INFOPRODUCTS
- The Stars of IM

Ready For The Close-Up

Infoproducts (informational products) are stars when it comes to Internet marketing. Whether you are selling ebooks, music files, or downloadable videos, infoproducts are perfect for the Internet marketer. Unlike physical products that have to be packaged and delivered via snail mail, infoproducts can exploit the digital nature of the Internet to create ultimate customer satisfaction and fewer headaches for you in record time.

Since the Internet lets you get up close and personal with people that might be halfway around the world, it creates a consumer expectation that sometimes is hard to meet, unless you're dealing with infoproducts. There's really nothing like the instant satisfaction your customer will get from receiving his/her infoproduct from your site, almost immediately after payment. It's a no fuss, no wait product that is definitely a crowd pleaser. It creates instant credibility, rapport, and makes consumers feel as if you're attending to them in an up-close and personal manner that meets their immediate needs.

The Many Benefits Of Infoproducts

Instant gratification is probably the biggest consumer benefit that is offered by selling infoproducts, but there are many more benefits when viewed from a business owner's perspective. Here are a few reasons why you will want to make sure you don't overlook the opportunity to make money online using infoproducts:

- **Low-Cost –** Online business owners that are just getting started don't want to spend too much money on something that they don't know will provide income or not. Infoproducts are low-cost to develop and have a very high return on the investment since millions can buy the product once it's done.

- **Requires No Physical Inventory -** If you are just starting your online business, infoproducts are a quick way to generate a large inventory of virtual products and to create loyal fans that keep coming back for more. You don't need room to store infoproducts either.

- **No Shipping Costs –** Since the infoproducts are delivered over the Internet in digital format, you don't have to pay for shipping or pass that cost on to your customers.

- **Versatile Formats –** You aren't limited to just offering ebooks; you can also offer videos or audio files over the Internet. Some Internet marketers even sell software scripts. As long as you know how to create the files or where to buy the rights to these types of products, you can start to create a downloadable library that fits your market niche.

- **They Can Serve As Free Advertising –** On top of already selling an item, that particular product can include links and advertisements for other products, whether they are your own or they are those of affiliate partners' products or services.

- **They Can Go Viral –** Infoproducts can also be promotional items that you give away for free to create a viral marketing program. Any infoproduct that goes viral can create unrivaled advertising and increase your bottom line significantly.

- **You Can Sell Them 24X7 –** Since there is no physical inventory or processes to deliver, you can sell them online any time of day or night. It's just a matter of setting up a system to deliver them for you while you cozily lie sleeping in your bed.

- **Always Something New –** Unlike a physical product that can take a huge amount of time to create a new product, infoproducts have a short development cycle. All it takes is a good theme and some ghostwriters, and you can churn out new products at least every month.

Low Start-Up Costs

What other product requires little to no investment to get started? As an online marketer, there are ways to use other people's infoproducts to generate income, even when you don't want to hire a ghostwriter or to write your own. Of course, the more original an infoproduct you offer, the more your customers will evaluate it as having a high value. That doesn't mean you can't offer affiliate infoproducts that offer a high commission. It just means that at some point in the game, you'll want to seriously consider writing your own infoproducts or hiring someone to write unique content for your infoproducts to really stand out from the crowd.

What will you need to get started, though? Basically, the same thing you'd need to get a website. You want a hosted account with unlimited email accounts. Initially, you can put in a system that delivers your infoproducts after a payment is made through PayPal. However, once you start to generate significant interest, it would be a good idea to really centralize the entire operation of your infoproduct offerings using a system like Delavo TM. This gives you the ability to create multiple payment processing options, as well as a way to create memberships. At the beginning, though, it is possible to get started with just a website, some infoproducts in a secure area, a PayPal account, and some autoresponders. Seeing that the cost to host a website is typically less than $10/month, and you can use affiliate partner offerings to start, you have one of the cheapest ways to get into business that has ever been created.

Requires No Physical Inventory

Other start-ups would require that you buy a set amount of physical inventory before you've even made a sale. Sometimes, a sale is never made and you're stuck trying to figure out where to store that junk or how to get rid of it. With digital infoproducts, you are dealing with virtual information that is easily copied. All you have to store is one original file in a safe place somewhere and a copy on your download server. Anytime someone wants to buy that product, it just gets copied to his/her computer, and you don't even have to pay for the paper or ink if it's an ebook.

One thing that you do have to be careful of when you use infoproducts is that the same benefit that enables them to be easily copied can also lead to digital theft. You want to make sure that all of your online files are stored in a secure area of your website where others cannot download them without proper identification. At first, you may want to start with a password-protected file to keep snoops out. That's only going to work for a short while as people will send the password via email to their friends, who will download the file without paying for it and use the stolen password to get in. Another way to secure your files is via a password-protected directory. The same potential problem above can also apply here. If you want to be sure that people won't steal the content you are selling, you will have to invest in some system that changes the passwords or authenticates your buyer in some other way. These are typically sold as scripts that you can add to your online site.

No Shipping Costs

Infoproducts do not require you to pay shipping. While it may seem like it's not really an issue since you can pass the cost onto the consumer, the fact is that charging shipping is just the start. Sending out a physical product takes time to package, and the envelopes and packaging material aren't free either. It doesn't mean that you can't offer to burn a CD now and then if a site requires your product to be physical, but there are more expenses involved with shipping physical products rather than selling a virtual infoproduct.

A physical product can take anywhere from 7 to 14 days to get to the recipient as well. It can get damaged along the way, making you have to replace it from your own pocket. With an infoproduct, delivery is instantaneous and automatic. You don't have to spend any time packaging or tracking shipping rates. There's very few ways that an infoproduct can be "broken" during delivery. However, there may be installation issues if you are selling software. Otherwise, you can specify the type of reader a person needs to open a PDF file and even offer a link to a free reader if they don't have the right version. You can have that information posted on-site or sent via autoresponder, along with the "thank you for your order" reply. This way, you never have to interact with the product after an order is placed. It's all done automatically.

Versatile Formats

It may seem that you can only offer ebooks as infoproducts, but that's far from the truth. Even if you chose to use the written word instead of video or music files as your medium, you would still have multiple options to create a variety of infoproducts from short reports to lengthy ebooks. Here are some ideas to get you started in finding a good format for your particular online business.

Digital Publishing

Now is one of the best times to get yourself published online. The advent of the Internet makes it easy for anyone to publish an ebook, articles, reports, and more. There are even free tools online that allow you to convert your Microsoft Word or other formats into readable-only PDFs. One great tool for digital publishing is OpenOffice. This is an open source version of a suite of products that are similar to the Microsoft Office suite of products. It is free to download off the Internet at http://www.openoffice.org.

OpenOffice Writer is the word processor that is included with OpenOffice. This product has an option to "Export as PDF..." making it super easy to take your files and make them into readable-only PDFs. Don't worry if you don't have a writer's way with words, either. The Internet makes it easy to outsource writing jobs to freelance professionals using Elance.com or Guru.com.

The written word is particularly versatile for infoproducts because it can be used to create multiple products. It is easy to find source copy that can be used to create your own products too if you buy Private Label Rights and Master Resell Rights. You can take any product you have the rights to change and either consolidate multiple pieces into an ebook of 50 to 100 pages or separate it out into multiple reports that can be sold separately. You can even use the material for newsletters on your website and for email marketing.

Why Not Offer A Package Deal?

If you do create a large library of different infoproducts using the written word, they are easy to offer as a package deal, creating a perception of high value for your customers. That way, you can offer to sell one ebook for $7-17 or a package deal that might include one ebook, 10 reports, and some copy with master resell rights for others to make money off your products too. Price it lower than each would be sold separately, but higher than just selling one product alone. That way, you can raise the total amount people will purchase on each transaction and increase your bottom line.

Video Formats

It's true that some people process information better in visual and audio format as compared to reading it. For those people, having a video set up can be a great alternative to an ebook. What's really nice about videos is that they are wonderful visual aides for instructional material and tutorials. If your niche market is DIY, videos make the perfect format because people can learn by seeing some other expert perform the same action via a video.

You do need some special equipment to create videos. You will need a camera recorder. However, even a simple webcam is sufficient for videos that you'll want to post to YouTube. You will also need to get familiar with video-editing techniques to make sure that the information and presentation is professional.

There are several ways to market videos. You can market them as segments of a larger course. You can sell them separately on their own. You can chop some segments that might pique people's interests and post those on YouTube with a link back to you to get people interested enough to visit your sales page for the full version.

If you are selling your videos via eBay and are using the auction feature, you will have to put the videos on CDs or DVDs to ship them in physical format. EBay has a policy whereby informational products cannot be virtual and be advertised in the auction area. However, you can use their classified section to list your virtual infoproducts there.

Videos are in a format that is viewed as being of higher value than ebooks or articles are. For that reason, you can charge more for this type of infoproduct. If you don't want to know how to create your own video, you can find some videos that are offered with Private Label Rights that you can offer to your customers. Or you can simply hire someone to create the videos for you under your direction.

One of the difficulties of using videos (despite their many positive characteristics) is that they aren't as easily brandable with your own links and affiliate offers. You can put up a screen at the beginning of the video that shows your URL and at the end of the video as well, but there is still much work to be done to figure out how to monetize a video as easily as a written ebook. In order to get around this problem, you can offer the video embedded into a web page that has some of these offers present. In that situation, a person doesn't download the video; they are directed to a secure page where they can view the video online. This makes it easier to secure the content of your videos and to offer links and other promotions on the same page.

If you use YouTube to promote some of your video infoproducts, be aware that when you post it, they will only give you one area to post a URL back to your site. Use it wisely.

Audio Files

Audio files aren't just about music or audio books. You can even use audio files to create short ring tones as accessories that people can use with their high-tech cell phones and gadgets. Don't limit the type of infoproduct you might offer just because you are more familiar with ebooks. Audio files are a whole different format, and a creative approach can lead to new ways to promote audio infoproducts that can create interest and bring in more income.

Like the video format, this also requires a little more technical expertise. You will want to know what types of audio files can be played with which kind of audio player. You will want to know what tools you need to record and what the limits are on copyrights for the sounds you may be considering using. Don't take songs from popular artists and try to create your own infoproducts from even snippets of these songs. You will most likely be sued for copyright infringement if you do try this.

Software and Scripts

Have a great idea for a software package or script that can help people solve some problem? Even if you don't know how to program a single line of code, you can get someone to build that package for you and then sell it to others. Rentacoder (now Freelancer.com) is a great place to look for software professionals who can make the dream of your software package come true. Once you have the package in hand, you can offer it to people online as an infoproduct. It is also easily delivered via automatic download, although it may be a little trickier to do than selling a video or ebook.

With software packages and scripts, it's important to let the customer know what platforms and operating system is required for the proper operation of the script. You might also have to provide some technical support for people who can't get the package or script to work. The payback, of course, is that software packages and scripts are highly popular on the Internet, where webmasters, online entrepreneurs, and everyday business people are looking for automatic solutions to their problems.

It doesn't even have to be complicated, as long as it resolves something that is causing issues and taking time away from additional job productivity. Once you get a few loyal customers, word-of-mouth travels very quickly for this type of infoproduct, and you can then go on to provide upgraded versions to keep the income flowing into your coffers for a very long time afterwards.

Don't forget to add some links back to your site within the program, either on the splash screen or in the "About Me" area. This will give customers a way to go from your software or script back to your site, where they might find additional products that can help them achieve what they want more easily.

Infoproducts As Advertising

As mentioned earlier, the easiest format to include advertising for other products and affiliate offers is the written word. Use URL links judiciously to pull people into your other offers that might be of interest to them. Don't abuse that by plastering a URL in every single paragraph, but on every few pages, you can add a URL to an offer or even just provide free information that might be of value to your customers.

A typical mistake that some Internet marketers make when they begin to put links back to their offers within the ebooks and reports they sell is that they don't create a redirect to that page. By creating a redirect page for every offer that you want to advertise, you can guarantee that, later on, if you want to change those offers for a good reason (like it's expired or people complain about it), then you can just change the code on the redirect page to send customers to a different offer. You never have to revise any of the links on any of your products this way. You only revise the redirect page, and everything else, whether sold years before or recently, is automatically updated. The Internet marketer doesn't have to fret that the previous versions of that ebook or report are now outdated. Instead, it will automatically update because the redirect page is what sends people to the link, not the actual link in the product.

Going Viral

Different infoproduct formats have different potentials for going viral. Going viral just means that the content has become so popular that it is spreading across the Internet like a virus. In this case, the virus isn't making anyone sick; instead, it's making you rich by giving you unbelievable exposure to a massive audience of people who are within your target demographic. All you have to do after that happens is to send out links back to your sales pages to generate a large number of sales in little time.

Videos are popular formats to exploit right now. Third-party video publishers like YouTube already have a large audience of people who want to explore new content in video format. Posting segments of a video there can be a great way to attract an instant audience.

In the same way, you can grab a lot of traffic from article marketing. That's a practice whereby you write numerous articles for article directories that already have a large audience. At the end, you are allowed to list a couple of links in your resource box, and that's where you can add links to your offers or to your website.

Even though you may have to put a small portion of your content out for free, the return on your investment is a highly targeted marketing practice that brings in a whole lot more traffic to your sites and offers.

There are some techniques to get you more exposure quickly. For article marketing, you should be familiar with Search Engine Optimization (SEO) techniques. By using keywords that are highly searched and not too competitively used by other marketers, you can get a higher ranking on the search engines for the content you add to a site. This, in turn, creates the possibility that more people will find your content via the major search engines, as well as the article directory in which you post.

Promotion of your online content is extremely important when you are marketing infoproducts or trying to instigate a viral marketing campaign. Luckily, on the Internet, promotion is not hard to do at all. Along with placing your content on multiple article directories (if you are doing article marketing), you can also go to highly rated blogs that allow comments and use them to drive traffic to that article by leaving a comment. Other ways to promote your content include adding it to social news sites and search engines like Digg.com and StumbleUpon (now mix.com) Lastly, if you are on social networking sites like Facebook or Twitter and have hundreds or thousands of followers or friends, be sure to let them know when you post a new article, video, or audio file so they can take a look at it and rate it. Be sure to ask them to rate the content so that you climb higher in the popularity ranking of that site. This will also increase the probability that your content will go viral.

Orders And Delivery 24X7

Why is New York so famous? It's the "city that never sleeps at night," that's why. Everyone knows that no matter what you want, no matter what time of day or night, there is someone selling that, and all you have to do is to show up and place your order. People demand in this age of instant gratification the ability to do just that no matter what they're buying, and infoproducts make that demand possible.

Infoproducts are ideal products in that the entire process of order taking and delivery can be automated, with no human intervention at all. Even when your customer is in Taiwan, halfway around the world, they can still log in, find your site, and download a copy of your latest ebook bestseller: "Tales Of An Insomniac." Your customer is happy they have something new to read, and you get to sleep soundly through it all.

When you first start to deliver infoproducts, you will want to design a system whereby you have a series of autoresponders and scripts taking orders and delivering the products to the registered email address given to you by the customer. If you don't know how to do that, then buy a solution that will allow you to do that from the start. If you are just getting started, taking one or two orders in the morning after they are made is not going to be a hassle for you, but it will be a hassle for your customer. Now, imagine that 100s of people ordered your product while you slept. Upon awakening, are you going to spend the entire day manually sending everyone his/her product? It may take a few days if that's the system you are thinking of implementing. In this day and age of automation, it's really not

necessary either. Just a small investment in a software package or script that can automate delivery is going to make your business more efficient, please the heck out of your customers, and give you fewer headaches down the line.

If you want to get off on the right foot, try a product like Delavo TM and set up a system that will be reliable whether you only have 10 customers or thousands of customers. Otherwise, you can get free scripts that will help you to automate your processes, but you may find that as your business grows, you will have to change or add new scripts to handle even more functions that require your immediate attention.

Creating Novelty And Excitement

Infoproducts are one of the easiest ways to create a sense of novelty and excitement about your product offerings. Unlike a physical product that might have to be manufactured in several different colors and have multiple manufacturing processes to just add a few new features, infoproducts can be as varied and as interesting as your imagination allows.

For instance, say you want to appeal to a demographic that likes to be challenged by word puzzles and the like. You can create online word puzzles that people can subscribe to as a member to access online. Or you can use these types of infoproducts to spur excitement for an ebook you've just written on: "Helping Your Kids Score Better On Standardized Tests." Either way, as you can see, there is no reason why you can't take a number of differently formatted infoproducts and use them to create online campaigns that are new and exciting for people to participate in and to eventually buy your online products.

In addition, you can take any subject that is of major interest to your readers and spin off any number of infoproducts from that one theme. Are your readers worried about how to survive this recession? Have a video collection showing urban gardening to save money on groceries. Sell an ebook on investing in tough economic times. Maybe they want to know how to capitalize on foreclosures in their area? As long as you have the imagination and the foresight to understand what information people want and will pay for, you can make a very good living creating and selling timely infoproducts online.

The sweetest part of this whole deal is that it doesn't require any inventory, no renting out space, no shipping costs either. The field of infoproducts is genuinely only limited by the imagination you use to help disseminate information that people want to know now.

Your Product Is Information

In conclusion, your product is information – not paper, not videos, not even ink. It's information, pure and simple. Once you understand that you are in the business of

selling information, that's when it will begin to click for you. You will realize that there is little difference between your business and a magazine or newspaper publisher, except that they have tons of upfront costs and you have very few. However, if you can think of yourself as a major publisher, you will then begin to understand some of the dynamics that make this type of selling online so profitable.

Ask yourself: "How do newspapers and magazines make their money?" It's through their subscribers. The bigger their subscription, the more money they make. Another way that these people make money is through their advertisements. Well, you are no different as an online publisher. You are going to make money through subscriptions and through advertisements. In this case, the subscribers will sign themselves up and be automatically added into a database system that tracks people when they join your site. You can do this easily with a blog that allows people to subscribe to your site, but a better way is to establish a membership site.

Membership sites are the ultimate in targeted marketing. You have people subscribing to your content and they are now a captive audience that you can solicit freely, as long as you own the site. If you try to just get subscribers from a third-party site like YouTube or a blog community like WordPress.com, you will end up at the mercy of the third-party site and their policies, which often include a "no solicitation" clause. Obviously, as an Internet marketer, you want to be able to solicit your audience freely. For that, you have to have your own site with your own content and just use the major sites as feeder streams back to your own online membership community.

Setting up a membership site is not difficult with the right software. It should be your goal to do this from the start. This way, you can begin to create multiple lists of specific demographics and people who you can offer similar products and services to right away. You can even gauge the popularity of a potential product by offering pre-sales to your membership at a discount. If the pre-sale reservations flop, odds are that the main sale won't be much to talk about either, and it might be best to can the entire project.

Once you get a hand of being an online publisher of information products, you will start to understand the power behind this model. It has one of the lowest entry costs of any online moneymaking model. It is super easy to implement. Promotion is available through large third-party sites with ready audiences who hunger for new content daily. They can be used to advertise your other products and services through careful link placement. They are quick to develop and to roll out to a mass audience. They cost nothing to ship and they create a sense of instant gratification in the consumer. As long as you have the proper systems in place to handle the large demand that comes with these types of products, it is the best model to start any entrepreneurial business activity online.