

**Build Your Online Success**

# **Build Your Online Success**

Brought To You By  
**Bonnie Holscher**

# Build Your Online success

Internet Marketing Made Simple

This Book Is Brought To You By

Bonnie Holscher

<http://www.365DaysOfSuccessesJournal.com>

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# Introduction

## Ask

Yourself, “ Do I have all the money I feel that I deserve? Do I Have enough money saved to retire? Do I have enough money for my children's education? Am I doing the things I want to be doing? If the answer to these questions is no, then read on. This manual is

designed to help take ordinary people to new heights using the money-making machine that is the Internet.

You may have a business or product already. This manual is designed to create demand for that product or service. You may simply want to find a way to "break in" to the lucrative world of the online marketplace. I will tell you how you can be successful at accomplishing all of these things!.

If you are thinking to yourself, "But I don't know anything about computers! How am I going to create a successful business online?" Don't worry. I will walk you step by step through the techniques that will be introduced. You don't need to be a rocket scientist or have a degree in Information Technology to make these techniques work for you. If you can turn on your computer and click your mouse, you are ready to start changing your life.

It is helpful to remember that there are literally hundreds of thousands of people that have made millions of dollars using the Internet. In fact, the Internet has created more millionaires than any other medium out there — including Real Estate. Individuals who have never even run a small business, are succeeding online because of how easy it is to run an e-commerce business. Why should you be one of them? Simple! Take advantage of the "information superhighway" and put yourself in front of the explosive growth of the World Wide Web.

As you read through this manual, keep a pen and paper handy. Think about your situation. Do you have your own Internet-based business already and just want to drive more traffic your way? Do you have a product that you want to market but don't know how? Are you looking for a product or service or even information that you could sell online? Keep your particular situation in mind as you read through the ideas presented, and jot down ideas and notes that pertain to you. Write down any thoughts you have that apply to your situation. If you do this as you go along, you will be much further along at the end of the process. You will have the beginnings of a business plan already in place. You may also want to write notes in the manual itself, and note the page numbers in your "business plan," so you can refer back to the information as you work through your planning stages.

Remember, this will take effort at first, but this manual will show you how to automate your business, so that eventually it will become a residual income "generator" that makes you money whether you are there or not! You can be on vacation, at the pool with your family, or on the golf course, and the money will still roll in – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year!

This manual will show you how to create your site so that orders will come pouring in. All of the techniques that are discussed have been tried and proven successful. They are not new or untried ideas. Every one has been proven to be a sure money maker. Each of these ideas can increase your income in a small way, creating another step on the "ladder" to financial independence. As you implement each idea, you will start to see the ability to increase your income. You have the potential of increasing or even replacing your income with the ideas outlined in this manual. Each time you put one in place, you have added an additional stream of income to your total. Patience and hard work up front will pay off in the long run!

You are probably saying, "Ok, this sounds good, but how much is it going to cost me?"

Surprisingly, very little. We will discuss the costs of getting started, and you can do it for anywhere from as low as \$100, if you want to do everything yourself, to up to \$1,500 by paying someone else to do it for you and get everything up and running right away. You can see that even the tightest budgets can handle these costs.

**The bottom line is this: if you have a business and you do not already have an online presence, get online now!** USA Today ran an article stating that 70% of small businesses are not online and are limiting their potential by not investing in a website. Every type of business can be taken online, whether they sell products or services. Even a service provider like a hair salon can utilize email marketing to bring repeat business into the salon. Knowing your customers and keeping in touch with them through email, or other means, creates loyalty and a sense of community with them.

So, get your pen and paper, turn the page, and let's get started. The longest journey begins with a single step. Commit to taking that step, and making the journey one step at a time, and soon you'll be creating your own agenda for your life and the lives of your family!

## SECTION 1

# Understanding How to Make Money Online

### Section 1.1 The Benefits and Costs of Online Marketing

#### **BENEFITS**

To begin this manual, I want to share the benefits of taking your business online.

- Online businesses can be automated, freeing up your time. Your online business requires little or no staff and is open 24 hours/day.
- You set your own pace. No one is looking over your shoulder or giving you deadlines.
- Access to new customers costs a fraction of advertising in traditional media sources.
- You have access to millions of potential customers from all around the world without spending tens of thousands on advertising.
- Trying out new ideas, products, or sales promotions is easy to implement and cheap to change if it does not work out.
- You can use your website to track the wants and needs of your customers, by determining the things they are accessing on your site. Then you can change your site to better meet the demand.

So those are all nice advantages of taking a business online. However, here are the most important three:

- Start up costs are very low compared to that of a traditional business
- You have instant access to the world wide web (a "global" marketplace).
- Time required to run the business is minimal once you've automated.

#### **COSTS**

Advertising in a traditional magazine can cost \$30,000 or more for a full page

Ad! You have to get the ad to the magazine in advance, and you won't start to see leads until the month after publication. That is a lot of money up front and a long time to wait to see results.

If you want to really get going, hard and fast, you could spend more to purchase advertising, software for automation, and people to help you with the details. This would be an initial outlay of perhaps \$1,500. This would be the fastest

Online, you can run the ad; see how the public responded and start taking orders immediately, which translates into money in your pocket. You can test as many variations of the advertisement as you like to determine which one is the most successful.

So how much does it really cost to take a business online? This is what most people really want to know. As I said before, you can start your business for even as low as \$100, but you will have to do

everything yourself, and it will be slow.

For around \$500, you can get your site up in two weeks, and begin your online advertising campaign. This would include email promotions, web sites, co-op linking, etc.

If you want to really get going, hard and fast, you could spend more to purchase advertising, software for automation, and people to help you with the details. This would be an initial outlay of perhaps \$1,500. This would be the fastest and most effective way to jump-start your online business, to start taking orders immediately, and begin seeing profits from your hard work.

Do not fall into the trap of scam artists out there that charge thousands of dollars to create a web site. They take advantage of people who are not web-savvy. As I said before, you can have everything for around \$1,500, and that includes a terrific web site. So shop around and compare. Getting started on the Internet may not take a lot of money, but it will take a lot of hard work, at first. Eventually, you will be able to sit back and enjoy the fruits of your labors, but in the beginning you will have to work to get the business going.



## **REMEMBER**

You want to set up your business to run automatically eventually, so that you will have the time to work on many marketing issues, not on order fulfillment. Once you have that business going by itself, you can start another online business. By diversifying your businesses, you can assure yourself multiple incomes and protection from shifts in demand.

You should go after a narrow "slice" of the market. You can't be Ford or GE and market to everyone, so it is far better for you to target the group of consumers that are most likely to purchase your product or service. It is extremely important that your target market can be identified and is an online audience.

There are five steps to success:

- 1 TARGET YOUR MARKET**
- 2 MAKE CONTACT**
- 3 ESTABLISH DIALOG**
- 4 BUILD A DATABASE**
- 5 MAKE MONEY**

So the basically, following these steps, it boils down to this: Find a niche market, provide what they want, offer it to them online, and automate the business. By doing this and then creating new businesses to expand and diversify, you really CAN make millions online.

## Section 1.2 Online Products and Services

You may already have your own business providing a product or service to the market. You may be like many others and be searching for the right thing to offer the market right now. Products and services are two totally different animals, and both have their pros and cons.

### PROS

**Selling Products** — Income is not dictated by the time needed to "perform" the service. The more products you sell, the more money you make. Once you automate the business, this is more so the case.

**Providing Services** — Profits are easier to come by because the payment for the service is paid to you.

**Providing Services** — Repeat business is likely with services because your customers, if they are happy with you, will return again and again.

### CONS

**Selling Products** — Fulfillment issues. You have to stock and ship a product (or pay someone else to). The cost of fulfilling orders on a product will take money from your profits.

**Selling Products** — Unless your product has a very large profit margin, you may have to sell a LOT of items in order to make the profit you want.

**Providing Services** — Your income can be limited to the amount of time you are reasonably able to spend providing the service each day. Hiring employees can increase the services you can offer, but also cost money to employ.

If you don't already provide a service, I would recommend selling a product or offering information as a product. It is the best way to earn really big profits over the long term. However, if you do provide a service, try to find a way to transform it into a product. For example, instead of providing a service directly, create reports or newsletters that give key information to people so they can do it themselves. By doing this, you have translated your service knowledge into a saleable item, thus creating an added stream of income for yourself.

Another excellent way that companies use the Internet for their service-oriented business is, that they will give you coupons as an incentive for you to visit their site and then save money by simply printing out the coupon. By offering the coupons, they get you to their site.

Don't forget that most people use the Internet to gain information. It may be as simple as looking up a phone number or checking the weather forecast, but they are still looking for instant information. Information is the top commodity online. It is in your best interest to market information products such as books, reports, videotapes, how-to manuals, etc.

Information products are easy to sell, generate quick profits, and have a huge profit margin. Typically, books cost anywhere from one to four dollars to print. But how many books have you seen that cost less than \$9.99 or so? Some even retail for \$30 or \$40. On a book that only costs a couple of bucks to produce, that's some profit margin! You also have to remember that if these items can be printed in hard cover, they can also be downloaded over the Internet directly to your customer, therefore eliminating the wait time for the information or book to reach your customer's doorstep.

If people are researching the Internet for information, and you are provider of information, then your clientele is already searching for you! Let's use a perfect example, Stephen King is a renowned author of hundreds of books. Chances are that you have probably read one. You can pick up any one of his books at a store such as Barnes and Noble. Yet, if you are interested in his newest book or want to see some of the books you haven't read without getting in the car and driving to the book store, you can simply log onto the Internet. You can visit his website where you can satisfy your craving for his literature, or perhaps even have the opportunity to read a portion of the book before you purchase.

If you don't have specialized knowledge already, you can summarize industry experts. Find out what the best-selling books are. Find books that all have the same hot topic that people are trying to find out about. Buy these books, read them, and then summarize the information you've digested. Believe me, people will pay to get a large amount of information from different sources in a more concise format. Most people don't take the time to read an entire book, but an "executive summary" version of several best selling books is a desirable commodity.

Ok, so what if you don't have a product or information to sell? Read on for some ideas for YOU to put into place on the Internet with your own online business.

## Section 1.3 Product Ideas

I will cover each and every idea that relates to a product. But first take a minute to take stock in your hobbies, interests, and personal knowledge. Most people don't realize the potential that lies at their feet. Take a look within yourself, and see what it is that you enjoy most. What are the things you enjoy doing or how do you enjoy spending your time? These things can translate into a product or service for you to sell.

Ask yourself these 4 questions:

- 1 WHAT AM I PASSIONATE ABOUT?**
- 2 WHAT THINGS AM I INTERESTED IN?**
- 3 WHAT DO I KNOW A LOT ABOUT?**
- 4 WHAT DO PEOPLE ASK ME ADVICE FOR?**

Remember, you can take one of these ideas and be very successful with it. But if you take something you love and find a way to translate that into your product, you will be that much further ahead, love what you're doing, and feel comfortable in an area you already know. Have you ever said to yourself -- I wish I could get paid doing what I love? Perhaps finally here is your chance.

Don't worry if you think your area of interest is very obscure or specialized; the Internet is where people are looking for the obscure! In fact, many successful entrepreneurs start businesses by finding a narrow or specialized market and then developing a product that market needs. Voila! Instant Market!

One way to target a specific market is to find products that already exist and find a way to improve them. You can look on consumer review websites for your competition's products and find out what people do and don't like about them. Some good sites for this are:

[www.consumerreview.com](http://www.consumerreview.com)  
[www.epinions.com](http://www.epinions.com)

[www.consumersearch.com](http://www.consumersearch.com)

Another way is to surf news groups, discussion boards and chat rooms for your target market. This specific location on the Internet is referred to as the UseNet. I will discuss this more later on in the manual. You will find that discussions of these types can lead you to develop something that the market is hungry for. A place to look for discussion groups of these types is <http://groups.google.com> or just search any major search engine by typing in the words "newsgroup" or "chatrooms" and your specific search.

So you may be saying, "Great, that gives me the perfect idea to start!" or you may be saying, "None of that is going to work for me". If you saying that later, then read on. I'd like to give you some ideas.

### **CREATE AN E-BOOK**

Compile interviews or articles written by others in a particular industry. Make sure you get written permission to republish their work before you do this. Taking others' knowledge and compiling it is a great way to make money online.

### **CREATE A SOLUTION IN YOUR OWN INDUSTRY**

Whether you are a software programmer, a secretary, or a construction worker, you have knowledge of problems in your industry. What do you hate about something you have to deal with every day? What issues do others in your field always complain about? If you can find a solution to this problem, you have a certain best-seller in your particular field!

### **CREATE A TUTORIAL FOR SOMETHING**

Do you know how to do something really well? A piece of software? A hobby or skill? A video game? Create a tutorial to show others how to do it too. For software, you can use a product called Lotus Screen Cam to create video tutorials to demonstrate what you want to teach. Go to [www.lotus.com/products/screencam.nsf](http://www.lotus.com/products/screencam.nsf) to use a 15-day trial version. You can use this product to "record" what you are doing on your computer screen while recording your speaking voice to go along with it.

For demonstrating a hobby or video game, you can either digitally record a tutorial with a video camera, or simply create a written instruction booklet. People are always looking for ways to do things better or faster!

### **CREATE A WEB GRAPHICS CD**

With the Internet explosion, people everywhere are publishing their own websites for everything from family reunions to online businesses. However, the average "lay-person" can't create their own graphics.

You can take advantage of demand by learning how to create graphics to sell on CD or downloadable zip-file. Learning to create graphics is easier than you might think, and you could take the time to put together a library of 100 or so graphics to sell. These types of graphics libraries can sell for up to \$75 each, making it a very worthwhile endeavor!

If you target your images to a certain market, you are even better off. Find a market that has a need for specialized graphics and target your CD to that industry. It makes marketing easier, as well as creates repeat sales for future CD's with additional graphics.

### **CREATE A TIP OF THE DAY NEWSLETTER**

This idea goes back to selling what you know. Set up a newsletter that will email a hint, trick or tip for your industry each day to subscribers. It doesn't matter what industry you are in, you can make this work for you. The trick is to keep the subscription cost low and aim for a high subscriber base.

Think about it. If you charge \$5 per YEAR for your tip of the day email newsletter and get 10,000 people to subscribe, that's \$50,000 per year! For a lot of people, its enough to quit the job they currently have! Think about the guy who came up with the "Joke a Day" website. Good ideas can put you right at the top very quickly. It takes some time and effort, but you can spend one day a week coming up with your ideas or maybe a few days a month, and leave the rest up to email automation to send them out at the right times. Talk about "hands off".

### **CREATE AN ONLINE COMMUNITY**

If you know of a topic that will appeal to a large group, you can set up a private online community and sell membership and advertising space. The community can have

resources and articles, chat rooms or forums, links, tools, and news relevant to the members. You can even have an online store to sell specialized items to your members. This idea can take a lot of time and energy, but can also be a huge money maker for you.

### **CREATE SOFTWARE TO SOLVE A MINOR PROBLEM**

There are tons of irritating little problems in software out there, that the big software makers don't bother to fix. Find a way to fix the "everyday nuisances" and you will have a top selling item. You don't even have to be a programmer. You can find programmers at local universities or technical schools who are looking for extra money or experience. You can either pay them upfront or offer them a cut of the profits. Just remember to have them sign a non-disclosure agreement before you describe your idea, so it doesn't get stolen! Better safe than sorry.

### **CREATE A FANTASTIC ONLINE BUSINESS FOR SOMEONE ELSE**

Find someone who has a great product or service and run THEIR online business for them. There are plenty of people who know nothing about computers or the Internet. You can use all the techniques in this manual to make millions using someone else's product, and then take a cut of the profits for doing the work. A small percentage of a million dollars is still a lot of money!

## Section 1.4 Drop Shipping Arrangements Can Make You Money Online

Now that we've given you some ideas for your own product or service, you may still be saying, "But that's not for me. What else is there?"

Another money-making idea for utilizing the Internet for your online business, is to enter into a drop shipping arrangement with a manufacturer or wholesale distributor.

The beauty of this concept is that you don't have to worry about stocking inventory, maintaining warehouse space, shipping and receiving products, etc. A drop shipping arrangement allows you to sell quality products on your web site and the drop shipper handles all of the shipping details for you. They ship the product directly to your customer for you and also handle returns. This can be extremely lucrative in getting started, simply because you do not have to purchase the products up front. Once the client buys the product from your site, you can set it up so that an instant email goes out to the drop shipper, and they fulfill the product for you. Great isn't it?

### EXAMPLE

I set up an online website to sell porcelain figurines. My website is set up to accept credit card orders through e-commerce. A customer visits my website and orders a figurine. My website automatically processes his credit card for the retail price of \$200 plus shipping of \$20. Once the order is placed, and the credit card is approved, an email with the order goes out directly to my drop shipper (either the manufacturer or a distributor) who will then fulfill the order and ship it. The drop shipper will send the figurine with my company's name and the drop shipper's address. Now you may be asking yourself why they would put my name and their address. Simple -- they handle all returns that may come back damaged or in need of replacement. They then email me the tracking number and shipment information. The drop shipper will charge me the wholesale price of \$120 and shipping of \$20. I have already collected this money from the sale, and it has been deposited from the buyer's credit card into my account.

Because I passed the shipping costs directly to the end consumer, I just made a profit of \$80 for doing nothing more than simply taking the time to put the item on my website and then drive people to visit the website.

You can see how you can turn this kind of business arrangement into a huge money maker for yourself! Drop shipping arrangements can save you the cost of building and maintaining inventory on your own. You won't have to use start-up money to buy inventory to sell online.

Another advantage to drop shipping, is that because you do not have inventory to maintain, you also don't have extra product that won't sell, should the item lose popularity or never get off the ground in the first place. Because your product line is entirely online, you can add and delete products almost instantly! By simply changing your website, you can change the mix of products you offer; thereby, taking off the ones that aren't selling and adding newer, better, more popular products to replace them.

Shipping headaches are also eliminated through this method. You won't have to worry about packaging supplies, carrier accounts and pickups from companies like Fed Ex or UPS, or dealing with sending your products through the postal service.

So, what kind of products work well in a drop shipping arrangement? If you look online, there are

tons of online companies selling cheap, imported stuff — hundreds and thousands of items for a very low price. Do NOT try to compete with giants like ABC Distributing or Oriental Trading Company. In fact, a smaller product base can be a huge advantage to you because it will not give your customers too many options to choose from, but the only the ones you want them to choose from.

As we mentioned earlier, a narrow market targeted to a specific group of people is the better way to go. Once you have determined the market you want to target, do some research to determine what your competition in that market is selling and for how much. By doing a bit of homework up front, you should be able to see what the "going price" for the products you want to sell, and thus you can figure your profit margin. You may find that you can't make enough profit to make it worth your while, and you can then find a different product or market that will net you a better profit.

One thing to remember is that if you want to put your own product out there on the world wide web, you may not be able to fulfill the shipping of your own product. You may end up needing to set up a drop ship relationship and even a manufacturing relationship just to fulfill the demand for your own product. Also, if you are still in the idea stage of your own product, do not hold back your success while waiting for the finished product. Go ahead and start selling an already existing product from a distributor in the mean time to help satisfy your investment costs for developing your own product.

## **CHOOSING A DROP SHIPPER**

When looking for a good drop shipper to enter an agreement with, your best bet is to do some research up front. You should try to work directly with the manufacturer when possible, because this will net you the largest profit margin if you don't have to go through a middleman or distributor.

Search the Internet for the product you would like to sell. Look for manufacturers of that product and contact them directly. Ask if they will drop ship their products to your customers.

Some will be willing to enter into a drop shipping arrangement with you, others may not offer that service and direct you to one of their distributors. This still can be very profitable for you because these distributors, on many occasions, have to purchase in bulk from the manufacturer, so they will be able to give you good prices and mark up percentages, but you will still be able to purchase just the number you need at any one time. Still others may not be familiar with drop shipping arrangements, and you may need to convince them to work with you in selling their products. Just remember, they are going to want to sell to you in bulk. Keep that in mind. You do not want to become the drop shipper yourself and end up warehousing product in your home.

If a company does not drop ship directly, you can ask to recommend one of their distributors. You can also find lists of distributors in trade magazines for the industry or product you want to sell. A little homework can go a long way here. Search the Internet for wholesalers or distributors of product. You'll be surprised at how much will turn up.

Once you've made a list of the manufacturers or distributors whom you'd like to contact, keep the following few things in mind before you contact them.

- You will need an official business name
- You will need a tax ID or resale number
- You may need a credit reference if the company will be billing you once a month for the products you sell. You can give them the name and number of your bank.

- When you call, ask to speak with someone about becoming a vendor for their products.

Once you are speaking to the right person, you need to ask some questions to determine how the company will handle your business, as well as to get a "feel" for how the business relationship would proceed should you decide to go with them.

Some questions to ask are:

**Price?** — What is the wholesale price of their products to you? Is it low enough that you can have a reasonable profit without pricing your product out of the market?

**Shipping and Handling?** — How do they ship their products? Most companies use a nationwide carrier like UPS or FedEx. Will they include ALL of the shipping and tracking information in a confirmation email to you? Is there a handling fee or simply the straight shipping cost? You want to know this upfront so you can build it into your shipping costs to your customers.

**MONTHLY MINIMUM OR MAXIMUM?** — Will you have to sell a certain dollar amount per month? Is there a maximum amount of product they will ship for you? These are important things to keep in mind. If a manufacturer cannot ship as much as you sell each month, you may have to move to one of its distributors for fulfilling your orders instead.

**Billing?** — How will you be billed? Will they charge a credit card for each order or bill you once a month for all the orders for that month?

**Returns?** — How will they deal with product returns? Make sure they have some sort of warranty or guarantee on their products and will be willing to handle returns for you. If there is a problem with the product, you can direct your customers to deal directly with the manufacturer.

**Product Information?** — How will you get the graphics and product information for your website? Many companies will simply direct you to use the information and graphics from their company site. Others may send a CD ROM with their product images and descriptions. Find out how this will work up front so it will be easy to set up your site.

Make sure that you ask these questions, and any others you can think of, to get an idea of how the company will conduct this business arrangement. If they don't answer your questions or you just don't feel "right" about the conversation, you may want to think about trying a different drop shipping partner. If your drop shipping arrangement isn't a solid one, you may end up with unhappy customers and no business.

There are a few things to look out for in the drop shipping arena. Do not pay money for lists of drop shippers. With a little research and hard work, you will be able to find your own companies to contact. People who are charging you for a list are probably giving you an out-dated, and useless list that will be 75% worthless anyway. One of the easiest ways for you to find a great list of potential drop shippers is to go to a major search engine online such as Google or Yahoo and type in the search "Wholesale Drop Shipper" or "Manufacturer".

Do not enter a drop shipping arrangement with a drop shipper who charges you a monthly fee. You are selling their products for THEM. They should not be charging you to do so. If they are, there is a

serious problem with their business model, product, or both.

Do not buy a "turn-key" solution from an online source. These companies usually charge a one-time or monthly fee, and claim to provide you with a website, products, and a merchant account. This is basically a scam to get you to pay to advertise and sell their products. You will not make a good profit margin with this type of business and could even lose money in the process.

Other problems can also occur even when you are working with a reputable drop shipper. They are common occurrences and easily solved if you prepare in advance for them.

**Shipping delays** – Sometimes a drop shipper can be sold out or be backordered on the products that your customers are purchasing. This can cause shipping delays that could lead to unhappy customers. To solve this problem, make sure that your drop shipper responds via email to all orders with the status and shipping information. Once you have received the notification of backorder and shipping delay, you can easily inform your customer.

**Lost Shipment** – What happens when your customer contacts you to ask where their product is? You have not shipped the product, so can you give them an informed answer?

Yes. To handle this issue, simply require your drop shipper to include shipment tracking information, including carrier such as FedEx, UPS, etc, in the confirmation email that is sent to you at shipping time. With the tracking number, you can easily track the package online and give the customer the exact shipment details. Problem solved.

**Shipping Costs** – If you have a variety of products on your website from multiple different manufacturers/distributors, your customers could end up with multiple shipping charges on one order. If the customer has to pay half again as much as their order, they won't order through you! To counter this problem, try to keep all of your products through one manufacturer or distributor. This way, there will only be one shipping charge per order, and you can keep costs down for your customers.

**Loss of Arrangement** – What if your drop shipper decides they no longer wish to maintain a business relationship with your company? This can be a little harder to solve. It usually is caused by the drop shipper deciding that it is not cost effective to handle all the packaging and shipping for you. If this happens, first contact the company to see if there is a large distributor with which you could establish a drop shipping arrangement. In this case, you would simply need to change the company you are doing business with. If you can no longer carry the products, don't despair. Simply go out and find another manufacturer or product and start over. It was easy enough the first time, wasn't it?

**If this is the route you want to go, make sure to take the time to do your homework.**

In closing the discussion on drop shipping arrangements, remember this - if this is the route you want to go, make sure to take the time to do your homework. Research the market, product, and companies. Find out what is out there in the way of competition, pricing, etc. If you can find a great product in a narrow market, you have what it takes to make a lot of money using drop shipping, and you can spend your money marketing your business online rather than maintaining a space-consuming inventory.

## Section 1.5 Types of Websites

The last thing I want to discuss in this section, is websites. There are three main types of websites available to you for using in an online business. The first is a billboard website or more commonly called a FREE website. These can be found with any major web provider. Basically, you just use their software to build your own insecure site on their server space. I don't suggest using one of these unless it is only used as a way to market and advertise business, driving potential customers to your main site. (Hence the name "billboard" site.)

The second type of website on the Internet, and one of the most popular, is called an e-commerce sales website. This is the type of website you see all the time when you visit a company's online site. This website is designed to offer the company's product or service online, tell the customers about it, and make it easy for them to purchase that product or service directly from the site as opposed to having to call in or order from a magazine or other source. An excellent example of this is the popular company called Omaha Steaks. Omaha Steaks has been around for a long time, and yet, they only sold their steaks through a mail order business. At the beginning of 1999, they set up their own e-commerce website and instantly, that same year, doubled their sales. Why? Because they opened their business up to a huge potential customer base on the Internet -- millions of steak lovers across the world.

You can do this as well. You can put up a site to give your customers the option to buy from you, or you can offer free information that will draw them to another site where they can then find out about your core products or services. This is the most straight forward type of website, and one that most people are familiar with.

The third type of site you can utilize online is a portal web site. This type of site is an online "community" of sorts. Think about Yahoo and Alta Vista. These sites are designed to draw people to the site and keep them there for all their online needs such as weather, stocks, maps, traffic, shopping, etc. A portal offers information to its "citizens". A broad "horizontal" portal offers a large range of topics and information catering to "everyone". A narrow "vertical" portal caters to a narrow segment of the market, with specialized information that would be of interest to a smaller range of the population.

As you read on about portal sites, remember that this is not a quick cash generating business. It can take a lot of investment in time and money to get one up and running. However, the potential payoff down the road can be huge. So if a portal site is of interest to you, keep reading. If you are more interested in putting up your sales website and getting cash flowing in the door, move on the next section where I will discuss creating your successful online presence.

### **WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM IN A PORTAL SITE?**

A portal website can be a money maker for you, even if you don't necessarily have a product to sell. The reason for this is that once you have sufficient traffic visiting your site, advertisers to your narrow market segment will pay you to advertise at your portal.

A portal site can also help you become recognized as an industry expert, increasing sales to an already established business venture. For example, suppose you are an online business selling scrap-booking supplies. You have a reasonable amount of traffic to your site, but let's face it; there are a lot of scrapbook suppliers out there.

You decide that you would like to create a scrap booking portal site. You can become THE online resource for all the crafters out there that are into scrap booking. You can create forums to

allow people to share their ideas and even images of their finished pages. You can add links to other websites and suppliers, you can include daily, weekly or monthly articles and ideas. You can allow your "citizens" to provide the information for articles and tips.

Think about it. Once you have established your portal site as an industry standard, people will be willing to visit YOUR online store to purchase their products since you are so helpful and knowledgeable about the industry.

And here's the best part, once you have a lot of traffic to your site, advertisers will pay you to advertise to those crafters that are visiting your site every day! By constantly adding information and ideas, you will encourage repeat visitors and establish an "online community" where people who scrapbook can visit often.

So we've talked about how a portal can drive potential customers to your core sales site to increase product sales. What if you don't have a product?

Use your portal site to refer your visitors to the products or services of others. And get a referral fee for doing it! You don't have to take credit cards, ship products, or maintain inventory — simply tell the customers who see you as an expert what is the best "widget" to buy and send them to that site. Then collect the referral fee from the company you just referred them to.

sections you have, the more money you are collecting in advertising revenues each month!

So how do you go about developing a portal site? You have the knowledge and want to move forward to establishing yourself as an industry expert, so what now?

The first thing I would recommend is move NOW. Don't wait. There are people out there that know as much as you do about your industry. You want to move in quickly and establish yourself before someone else does.

**Another important element is that to be an industry expert, you can't just rely on the stuff you already know. Do research! Read and increase your knowledge. Communicate with people in your industry. Continue to learn as you enrich your site for others.**

Along the same lines of your continuing education about your industry, make sure that your site grows along with your knowledge. Keep your visitors coming back by maintaining a well-designed site with compelling and informative content. This is very important. Your main purpose on the Internet is running your business. So make sure to automate it, and make it as "hands off" as possible. This creates and maintains a strong residual income for you.

You can do this in some very easy ways, but you must put the time in now to make this so. Keep your site looking "fresh". Change it often, daily if possible, to keep them returning to learn more. Stay focused and keep your target market in mind when you publish content. Communicate with your visitors through email campaigns or online surveys to find out what they would like to see added or changed, then do it and make sure to let them know it has been done. If you don't tell them that you made the changes they wanted, they won't come back and take a look. Customers need a little friendly reminder on occasion.

Diversify your income on the portal site by developing products or services that will appeal to the huge base of potential customers that are visiting your site all the time. By doing so, you will have a "built-in" client base for your product or service, AND you will already be seen by them as the industry expert.

So, whether you are building a billboard site, an e-commerce sales site, or a portal catering to a niche in the market, you still have to do one thing. Build the site! You've heard that cliché statement from the movie "Field of

Dreams" — "If you build it, they will come." Get started with something! Remember your business plan can change monthly if needed, but taking action is what will start the flow of success. Now move on to the next section, where I will discuss the basics of creating that successful online presence through your website.

## **SECTION 2 Creating a Successful Presence Online**

In creating a website, there are several things you need to address in getting the best, and most secure site you can get.

The 7 items I want to discuss in this section are:

- 1 WEB HOSTING**
- 2 DOMAIN NAMES**
- 3 HTML**
- 4 DESIGN STRATEGIES**
- 5 SITE TEXT**
- 6 ORDERING & PAYMENT ISSUES**
- 7 AUTO-RESPONDERS**

All of these things have the potential of helping or hurting your website. This section will identify for you how important it is to take proper steps and make correct choices in relation to your Internet presence. So by taking the time to do this right the first time, you will be much further ahead down the road. You will also feel much better about your business because you did it right the first time as opposed to having to make unnecessary changes later on in your business that may cost additional income.

Remember there are two ways in starting your business in today's world; the first being "Trial and Error." With this way, you can expect to pay more. The second is "follow in someone's successful footsteps;" it saves you a substantial amount of time and money. I will identify for you what is called the "10 second rule" in regards to your website, and how to keep the potential customers within your site. If your customers won't stay on your site because it's slow, or too difficult to read or understand, you've just lost money! First impressions are everything. So make it count!

## Section 2.1 Web Hosting

Choosing the company to host your website, you are making one of the most important decisions you can make regarding your online business. Would you just point to a name in the phone book and call someone up and offer them a chance to be your business partner? Of course not. But many people use much the same technique when selecting a web host. It's a mistake. Your web host is vital to the success of your site. It is the "engine" that is running your money making machine, and if the engine breaks down, your money maker grinds to a stop.

If your web host is not reliable, your website will not be either! If your web host is slow, your website will be slow too. And no one will wait forever for your page to load, even if your product is the best in the world.

You can't afford to do business with a web host that is down 20% of the time, is slow, or has no security. Do your research up front, and find a hosting company with a proven track record. It is worth the time and money to find a reliable partner. Don't try to save a few cents on a less reliable provider. What is saving a few cents going to mean to you when you are losing thousands of dollars each month to downtime? Are you going to care about a few extra dollars if the host's hardware crashes, losing all of your data including your website?

Take the time to do your homework first. Will you be building and designing your own website? There are lots of companies out there who will build it for you. In this scenario, you must remember that the cost will be high to have them do it entirely for you. Can you do it yourself? Yes, YOU CAN! Take the time to research companies that allow you to build the website yourself using their web-building software or have them give you a password that will allow you to access their online builder.

Whatever route you decide to take, Get to know the ins and outs of how your host operates, when they are available for technical support, etc. Find a reliable company to host your site, or it will cost you in money and headaches later on.

## Section 2.2 Domain Names

Why should you purchase your own domain name? Two reasons.

### NUMBER ONE

You want your name to reflect what you are selling. People would rather visit a descriptive website name that sounds "legitimate" than a site with a name like `www.xyzhost.com/joespages`. Wouldn't you? This second example is commonly referred to as a Sub-Domain name. It is the provider's name and then your business name after it. Think about how you want to represent yourself out there in the world, out there to your potential customers. You want them to remember your name the first time they see it.

### NUMBER TWO

If you have your own domain name, your web host cannot hold you hostage and after you move, your customers can still find you because you haven't changed your website URL.

So you need a domain name and you need one quickly. Domain names are going fast and people are buying them up so that they can resell them to someone who REALLY wants them later on. But don't panic if all of the ones you can think of are taken. You can register a domain name up to 67 characters in length, so you still can put together groups of words or phrases that will still generate traffic to your site.

When deciding on and registering a name, make sure you that register all iterations of your business name and product. You may just leave them empty or you can direct each of them to your one sales site, but the point is that others won't be able to use them if you have already registered them.

Another thing to remember is to try to get a .com domain name if possible. People don't remember .net or .org names as well, and you can lose visitors to your site which equates to money out of your pocket. So be creative if you need to be, and register a .com domain name. Use a memorable name, even if it is long, because it will provide a description of what you are trying to sell. If you just can't find a domain name ending in .com, then move to the second most popular suffix which is .net.

A different way to go with domain names is to use a catchy phrase even if it doesn't describe your business or product. Names like `www.dont-count-yourchickens.com` or something like that can draw people to your site, just because it is memorable and catchy. Names like these can also boost your search engine ratings!

Speaking of search engines, you can use other domain names that are loaded with keywords that describe your product to submit to search engines. Search engines love domains that have a lot of keywords in them and you can use these "alternate" domain names to direct people to your "real" domain/website. You can register domains with lots of keywords with and without hyphens, and I suggest you do so. Why? Search engines prefer hyphenated URLs and visitors prefer them without. So satisfy both by registering your keyword domain both ways. (I'll talk more about search engines in Section 5.)

Here are some ideas for keyword-rich domain names.

[www.crafts-dolls-art-supplies.com](http://www.crafts-dolls-art-supplies.com)

[www.craftsdolisartsupplies.com](http://www.craftsdolisartsupplies.com)

[www.dogs-cats-birds-pets-reptiles.com](http://www.dogs-cats-birds-pets-reptiles.com)

[www.dogscatsbirdspetsreptiles.com](http://www.dogscatsbirdspetsreptiles.com)

As you can see, it won't take you long to figure out a keyword-type URL to submit to search engines for your business.

You can also register your name as a URL. Not only can you use this for online businesses, but personal and family websites as well. And a great benefit of having a website with your name as the URL, is that anyone you ever give your URL to can find your site – forever!

Remember that registering a domain name only costs between \$6.95 on up to \$25 per year. It depends on entirely where you register the domain name at online, and there are lots of options out there. You are not required to actually put up a website on every name you reserve. You are merely holding the name for future use, or security purposes so someone else can't take it. In fact, you may want to register other names which have to do with other ideas you may wish to pursue in the future as well, just to ensure that you will have them when the time comes.

Another very important reason to get your own domain name, is that it will allow you to have a permanent email address. If you plan to do business on the Internet, you must invest in a permanent email address that you can use for the rest of your life.

You can get a permanent email address through an Internet Service Provider (ISP) for a small annual charge. This will forward all of your email, no matter where you are or what new address you are using. However, if you try to go through your ISP, you may waste time and money. If they close business or just decide to shut you down, you lose your email address and domain name forever.

Here are some companies that can help you to obtain a permanent email address:

**POBox.com, Net Forward, Net Identity, A.K.A.Mail**