. Likewise, your blog can serve the same purpose. The articles that you post to your website and blog can easily be spun and edited, then re-posted onto the top article directories. The advantages of using this method are three-fold.

First, when you publish your articles on a top directory, you immediately benefit by getting a link back to your website from a directory which has a high quality score on Google. In fact all the search engines love this. The second benefit is that visitors to the directory will read your well-written, action-packed article and be hungry for more. That means that they'll click through the link at the bottom of your article and visit your website. The third benefit to posting articles onto the top article directories is that other webmasters will find your article, and with your tacit permission, they'll repost your content onto their site. This way you benefit both from the back link and from their traffic. The beauty of this method is that 10 spun articles posted onto the top 10 article directories means a minimum of 100 back links to your site. Any traffic and re-posting you get after that is a bonus indeed. That is to say, people don't even need to read your article in order for you to benefit from this effort.

For a current list of the top Article Directories on the Internet, go to my website at [eCommerceGal.com](http://eCommerceGal.com) and look for the section on Article Marketing. You'll also find links to great article writing and article directory submission tools there. These software tools will not only help you write your articles, but they'll help you shave loads of time off your article directory submission process. I love 'em, and I use 'em: enough said.

The next way to monetize your content is through direct sales of your information product. All of the methods we've talked about so far lend themselves to directly promoting your own software, ebook, or physical product such as a CD or a paper published book. You can promote your product through a number of means. Your newsletter is a great place to publicize both your digital and your physical products. You can also post product ads on your site. You can blog about your offering. And you can link to it in the articles that you post on the directories.

Offering physical products really is a terrific way to monetize your information product that is routinely overlooked because marketers don't want to hassle with shipping. You can get around this using print-on-demand companies like [Kunaki.com](http://Kunaki.com). They make it very easy to print and ship a physical product to your

customer. All you need to do is upload your digital product to their site, set your price, and market your offering. Now, Kunaki is not the only vendor in this space. I strongly encourage you to do a little due diligence and check the terms of the agreement before you engage with any company. You'll want to know what you're getting into. Beyond that, it should be smooth sailing and you can offer a ton of value in the marketplace using these tactics.

### **Wield Carefully Your Newfound, Hard Won Competence**

The credo that Content is King is an idea that's simply not going away anytime soon. It's true that the pen is mightier than the sword. How will you wield this mighty weapon? Our world online, our digital society is a growing, breathing, living, seething thing that is as rich, as dynamic, as vital as we permit it to be. It's about us - no matter how we as members of humanity analyze what we do and report it back to us in a ranked, optimized, pre-digested format surrounded by little bits of advertising.

Knowledge is power. There is no doubt: we are living in the Information Age, an unprecedented epoch bedecked with limitless power for love and war, peace and jealousy, a twinkling moment when loss and hunger and aloneness may finally know an end through our common will and purpose. By accident of technology, our world is uniting online. Ours is a gilded time when the sum of mankind's most brilliant achievements and most heinous, shameful acts live side by side in a naked compendium available to any who would venture into the digital wilderness and tame his greatest foe: Himself. For every line we publish is a reflection of our inner being. We have, you and I, not only the opportunity, but the obligation to master ourselves and comfort others with our newfound, hard won competence.

The power of the word now lies within you. How will you use it? What will be the nature of your own promotion? Whatever choice you make, choose wisely.

## Video Promotion - Using Visual Media to Promote Your Business

"What's your story?" My mom used to say this to me all the time when I was growing up. I was too young to know that everyone has a story, and it's worth telling. If you've got a business, telling your story is your number one priority. I'm sure you already know this, or you wouldn't be reading to this chapter. What I'll share with you in the few pages will help you increase your sales profits and boost your web presence by telling the story of your business through video. I'll show you the limitless possibilities that video technology offers to increase your online business and your profits. Ready? Great - let's get started.

Using Internet video has become the most logical choice for promotion for a lot of reasons. Internet video is economical, it's entertaining, it's compelling, and it's just a great way to get the word out. Video on the Internet puts the power of TV advertising in the hands of just about every business owner. Video promotion can be used in a couple of ways - by embedding a promotional video into your website, or by posting your branding video onto a social media network, like YouTube.

If you're like me and you've been around the block once or twice, you may remember the early days of the Internet, before there was such a thing as Internet advertising of any kind. At that time, information flowed freely in a primordial digital soup - little ones and zeros flipping and flopping, data crunching from hub to hub without any kind of promotional agenda attached to it. Life on the Internet was primitive, consisting only of a comparative handful of forums, newsgroups and some email providers. But it was free.

In fact, the first time I ever heard about the Internet as something that might be commercially appealing to the general public, I was visiting a neighboring office in a Manhattan high rise. This was back in 1992, when I was managing a media studio at the corner of Broadway and Houston Street. It was a very lively location at the edge of the SoHo District - meaning only that the people I was surrounded with had a fresh way of thinking about everything, from fashion and art to music and even (or especially) technology.

I've always been pretty good at meeting people and networking. I'm actually something of a connector, according to the definition offered by the author Malcolm Gladwell in his book *The Tipping Point*. I really am fascinated by people, and I love learning their stories and connecting them with other people. I collect business cards like I'm playing gin rummy.

So one particularly hot, gritty summer afternoon, all clients had gone home and the studio where I worked was empty. I had the front door to the office open, when a man walked by. As he approached my door, a bird flew off his shoulder into the studio, and landed next to my desk. It was a sun conure, I remember, a little green parrot with a yellow and orange head. The bird's owner was a little embarrassed and apologetic; he picked up the parrot from the floor and fumbled for words. I recognized the symptoms of his social

distress immediately and identified him without too much trouble as a computer geek. The pocket protector was also a clue. "So what's your first language?" I teased him. "Cobol or Fortran?" It wasn't nice, but it was accurate. He laughed off my jab, and we started talking. One thing led to another, and I got the aforementioned invitation to his office. Naturally I accepted - he told me he had air conditioning. What's a girl to do.

When I walked into the space, the first thing I noticed was the image on his computer monitor - something of a circular swish for a logo, and the words "America Online" filling the top third of the screen. "What's that?" I asked him. He was still fumbling with his bird and barely noticed what I was asking about. "That? Oh - it's AOL." I stared blankly. "America Online? Parle usted ingles?" Zing - right back at me. "Here - here's a CD-ROM. You can get your own account on a monthly subscription. Go ahead take it. I have more. You can install it on your PC, and we can connect online." I sensed a come on here, and I wasn't really liking the quality of this guy's personal hygiene. "Oh... darn. I've got a Mac." And for the next few years, that was that - about as close as I came to logging onto the Internet.

### **Wow – Graphics on the Internet**

Then awhile later, Netscape came along and took the corporate world by storm. Once again - this time in the San Francisco Bay Area - I found myself in the company of forward thinking individuals. One of my dear friends was deeply involved in the visual arts and she made her living through graphic design. She was telling me one day how excited she was to finally be able to put images of her work online. She built a website and populated it with some of the most gorgeous, fluid, richly colored images I'd ever seen. The monitor and the contrast of the black background made the graphics seem like they were lit from within. "Wow - graphics on the Internet." I was spellbound.

It was only a matter of months after this that Internet advertising came along. Suddenly websites everywhere were full of flashing banners, neon colors, and ad messages shouting in your face. It was a far cry from the Art Nouveau designs by my friend the artist.

Now, I had mixed feelings about this trend - about the emergence of advertising on the web - because by then, I'd gotten involved in marketing for a leading software company. As an end user, I was sad to see that the Internet had become so overrun with advertising. As an employee, I was delighted.

Both banner ads and pop-ups are still being used, but they're quickly becoming passe. Now, entertainment is the key to good advertising. This fact was keenly observed by corporate America back in the mid-90s when a division of Autodesk called Kinetix contributed to the development a 3D video to demonstrate the range of its flagship 3D animation software, 3D Studio Max.

Love it or hate it, the Dancing Baby became an Internet sensation worldwide - one of the first, in fact. If you're not familiar with the Dancing Baby video, well... maybe you should skip it. But when that video came out, it was not intended to become a pop icon, though it quickly went viral because of its entertainment value. I was working at Autodesk at the time in the Marketing Services department - the company's internal ad agency. I was distributing advertising graphics and videos worldwide to software vendors through a web-based application. So did this video sensation have an impact on my work? Uh... yeah. Did the world take note of the direction the Internet was headed? Well, not as quickly as you'd expect. But ultimately, yes.

### **The Dancing Baby's Legacy**

Fast forward to the present day, and video is everywhere. Whether it's a grainy 90-second welcome message embedded on a sales page, or it's a slick 10-minute production that's gone viral on YouTube, video has become an entertaining and information-packed part of life on the Internet.

The marketers who are truly succeeding in promoting their businesses online are using video promotion in a variety of ways to draw customers to their products, create brand awareness and drive traffic to their websites. And the more people they entertain, the more business they get and the greater their profits.

Video can be used in a variety of ways for Internet promotion. Social media sites like YouTube are only increasing in popularity as people around the world post their 10-minute productions for all the world to see.

People want to be entertained, whether it's through television, at the movies or on the Internet. Not only do most people prefer to watch a video rather than read an article, they will share it with others, embed it in their own website, discuss it on their blog, post it on their social network profile, and even e-mail it to friends - just like the Dancing Baby.

In the past decade or so, as technology has increasingly accommodated video on the Internet, news media has found that it's highly effective to include not only the news articles about an important case, but video clips covering the story. According to a study done by the Chicago Tribune Online, more people are watching the videos than reading the news. Watching a video is easier to do and, more importantly, it's entertaining. Though news websites were among the first to recognize the impact of adding video to their websites, now individual promoters and corporations alike are following suit.

Video promotion on the internet is a whole lot cheaper than traditional advertising, and it can be done by just about anyone. Sometimes, the most quirky and funny videos are the ones that stand out the most. A word of caution here - when it comes to your video production values, don't be sloppy. You can get away with using

low budget tactics if you pay attention to detail. Creativity is key. But by the same token, show respect for your audience by making the best production you can afford. These are people you hope to develop a relationship with, provide value, and someday ask for their money. You're not going to get anywhere if you show them disrespect through your sloppy work. Be conscientious, and care about your production values as much as your message.

### **Video Production Even For Rank Amateurs**

Now let's take a look at the production process, including any preparation, tools and equipment you'll need to make your own online videos. Making and sharing your own videos sounds exciting, doesn't it? But before you make plans for your next movie shoot, you'll want to do some planning. Think about your process and map it out before you dive in. This is important because it will help you plan your content, identify the type of equipment you will need, take note of any resources you're lacking, and name additional key players in the project before you even get started. As with so many business projects, momentum is your friend. Once you get started, you'll want to keep going until your video project is polished and ready to launch.

The video production process includes only a handful of steps, but each one is crucial to the success of your promotion. Here's what's involved in making your video, whether it's a short piece for your sales page or it's a branding piece that you're going to post on YouTube.

First, start with the concept. Flesh out the message that you want to convey to your viewers. Whenever possible, distill this message into a single sentence or sound byte. That way, during the production, you can measure your progress against your ultimate goal. Ask yourself, does this element contribute to my objective - that is, conveying the key concept.

Next, plan the story. What's the meat of your video? Where do you want the viewer to begin and end? You'll want to take them by the hand and lead them there with your story. As you write your material, make sure you leave some breathing room in the text for emphasis through music, sound effects and visuals. For example, if you're talking about heroism, you may want to show some footage of a fireman. Or if you're appealing to your viewer as a parent or concerned citizen, you may want to use some footage of a mother with a child on her lap. Remember that there's more to your story than words. Record the audio first, then the video. You want to sync the video to the audio - not the other way around.

Once you've got your story and your script put together, decide on your production methods. Most recording devices include camcorders, webcams, digital cameras, and cell phones, and they should interface easily with your computer. Your other options include screen capture, live motion footage of yourself or another

subject, stock footage, or a combination of all of these. Of course, the more professional your equipment, the better your results will be.

Here's a dose of reality. If you get in front of the camera and you're not photogenic or you don't come across well, you can actually do more harm to your business than good. When it comes to screen presence, you either have it or you don't. This is mostly born of genuine enthusiasm. You just can't fake keen interest. Don't expect a flood of traffic to your site if your video is merely a close up of you making a half-hearted sales pitch into your cell phone. Deliver me! It's like those late night used car dealer commercials on TV. "I'll stand on my head to make you a deal." You know who I'm talking about. Don't be that guy!

The more you invest of yourself into the project, the higher your rate of return will be. With the amount of screen capture software, stock footage, royalty-free music, and finished video that's available to you on the Internet today, you don't have to appear on camera unless you want to. In fact you don't necessarily even need a camera at all to successfully create a high quality video to promote your business.

Now that you've identified the elements of your video, you can put it all together. Craft your video with all the care you would use in constructing a house. You've already got a great foundation - now build on it. Remember to take advantage of key elements such as lighting, sound and special effects. Use the highest quality technology available to you, regardless of the resulting file size. You can optimize it and make it smaller during the rendering process - that is, at the end of the job.

Once you've rendered it, now you're ready to put it up on your website. If possible, do a private screening first to get feedback from a few people you trust. Their response may surprise you. Odds are, they'll laugh in places you never expected, or they may have a completely different take-away than what you intended. Be open to what they have to say - above all, don't argue with them or defend your production. Whatever their response, simply say thanks, smile and nod. Make some adjustments if necessary. Then, assuming your work is closely aligned with your original concept, you can post your promotional video on the Internet.

Don't be too concerned if your first effort isn't something you'd be proud to charge \$15 a ticket for at your local cinema. If you've followed these steps in creating your online video, you're likely to see something close to the results you're looking for. Now you're ready to produce the next one.

### **Video Production Tech Specs**

When it comes to the technical side of video production, you have a few options available to you, ranging from free software that you probably already own, to a modest investment in both software and technology to create production values as high as anything you might see on the Internet today.

Whatever your level of investment, you'll want to create videos that are effective and that look as professional as possible. Most of what's on YouTube are unedited "hobby videos" like scenes of a skateboarder wiping out, or a litter of puppies encountering a cat for the first time. While these are entertaining and tempting to post for the sake of the back links they would create, here's a word to the wise: don't. Have respect for your customer - be professional. You're asking people to spend money with you, sometimes hundreds or even thousands of dollars. You've got to look like you're worth it.

I can't tell you how many times my work on the Internet has come full circle, either through viral distribution, search, or simply someone's comment. And each time, I've breathed a sigh of relief that I did my level best. The results of my work from years gone by may not be up to my standards of today, but I know that I've always given it my best shot. When you play for keeps, you'll never regret it.

Here's a brief look at the software that's available to you for your video production, from the most basic to fully professional production quality.

Slideshow XL is free software available from [Download.com](http://Download.com), and it allows you to create your own video with still images and your own royalty-free music or voice over. If you plan accordingly, you can create text slides to mingle among your photos and graphics. [Animoto.com](http://Animoto.com) and other similar sites offer this service for free, including their music, but the last time I checked, there's a 30 second video time limit on this free service. If you want your video to run longer, they'll charge you for it. I prefer Slideshow XL, and in fact I love it. If you think this method of making videos is on the mundane side, think again. There's a guy I met on Facebook who captures images of the Coolum Beach sunrise everyday. He uses Animoto to create videos with the still image, and posts them on his Facebook profile. I myself can't wait to see what tomorrow looks like in the wee hours of the morning, and he makes it all possible using Animoto.

You can use [Open Office](http://Open Office) or Microsoft PowerPoint to create custom slideshow presentations, including sound, but you'll need to be careful using this method. The process is a little more cumbersome than Slideshow XL, and the results tend to look amateurish unless you invest a lot of care in the process.

[Muvee.com](http://Muvee.com) offers a software package called Muvee Producer 6. Just like Slideshow XL and Animoto, it allows you to create videos from still images and audio that you supply. But it does a lot more. You can adjust the brightness, do color correction, and manipulate the tempo and feel of your video. They offer a free product trial, and if you decide to buy, it's very reasonably priced - under \$50.

Windows XP comes with Windows Moviemaker. This software really is all you need to create quality videos. Not only have I used it, but I've heard a number of professionals swear by it for the beginning video

producer. It's very powerful and straightforward to use. Now, any software program can look daunting when you first open it up and start to use it, and this is true of Windows MovieMaker. But once you start poking around, you'll see it's pretty intuitive. You can do screen capture video and combine it with live motion or stock footage. And if you're using live footage that you've shot yourself, Moviemaker will automatically locate your camera through a USB port once you connected it to your computer.

Screenr at [Screenr.com](http://Screenr.com) allows you to create screen capture videos with a simple point-and-click technology, then upload them to Twitter, YouTube and other social networking sites. Screenr is free to use and very cool.

Moving up the ladder, you can use Camtasia Studio, which costs about \$300. It does the same thing as MovieMaker, but it has more a powerful set of features. You can direct your viewer's browser to another site at the end of the video, embed affiliate cookies, and there are all sorts of other tools that make it worth the price.

Sony Vegas is about \$500 and it's even more powerful than Camtasia Studio. Now, \$500 may seem like a lot to spend on a piece of software. But when you consider that this is an investment in your business, you'll see that the cost is fairly minimal.

### **Sometimes You Just Have To Splurge**

I want to talk about this for a second, because it's important. Compared to brick-and-mortar ventures, it takes very little investment - if any - to become involved in an Internet business. Of course, you'll always have plenty of opportunities to spend money on your online business, but the hard requirements are few. If you were to buy a McDonald's franchise, for example, you'd have to invest a million dollars, plus the lease and equipment along with staffing, then show up for work everyday for the next 3 to 5 years before you even got into the black.

With an Internet business, you can literally buy an optimized domain name for 89 cents, get free hosting using your own URL, use a free website template, promote quality products that don't cost you a dime, and make a good living through nothing more than focus, creativity and sweat equity. Because of the ease of entry for this type of business model, the majority of people don't take this opportunity seriously. They treat it like a hobby instead of a business. Then they get discouraged when they find out it takes real effort, and they give up when they're so close to making their online dreams come true. It happens far more often than it should. Ninety-nine percent of online marketers will never make enough money to walk away from their day job.

What sets you apart from these people is that you already know it takes more than a half-hearted effort to succeed online. After all, you're listening to this program, and that puts you in the top 5% of people everywhere. Most people don't engage in training of any kind or try to better themselves. In fact, most people don't see the value of owning their own business. Whatever you do - whatever your challenge is - stick with it. You will succeed. Yes, you may have to make a small investment once in awhile. But more often than not, there's a creative solution to achieve your objective. If you want to bring real value to the marketplace - not just make a buck, but really serve people and make a living through service to others - then the world needs you, and you have an obligation to stick with it. Do what it takes to stay in the game.

Now, if you need to start out with article marketing, Animoto and some graphics you've made using Microsoft Paint, well... you'll have a great story to blog about when you're sitting on the beach drinking mai-tais with your favorite friend. If that's the case, send me an email - Liv@eCommerceGal.com. I'd love hear about your success. In fact, I might even like to join you in your little beach party. I could seriously use a vacation.

Now. Back to work.

### **Death or Comedy? ...I'm Thinkin', I'm Thinkin'**

Let's talk for a moment about style and content. We've already said that entertainment is the key to great online promotion.

Comedy is a great theme for your online video, but it's a two-edged sword. Your video needs to be entertaining, and if it's funny, it could go viral on the Internet, bringing you untold traffic to your site. But don't be fooled - this is a long shot, and it's tough to get it right. If you botch the job, you could alienate your prospects and damage the reputation of your business. There's an old saying, "Death is easy. Comedy is hard." And I can tell you, there's a lot of truth to this. In fact, if your attempt at comedy flops, you may wish you were dead! Here are a couple of laws to obey when pursuing that all-elusive laugh track for your video content. Break them, and pay the price. Obey them, and reap the reward.

First, understand what it is that makes people laugh. Here's what one authority has taught at Yale Drama. Bill Raymond says that comedy is defined as the build up and release of tension through humor. Got that? This is key, and there will be a test. It's actually very scientific and mathematical. Those stand-up comics you see on television and YouTube have spent countless hours upon days upon years honing their prat falls. They've got their delivery down to the micron. What's the secret of comedy? Timing.

Second, never... ever tell jokes. Most often, they wind up appearing dated, off-color, or even offensive. Let me give you a demonstration: "A guy walks into a bar..."

I'm kidding! (So did you cringe, or sit on the edge of your seat?)

Third, let your material provide the humor. Be natural, and you'll automatically win your audience. You want people to be laughing with you, not at you. Trust me on this one. When your audience is with you, they'll think of you as a friend and automatically accept your recommendations. (That's [eCommerceGal.com/blog](http://eCommerceGal.com/blog) - go there now.)

Whether or not you choose to add humor to your video, your content needs to be engaging. Get excited about your subject. It's okay to bubble over with enthusiasm. Unless you've had a double espresso with an added shot of Jolt, you're likely to come across as perfectly normal. Droning only works for math professors. Show some snap.

### **Create A High Performance Sales Video**

We'll take a look at popular online video websites, including YouTube and Google Video, in just a moment. First let's compare the requirements of a high performance sales video embedded in a sales page, versus a branding video that you post to a social media site like YouTube.

A high performance video can make your sales page come alive. In a matter of 90 seconds, using straightforward copy, you can connect with your prospect in a way that no other medium can approach. In your video, you'll want to focus on features only, and no benefits. Sounds backwards, doesn't it? But there's a reason for this. Your time is short, and you have to tell a story. Let the sales page handle the benefits. Make your video business-centered – no hype. If you let the viewer know exactly what pain your product addresses for them, you're about five times more likely to get them to do what it is you're asking them to do. This increases your mailing list opt-ins as well as your conversion rate.

Come up with an idea about your product that you want people to know about right away. What pain are you soothing? What joy or pleasure is it that you're offering? Make a story around that. You want them to ask in their minds "How are you going to help me? You want to show that you're credible as a resource to solve their problem. Let people know they came to a place where they can ease this pain or gain this pleasure. Have a beginning, and a middle, and then a clear call to action - either opting in to your mailing list, or clicking the Order Now button.

Make your message credible, and you'll love your results.

## **Use YouTube for Branding & Back Links**

Now let's look at creating your branding or training video that you can distribute to social media sites. The current model is less than 10 minutes, and preferably less than 5. Just as with the sales video, you need to offer entertaining copy. This time, however, your focus is on your company image, offering training, demonstrating a process, or showing the benefits of your product. Let's be clear, though - no one logs onto YouTube to watch a sales pitch. You must not sell in your video whatsoever, but your video needs to create a compelling call to action to visit the site for more information. Make your video information centered. It has to be good, and it needs to be brief. A 10-minute video will get fewer views than two 5-minute videos on the same topic. Make it credible and entertaining, something people would want to watch several times. The objective is to draw people into your reality.

To create this video, don't wing it. Write a script and make it smooth. Be meticulous in your work. Just like with the sales video, you're developing a relationship with your viewer.

When you craft your concept, your object is to tell a story in about 5 minutes. The story should satisfy the viewer but leave them wanting more. Come up with an idea about your product that you want people to know right away. How can they expect you to sooth their pain in 5 minutes? Make a story around that. Present them with a beginning and a middle, then tell them how they can find the end. Close your video with a call to action - don't leave anything to guess work.

To go about posting to online video websites, you have a few options. There's a fairly large number of these site online. Many of them cater to a wide variety of video types, while others focus on a particular topic or issue. With YouTube, you can create, upload, and share videos, and it's a social network as well. Once you create an account, you can comment on others' videos, upload your own, and invite friends to join you. YouTube may be the most popular video site on the Internet, but it's far from the only one.

To share your promotional videos on a social site, you have more options than you will ever be able to take advantage of. It's best to limit your distribution to the top 10 or 15. Even using only a few of these sites will produce material results for you in the way of exposure and back links to your site.

Google Video may not be as well known as YouTube, but its certainly known. Google video's popularity is rapidly on the rise. Maybe one of the greatest reasons why Google Video is so popular is that, if you choose your keywords correctly, it's likely that your video will be viewed by scores or even hundreds of internet users.

If you're looking for popular alternatives to Google Video and YouTube, you have plenty of sites to choose from. Here are a handful of your choices.

[Gather.com](#) is one of the top sites on the Internet, ranking within the top 5,000 of all websites in the world. There's a very good reason for this - it's powerful! Registration is easy and intuitive. What Gather offers is an audience as well as a social network with a reach beyond the typical YouTube and Google Video markets. You can invite your friends from other social networks and your email accounts. You can join groups on Gather, and even create groups of your own. Using the "Feed Me" feature allows you to enter keywords, find like-minded people and create an RSS feed for not just videos on this topic, but also articles, images, forums and discussion groups.

Naturally, as with all social marketing, the more interesting your profile is, the more people you will attract to your page. Make sure that your profile photo is a picture of you doing the activity you want people to associate with you. If you're a cook, have a picture of yourself in the kitchen. If you're a fitness instructor, show an image of yourself working out. You get the point.

When you log onto Gather, you'll see a list of categories on the left hand side. These categories make it easy to find videos, images, articles and groups related to your topic. When you upload your videos and other content to Gather, you'll want to carefully consider which categories you want to classify your content in. Make sure you keep it relevant.

[Multiply.com](#) is a family-friendly media sharing site. It's particularly aimed at sharing your blog, photos and videos. It also features a Reviews option that acts in a way that's similar to a social bookmarking site, in that you can review your own posts as well as the content of others. You can create a Multiply badge to add to your website, blog or social network. You can also create an RSS feed for your Multiply site and submit it to RSS directories. This is so powerful.

Multiply offers customize themes, and you can find these by searching within the Computers & Internet Groups category. This is a great way to find people with common interests, and also locate custom themes to use on your Multiply profile.

Other high-traffic sites including [Vimeo](#), [Sharkle](#), and [Clipshack](#). These sites offer opportunity as well as a fresh community to connect with. Each of these sites provides a slightly different take on the video sharing experience and can reward you with high traffic and quality back links.

Whichever site or sites you choose as your online video platform, video promotion is here to stay. It's now up to businesses to use this medium to increase their customer base, provide value, and make sales through video advertising on the internet.

So... what's your story?

## Conclusion

That's our look at Social Marketing – Business Marketing Online With Social Media. You can use these tactics to make a real difference in your marketing and your bottom line. But really we've just scratched the surface of eCommerce here in this half-hour. Now you're ready to put these powerful tools in context as an online business promoter. And I'm ready to help you do that.

The next step is to download my audio program called Online Business Promotion, 16 half-hour programs like this one, a full 8 hours of quality insights and potent Internet marketing tactics, plus an action guide and step-by-step instructions on getting the most from online promotion for your business and dominating your market. It's like getting a one-day seminar in a box - without the hotel ballroom or the travel headaches.

Getting to the top spot on Google is really pretty simple, and with my Online Business Promotion program you'll learn what it takes to get there. What will your business look like next month? How about the month after that? What kind of year-end sales numbers do you finally want to achieve? If you keep doing what you've been doing, you can be sure that you'll keep getting what you've been getting. My program Online Business Promotion will help your business break free of mediocre performance and lackluster sales. But you have to take action. I can't do that part for you. To put the power of eCommerce to work for your business, you'll want to get your hands on a copy of my Online Business Promotion.

To get started right now... go to my website at [eCommerceGal.com/OnlineBusinessPromotion](http://eCommerceGal.com/OnlineBusinessPromotion). You'll be so glad you did.

Thanks for joining me!

All the best,



Liv Montgomery  
The eCommerce Gal  
[www.eCommerceGal.com](http://www.eCommerceGal.com)