

Starting Your Own Yahoo Store

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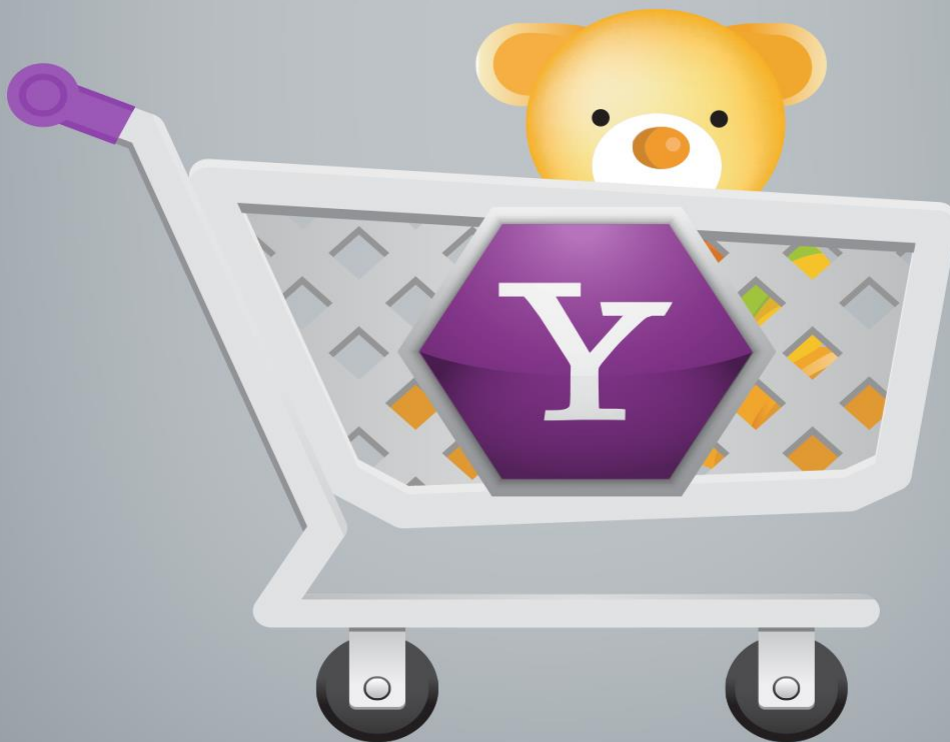


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INTRODUCTION: WHO IS USING A YAHOO STORE AND WHY YOU SHOULD TOO

Have you considered the key benefits of using a Yahoo! Store? Most people do not realize the true value that this one, simple tool can do for their business.

One of the most common reasons to turn to this type of ecommerce solution occurs when you want to take your offline business and start selling online. Imagine the local hardware store or the local print shop. While their business may mostly be through local community users, there could be a market for them in the online world, too. Because of the growing need for stores to turn to the web to increase their business, companies such as Yahoo! have come to the rescue with number of programs that make it very easy for the business to come on the web.

Why Yahoo? Many people would ask this question, but most will not ask who Yahoo is. You may use them on a daily basis for your search engine functions. You may visit their homepage to get your daily feed of the news. You may even turn to the organization to get your email. The fact is, the company is large and growing and it is well trusted. When you turn to Yahoo for your ecommerce needs, you get a quality product at an affordable rate.

You may be wondering why Yahoo is the company to turn to. The answer is actually quite simple. Other companies are having a lot of success using the ecommerce solutions that Yahoo! Store has to offer. You may know a few of these companies, for example:

- Oakland Raiders, a professional football team
- Simple Human
- Ben & Jerry's ice cream
- American Pearl
- Lance Armstrong Foundation
-

These big businesses and organizations are turning to this particular company for their web solutions. This is one reason that you should too.

One thing not to worry about is the cost. Yahoo! Store is highly affordable and provides you with a wealth of services for what you are investing in. If you have something to sell, it is always a good idea for you to choose an organization that is well known and is affordable because you are likely to get a product you can trust.

Check out these other reasons to turn to Yahoo! Store for your needs:

- You get virtually everything you need to put your business on the web. Everything is included in one tool to make the process that much easier for you.
- You get help along the way if you need it.
- Each step in the process is easy to do. You do not need any HTML experience, or any idea what web hosting is to get started. The product is very easy to use.
- You get the tools you need to start ranking in the web. This allows you to get your business online quickly and to start seeing a profit from it.

However, there are a few things to learn along the way, before you can start to invest in this product. You do want to ensure that Yahoo is the best option for you and that the company's product will work with your particular needs. Keep in mind that most people will have no problem achieving this goal.

The information in this book will teach you about Yahoo! Store and how to get your business online using it. Keep in mind that product packages, discounts and sales may be available frequently from Yahoo! Store. Therefore, you do want to check out the latest information available before you begin to invest or use the product. In general, Yahoo is all about offering the best price, for the best features available.

Like the other businesses that are using this product and ecommerce solution to get their business online, you can do so too.

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WHAT IS YAHOO STORE?

There are two important questions to learn the answers to from this chapter. What is Yahoo! Store and Is it right for me? If you can answer those, you know you are well on your way to investing in this company's product.

Here's a roundup of what Yahoo! Store has to offer to you in a nutshell:

- It provides you with the web hosting you need to get your business on the web.
- The company provides you with the software you need to build a catalog.
- It provides you with the marketing tools you need to get your business out in front of people who will buy from it.
- It provides the management tools to help you to oversee and monitor the success of your business.
- You also get access to something called Yahoo! Shopping. With this service, you get access to incredible amounts of traffic, which are just visitors and buyers to your site. Most sales come from this resource!

So, what does this all mean to the business owner who wants to get his or her business off the ground and online? In short, having a Yahoo! Store website allows you to do just that but in a simplistic way so that you are not overwhelmed by the process of getting your business up on the web.

In short, a Yahoo! Store website is a type of ecommerce platform. You are able to sell your products and services through this store as you would in the off line world. However, with Yahoo! Store, the company gives you more security and more dependable services and features that other companies may not. For example, the shopping cart system used is highly recommended because it is an easy tool to use by your customers and works well from the business owner's standpoint as well.

Although the Yahoo! Store is incredibly easy to use as a tool for getting your business online, some people do invest in having a professional web designer set up the site. This is an additional cost, and it will require a third party to do so, but the fact is, you do not have to use that service to reap the benefits of a Yahoo! Store.

TOP PRODUCTS

Yahoo! Stores do best when they sell a popular item that people go online to buy. For example, if you head online to purchase electronics, a Yahoo! Store is a great place to visit. You will find numerous products to choose from and you are likely going to find just what you need. Keep in mind that your store is just one of many that will be on the site, called the Yahoo! Mall.

Imagine if you will visiting your local mall. You walk in, walk around and walk into various stores. If you have come to the mall to purchase something specific, such as a pair of shoes, chances are good you may visit a few different stores. You want to see what your options are and you want to choose what works best for your particular needs. You may do a little bit of price shopping too.

The same is true when you visit the Yahoo! Mall. Keep in mind, there is not a website out there called the Yahoo! Mall. Rather, this term describes the numerous online stores that are selling products to consumers through the use of a Yahoo! Store. In other words, there is not going to be numerous retailers lining up with you to get each person's business. Your Yahoo! Store does stand-alone.

Check out Yahoo! Shopping. When you go to this website, you will find a wide range of stores. Each of these are using Yahoo! Store to operate. What is fantastic about this is that the Yahoo! Shopping location is a one stop shop for just about anything you can buy online. Do you have something different or interesting to offer? If so, this is the place to get it listed so that you can easily start taking advantage of the traffic pouring in to this website.

Keeping that in mind, you may be wondering what types of businesses do best in a Yahoo! Store. You will find hundreds of options, of course. For example, the Lance Armstrong Foundation is a very specific brand and their products are very limited. On the other hand, some companies do very well by offering a full line of unique items for people to buy. There is variety and there are a number of ways for you to use this store to benefit your business.

Again, those stores that sell products that people shop for online are going to do best with the Yahoo! Store. What do you shop for online?

- Clothing
- Shoes
- Electronics
- Books
- Health foods or supplements

- Jewelry
- Advertising packages and marketing services

This really is only a small portion of the types of stores found on Yahoo! Store. Remember that most businesses will do well here.

WILL YOUR BUSINESS WORK ONLINE?

Yahoo! Store works for many businesses. Ask the following questions about your business to determine if you should be using Yahoo! Store to get your business on the web.

- Does your business sell a product that can be sold over the web? A physical product will do best on the site.
- Do you have products that are in demand in the online marketplace? To find out, do some keyword research using some of the tools available. If people are searching for products like yours, getting them into your Yahoo! Store can be a profitable option.
- Do you want to start a drop ship business but you are not sure how to get it online? Yahoo! Store can work in this particular case, too.

If these things sound like things that you would like to do, then investing in a Yahoo! Store is a good place to start. It could be the best option for you regardless of what your goals are. If you are ever unsure about your business and Yahoo! Store, simply check out the company's website shopping.yahoo.com and check out your competition. If they are doing well online, your business is likely to do the same too.

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YAHOO! STORE MERCHANT SOLUTIONS

At the time of this writing, Yahoo! Store was the web host for 500 more ecommerce businesses than the competition. That says a lot since there are thousands of companies out there all trying to compete for your business.

When you invest in the Standard or the Professional plans offered by Yahoo! Store, you really get to take advantage of some amazing products and services. Check out some of the reasons why this ecommerce solution is the best bet.

STORE DESIGN BENEFITS

One of the first things you will encounter when it comes to Yahoo! Store is the actual development of your store. You need to get your store online. This process is excellent for providing you with an easy method. Later, we will take a look at some of the benefits of hiring a professional to help you with the design of your store, but before that, take a look at some of the plan features here.

- You are able to design a professional looking website. That speaks volumes for your business. To do this, you will be able to use a Yahoo! Store wizard tool. The store design tool is quite simply a step by step tool that takes you through the process one step at a time.
- In addition, each of the pages you create for your store are going to be search engine friendly. This means that the pages are set up in such a way to allow search engines to easily work through the site, page by page, and to rank it. Search engine optimization helps your website to be found by those searching for it or searching for similar websites.
- Let's say that you are interested in hiring someone else to help with the design. On the other hand, you may be interested in using other tools from other design programs. That is no problem since Yahoo! Store supports third party tools on the site.

Now that you have used the tool, you are able to get your storefront up. Now what?

GETTING YOUR PRODUCT CATALOG UP

The next of the benefits that comes from using Yahoo! Store is the product catalog. Yes, there are other companies out there that offer product catalogs and some may be a better option for you, but most businesses will do just fine with the use of Yahoo! Store.

Take a look at what you can expect. These are some of the benefits of the product catalog:

- You are able to manage up to 50,000 products on your site for sale. That is a sizable amount and most businesses will fit well within their range, even medium sized businesses.
- To get the products on the site, you will use a step by step wizard. Like the tool you used to set up the site, this tool takes over the process and makes it incredibly easy to use.
- For those who already have an existing storefront online, you can easily upload an existing product database to the system. That makes the process easy to benefit from, too.

The product catalog is like a virtual version of the a paper catalog. It inventories all of the products that you have for sale on your site. This catalog gives your website some organization as well as structure. When someone visits the site and is looking for a specific product, they can easily find it because your catalog has organized it properly.

SHOPPING CART AND CHECKOUT

Next, consider what happens when someone visits your websites and browses through the catalog. They see something they would like to buy and, what do they do? In the early days of the Internet and shopping online, people would simply call the company over the telephone and request the product they saw online. However, today, things are different.

Now, a shopping cart is used. A shopping cart is similar to the type you might find in a traditional grocery store. As your customer works through the store, he or she will find items they wish to purchase. They then add the item to their shopping cart. At this point, the item is tagged for their purchase. However, a shopping cart allows the customer to keep shopping. They can buy more than just one item.

Once they are done shopping at your site, they might have a few items in the shopping cart to purchase. That is when the checkout process occurs. During this process, the customer is able to verify their information, mailing address, shipping methods and payment options and the software

handles the transaction for them. You do not have to swipe a credit card nor figure out shipping charges. This is done for you.

With the Yahoo! Store, you are able to do this using a variety of the features found with the Yahoo! Store products. Here are some of the key benefits you may have with your Yahoo! Store plan:

- You will have single or multiple page checkout options.
- You are able to set up your own fields during the ordering process, which simplifies the process for your end. It also makes it easy for your customers to get through the checkout process.
- The system automatically calculates the shipping charges for you, based on the type of shipping you offer and the selection of the customer. It also handles sales tax where it is applicable.
- You can customize the layout of the pages. This allows you to personalize your business to make it stellar, or just the way that you want it to be.

There are some other nice features about the Yahoo! Store set up. For example, did you know that most people who are going to buy a product online will usually come back to the store two or three times (sometimes more) before they actually make the purchase? This is especially true about higher priced products such as electronics. One of the features of the Yahoo! Store is that you are able to set up the shopping cart to save the contents of the cart for up to two weeks after the customer places the item into it. Even if they close out their web browser, it will remember them when they come back.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Now that you have your website up and running, you cannot just sit back and wait for the magic to happen. Rather, you need to get started on the next step in the process: marketing. Most small business owners struggle with the concept of marketing because it seems so daunting. However, when you utilize the features found in Yahoo! Store, the process really does get easier.

Later in this book, we will provide some more information about marketing and how you can incorporate it into your plan, but first, let's mention a bit more about what Yahoo! Store can offer:

- It helps you with search engine ranking.
- It provides you with automatic submissions to search engines such as Yahoo! and Google.

- It helps you with local listing services
- It gives you some awesome discounts to use for marketing needs.

But, that is not all. It is not just about positioning yourself in the web that will help you to find people who will buy from you. Rather, you also need to stand out from the crowd. In other words, you want to make sure that your store has the means to do well. For this, Yahoo! Store offers some excellent benefits:

- They can help you to create and use coupons on the site.
- They will help you with discounts for pricing for particular timeframes or events.
- They can help you to offer gift certificates.
- They will help you with volume discounts you may wish to use.

There are several other options, too. The bottom line is that you will attract people to your Yahoo! Store using the tools that the company has available to you. Many of these tools are proven to be the most effective for nearly all who use them across the web, not just with Yahoo! Shopping.

WILL THIS WORK FOR YOU?

Many people ask this simple but all-important question. Is this what I need to do well online? Here is a checklist of the basics you need to start making money online.

1. You need to have your website up and functioning properly.
2. You need all of your products to be properly displayed on the website so that they are enticing for others to view.
3. You need the products you offer to be items that people want or items that you can somehow convince them they want (such as marketing services.)
4. You need to have a way for people to pick up items and purchase them, such as a shopping cart.
5. You need proper payment solutions so that customers can safely make payment to you.

6. You need to be able to market your business so that customers can find you online.
7. You need to entice them with special offers.
8. You need to be able to analyze and manage your online site and ecommerce.

The good news is that Yahoo! Store does all of this for you. You do not need to worry about having the right tools and resources from two, three or more companies, which is what happens when you try to set up a store like this through a new website.

As a merchant solution, this tool is highly effective, but do not forget that you have to do your part, too. By that, we mean:

- You need to have a professionally designed website and you need to invest in the services of a professional to design it if you cannot do so yourself.
- You have to actively participate in your business. These are not self-serve online businesses.
- You need to treat your online customers with just as much respect and attention as you do those who might walk into your local shop.

By taking the time to do this, you will garner not just one sale from a person who visits your Yahoo! Store, but you will also be able to get repeat sales from that customer over and over again. That makes it highly valuable and it makes repeat customers a profitable focus of your business.

Once you make the decision to use Yahoo! Store, the next logical step is to set it up and to start using it. However, it is also important to do this the right way.

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SETTING UP YOUR ECOMMERCE STORE

An ecommerce store will provide your offline store or your new store concept a place to grow and develop into a profitable opportunity for you. However, you do need to focus on what this type of store requires of you to set it up. If you were to set up a store through your own website, you would likely find yourself with countless obstacles and numerous third parties to work with.

With Yahoo! Store, this process is very simple. In this chapter, we are going to take you through the process of setting up your ecommerce store using Yahoo! Store.

DESIGN THE STORE FOR YOU

The first step in the process is to design the store. As mentioned previously, you have two main options here. You can hire someone to do the work for you or you can work on building your ecommerce store yourself. We recommend giving it a try if you have even just basic knowledge of what it takes.

Use the Wizard

The wizard provided by Yahoo! Store is very simplistic and provides step by step directions. Even those who have never attempted to set up a store will be able to work through this process fairly quickly.

The wizard does allow you to customize the design of your website. You can choose logos, graphics and color schemes that work for your particular needs. In short, these tools really do provide you with the options.

The nice benefit of using this method is that you are using a system that is designed to be used on Yahoo! Store. That means that the process is integrated, easy to do and most likely successful the first time out the door.

Third Party Tools

To make it easier on you, the company has designed Yahoo! Store to be flexible enough to allow you to use various other tools for designing your

website. Many people have experience with a particular program and want to keep using that program for their needs. That is no problem.

If you have your own design tool, you can use it easily. The most common option here is Dreamweaver, though most any type of website design tool will work with Yahoo! Store.

Have Someone Else Do It

The next option for you is to have a professional do the work for you. The website design process can be complex, especially if you are not sure what it takes to get your site up or you are unsure what you want on that site.

Some people simply want to hand over this task to a professional because their time is valuable. You may want to let a professional do the design work if you are looking for something highly customizable that will not work otherwise.

In all of these cases, the option is yours. You will find that the company is highly flexible in terms of allowing third party products to be used on the site or allowing companies to design the site for you.

LOAD YOUR PRODUCTS

Once the website is done and in place, the next step in the process is to load your products. You may have a list of products that you would like to add to the company site. You may not. If you do not, you will want to write these out and ensure that you have great pictures of the products, too. Accurate descriptions using search engine optimization are key to actually getting sales.

You will need to produce the names of your products as well as the descriptions for each one. If you do not have this type of list available, do take the time to design it with the following in mind:

- Use names that are descriptive.
- Do research and use keywords within the description.
- Keep the description readable and make sure that it sells your product. Do not overuse keywords in place of a well written, sales like product description.
- Do research the products and know the specifics. The more information you provide, the more likely the consumer is going to buy from you.
- However, keep descriptions as short as possible and to the point. Do not use too much text here as people do not like to read it.

- Do invest in professional looking photos. This is one of the elements that will make the most impressive decision for the consumer. They expect for you to have great pictures!

All of your details need to be placed into a spreadsheet. This spreadsheet will then be used by the wizard to upload the data to the website.

Once you have that list of descriptions, Yahoo! Store makes the process of getting that list of products online fairly easy. Like the design process, the product upload process also has a very easy to use wizard. This step by step wizard is designed to ask you questions, to locate your files or information and to upload it. It may take some time, depending on the amount of products you have.

Once you work through this process, it only takes a matter of time to open your doors, virtually.

SETTING UP PAYMENT METHODS

Now, you move on to the payment methods. Payment methods is a term used to describe the methods in which you will allow customers who visit your website, place their product in your cart and purchase it. There are several options out there, and you should research them for their costs. However, you do need to do a bit of set up work before you actually can get payment methods set up on Yahoo! Store.

First, you need to set up what is called a merchant account. A merchant account is a relationship you create with payment processors. Not just anyone can set up this type of account. You do need to be an official business operating in the United States (or elsewhere if allowed.) In addition, you will need to work through a series of set ups which will allow you to verify that you are a business operating where you say you are.

The fact is, in order to provide you with the ability to charge someone's credit card, for instance, these companies need to verify that you do have a real business and are trustworthy. The process is painless.

With Yahoo! Store, the recommendations are that you sign up for a merchant account through First Data or through PayPal. If you have a PayPal account already, this may be the simplest of options to start with.

Once you do this, you can then choose the types of payment methods you would like to accept. With Yahoo! Store, you can choose any or all of the following:

- American Express
- PayPal

- Visa
- Others, depending on your needs.

Once you select the choices you want, then you can start to tell the Yahoo! Store wizard what those decisions are. You will do this through a simple set up during the process.

If you do need to get a merchant account, the good news is that it is very easy to do. It should take you just a short amount of time to do so. It is recommended that you use both First Data and PayPal, but even just having one merchant account is enough.

If you already have an existing merchant account, the good news is that Yahoo! Store will provide you with the resources that you need to set your ecommerce store using that information. You need to ensure that this type of merchant account used is FDMS compatible. You may also need to contact Yahoo! Store's support to get your system set up.

From here, you just need to tell Yahoo! Store which of the payment methods you will allow your customers to pay with. This is as simple as completing a form within the wizard set up. It takes minutes. People often wonder which options to choose, though.

It is highly recommended that you give your customers as much freedom to choose here as is possible. The fact is, if someone tries to pay with one type of credit card and you do not support that credit card, the consumer may have no other choice than to turn to your competition to purchase their products. Do some research to find out what your competition is offering. Chances are good, you will want to offer numerous options for payment. Most are within the same range of cost anyway.

ESTABLISH SHIPPING METHODS

Now that your customers can select items from your store and they can pay for them, the next step in the set up process is to determine how they will receive those items. Anyone who has purchased anything online knows that some companies offer one or two shipping options while others offer numerous. In terms of what you should offer, determine what works for your customers.

In addition, keep in mind the type of products you are selling. If you are selling products such as computer parts, most people who buy these are trying to upgrade or fix a problem they have. They need fast shipping and will often pay a high price for it. On the other hand, if you are selling shoes, there may be less of a need for overnight delivery (though wedding products may be a different story!)

Like with all other steps in this process, Yahoo! Store really makes it easy for you to set up your payment needs with the company. All you need to do is to select which shipping carriers you would like to offer to your customers. Moreover, you will need to select your shipping rates.

When it comes to the shipping carriers, most companies will want to work with the most common and well-known companies, such as FedEx, USPS and UPS. You can visit the websites of each of those companies to learn more about their shipping options and how the process works for you in particular. Choose one or more of these companies based on what they can offer to you in costs and services. Most companies are fine with just using one company for shipping.

Now that you know which company you will ship with, consider what you will charge for shipping. When you visit a website to make a purchase, you will likely be charged a shipping and handling fee. What you may not realize is that fee is not necessarily just a charge from the shipping carrier, but also has other factors included such as the labor cost of the employees who are doing the shipping for you. You can wrap other costs into this cost, but there are several things to keep in mind.

Ensure that you select shipping rates that are based on:

- The product you are selling's weight
- The destination the product is traveling to (especially when servicing orders that are overseas)
- The order total (less shipping when the total is higher in some cases)
- Your costs for shipping that product to the client

If you are not sure where your shipping costs lie, take the time to factor in the profit you need to make as well as the costs of each step of the buying process from the maintenance of your website to the costs of paying the shipping carrier. You may also want to look towards your competitors to ensure that your costs are not too high or too far above where other competitors are.

Shipping charges are one of the biggest sticking points for many customers. For example, if you sell books on your new ecommerce site, the customer comes to the site, finds that you have the book they want but your shipping is expensive. They could spend ten minutes going to the local bookstore to get it instead. If your shipping is affordable, chances are good they will buy right then and there and avoid traveling to the actual bookstore.

The good news is that Yahoo! Store does a lot of this work for you. It will help you to determine what costs to charge. It also will automatically

calculate and then display the shipping costs to your customers when they arrive at their shopping cart for payment.

Setting up shipping is really a matter of making a few choices on the wizard set up process. It is likely that it will only take you a few minutes to complete.

ESTABLISH SALES TAX COSTS

The next step in the process of setting up your ecommerce website is to set up the sales tax. Sales tax does not need to be paid by all purchases online. However, sales tax does differ from one state to the next. This is why it becomes very important for you to take into consideration what your state requirements are.

In most cases, if you sell to someone within your own state, you will need to collect sales tax from that person. On the other hand, if you are operating out of a state that is different from the state of the customer, it becomes the customer's responsibility to report the sales tax, generally at the time of paying income taxes. Nevertheless, it is a good idea to check your state's tax code before moving forward.

You will then need to set up the sales tax rates. Sales tax rates may differ from one area to the next. Find out what the rate is from your state's tax authority and then input this information.

The good news, again, is that Yahoo! Store will help you with this process. The wizard will help you to set up the tax rates properly so that you do not have any problems with the Internal Revenue Service later. If you do have questions or concerns about this process, the company's support services are happy to help you.

In addition to this, the wizard allows you to enter this information in and then it will automatically calculate and then display the tax information in the customer's shopping cart. This makes the entire process simple.

Unlikely shipping charges, you should not alter this number to be anything but what it is legally supposed to be. You may need to revisit this topic again later if there are changes to your state's tax code that requires you to change the tax methods or collection amounts.

In general, this step also only takes a few minutes to complete. Once you do complete it, you usually do not have to think about it again, unless there is a change that needs to be made. Be accurate, here, as it is vital to the overall function of your site.

THAT IS IT!

The good news is that you can open for business after all of those steps are complete. Sure, there may be several steps here, but they are all simple and usually take just a handful of minutes to complete. The good news is that this last step is still very simple.

Once you work through the wizard provided by Yahoo! Store, you will find a verification process. You just need to verify the information you have included thus far. Do not worry. If you make a mistake, you can easily go back and change it.

Once you are sure that everything is correct, you just need to click on the button labeled "open for business." Really, that is all it takes. Once you do that, you will have your site go live on the Internet. You can immediately begin taking orders and passing out information about your business. You are ready to go!

NEED HELP?

Do you need help through this process? The good news is that it is available online. You can work through the entire set up process yourself in the middle of the night if you would like to. However, if you do run into problems, you can contact customer support or customer service right away.

Service for those who are members is available throughout the day and evening, though customer service hours are limited to business hours. You will get online customer service support 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. There is a link within your wizard set up process, and on the website, that will help you to get help.

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CHOOSING THE RIGHT ECOMMERCE PLAN

Thus far, you have seen how simple it can be for you to set up your ecommerce site using Yahoo! Store. However, what you may not realize is that setting up this site is not as clear-cut. In other words, you do have to make some decisions about what options are available to you.

Thus far in this book, we have provided information about how to set up the ecommerce site and some of the benefits and features of the plans. However, the information may be different from one plan to the next. The company still provides these highly easy to use wizards and tools for the entire process, but some plans offer more than others do.

Here we will discuss the variations in the various plans offered by Yahoo! Store. Keep in mind that no prices are included since these do change from time to time. In addition, the company may change what each plan offers at any time, too. Therefore, always verify this information on the website before you actually start using it.

CHECK THE DIFFERENCES

In this portion of the book, we will compare the three plans that Yahoo! Store offers. Their plans include:

- Starter Plan
- Standard Plan
- Professional Plan

The company charges you a monthly rate. This monthly rate is based on the services that you choose to have access to and to use to set up and maintain your ecommerce business. Here, let's talk about what you need and what you should consider for your business.

- **Set Up Fees**
There is a set up fee for each of the plans. This fee is the same throughout.

- **Transaction Fee**
This fee is a percentage of the purchases made. The starter plan offers the highest price. The larger the company is, the more customers it is likely to get and therefore the lower the per-transaction cost needs to be.
- **Recommended Plan**
Here, Yahoo! Store gives you a bit of a recommendation based on the amount of sales volume you expect. However, keep in mind that this is not all you should take into consideration. You also need to factor in the overall services you need. If you have a business making less than \$18,000 per month, the starter plan may be a good choice. If your business is making up to \$68,000 per month, Yahoo! Store suggests the standard plan. For those businesses at a higher level of monthly income, the professional level may be the best choice.
- **Maximum Products**
Across the board, this number does not change. When you work with Yahoo! Store, you are able to sell 50,000 products or less, no matter what size plan that you have. If your business has more than this, consider other options or consider setting up more than one Yahoo! Store based on the types of products you have.

All of the service plans provide you with the following features:

- Third party tools can be used on the site to build your website and ecommerce website.
- All allow you to upload product data to your website, as discussed earlier.
- All plans allow you to import a product database that you may have from another resource, such as another website that you have been using. Many people make the switch to a Yahoo! Store because of its sure ability to work so well for you.
- All customers have access to the ability to customize their checkout page. This is a nice feature because you do not have to worry about your business looking too similar to another, which could cause the customer concern.
- All plans do allow you to set up an affiliate program. An affiliate program occurs when you provide a product but you have other people help you to sell that product, generally for a commission or flat fee. Affiliate programs are a great way for you to get your new product out into the Internet because people want to do business in this way.

- All plans provide you with the ability to obtain a merchant account so that you can process credit card orders on your website. Never sign up with a company that does not provide this. It is a must for strong sales online.
- PayPal Express Checkout is another feature that all plans will benefit from. This allows people to feel more comfortable doing business with you because they do not supply you with their credit card information but rather supply it to PayPal directly.
- All plans do allow you to select other payment methods including money orders, PO's and COD's, though some businesses tend not to accept some of these.
- All plans do offer inventory management tools. This allows you to avoid overselling a product that you simply do not have available to sell. That is a key factor for many people when it comes to managing their store online.

So, where do the plans differ? They do a few ways:

- **Cross Selling**
Cross selling is the process of suggesting other items for sale on your site that may actually benefit the buyer. This tool automatically suggests other products to the customer based on what they have already put into their cart. If they choose one Dr. Seuss Book, for example, the system may suggest another. This service is only offered through the standard and the professional plan. It is recommended, though, since it will raise your average order total.
- **Gift Certificates**
Gift certificates are not available through the starter plan, but they are available on both other plans. If you plan to offer gift certificates, this is important but for many online businesses, this is not a necessary feature.
- **Real Time Integration**
The starter plan does not provide for real time integration with the use of backend systems. What this means is quite simply that the software program will go and check the available inventory you have once the customer places this in their cart. It is recommended that you have this feature if you are selling products that continuously run out or have a very limited quantity.
- **Export Orders to UPS WorldShip**
This feature, which is not available in the starter plan, really is an excellent one for larger businesses who will have numerous orders on a daily basis. This product allows for you to batch send products to UPS WorldShip to help minimize your costs and to speed up your processing time.

As you can see, there is not a lot of difference between the standard and the professional plan in terms of what they offer. However, if you believe that you will have \$68,000 or more in transactions per month, upgrading to the higher cost of the professional plan is well worth the investment. It will decrease the amount of money you spend per month on the monthly fees.

Keep in mind that products and services do change often. You do need to verify this information as accurate before agreeing to the program. Of course, you can always contact customer support to find out more information about the plans as well as get guidance regarding the current offerings.

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MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS

You have done the hard work of getting your ecommerce website up and running. Take a deep breath because you have done the hard part. The next part of the process revolves around marketing that business.

Marketing is a term used to describe the process of telling others about your business. Free and paid for marketing is necessarily in almost every business because it provides others with a way to find out whom you are and what you have to offer them. If you do not stand up and scream who you are, no one will find you.

The good news is that Yahoo! Store does a lot of that for you and with you. In this chapter, we are going to look at the ways that Yahoo! Store excels in providing its members with the ability to communicate their message to the world.

SEARCH ENGINE AID

One of the first, and potentially one of the most important, first steps for a business is to get into the search engines. Here is how a search engine works:

- A person is looking for something. They enter words into a search engine such as Google or Yahoo! in the hopes of finding a specific website or a website that offers them what they need.
- The search engine has already made a file that contains some of the most important words associated with any site that their "web spiders" have crawled through. In other words, once your site has been indexed by the search engine, the search engine creates a file that it can access later.
- When that person types in words that are associated with your website, the search engine pulls open that file and then presents the information in a search engine results page to the potential customer.

Your job is to show the search engine the real importance of your website so that when someone with your keyword or topic visits that search engine, he or she will get a search engine results page that includes a link

to your site. Most people who are shopping online will do this type of search for products they are hoping to buy. The better job you do of showing the value you add to the masses, the more likely it is that your website link will show up on that results page.

So, how does Yahoo! Store help you with this process? The first thing that the company does is to provide you with automatic submission of your site to Yahoo! Search and to Google. As the two largest and most powerful search engines, there is little doubt that you need to be listed in these services. This process only alerts Google and Yahoo! Search to your website. It does not favor the results any. It simply means that the website will be indexed.

Free Search Engine Marketing

Free search engine marketing is designed to provide your business with some basic resources to get it online. The submission to the two search engines is a part of this service offered by Yahoo! Store.

In addition to this, the company also provides you with a free basic listing in Yahoo! Local Search. If you have ever done a search online and have come across local listings for stores near you, that is what Yahoo! Local Search is. This is an important feature for anyone who is getting their business online but wants to draw people in to their actual storefront as well.

For example, perhaps you are an auto parts store. While you want to sell some of your products through the Internet, you are still operating a local store. When a person wants to buy a brake pad for their car, they may search for "brake pad New York City." In doing that, they are looking specifically for a local company. If you are operating in that city, your link will come up in the local search. This is a very handy service.

In addition to this, you can pay a fee and have a featured listing within Yahoo! Local Search. This feature is simply a higher ranking in the search engine rankings within the local search feature. Those that have a featured listing are listed before those that do not. Simply, you are likely the place that customers will call first if you are listed first.

Search Engine Pages

Another of the free search engine marketing tools offered by Yahoo! Store is the aid they provide to you in creating search engine friendly pages. By this, the company is talking about building in search engine optimization and creating pages based on good linking structure. A variety of these factors will help you to improve your overall ranking in the search engines.

If you do not have any experience with search engine optimization, it is a good idea to take some time to learn about it. It will help you incredibly throughout the building of your online business.

They Will Teach You

Here is another reason why you should love this company and the service that it provides to you. They provide you with what is called Sales and Marketing Education Center. This is a free service provided to you that allows you to learn the ins and outs of search engine optimization. You will learn things like:

- How to get more visitors to your ecommerce website
- How to build search engine rankings for your website
- How to use paid search (something we will mention below)
- How to take advantage of affiliate marketing
- How to merchandise products on the site
- Plus much more

This all inclusive training and informational guide is something you will come back to repeatedly to learn more. However, it only provides you with information about Yahoo! Store. You should still explore other methods of search engine optimization before you move on to other methods of marketing your business.

These free services are well worth the investment alone, if you do invest in the Yahoo! Store plans. Keep in mind, though, that paid marketing can also be highly helpful.

PAID SEARCH MARKETING TOOLS

Sometimes, you do have to pay for marketing when it comes to online marketing. Just like paying a company to create the sign over your actual building in your community, you need to pay others online to get your message out and to attract visitors to you.

Yahoo! Store encourages this, and they should. The fact is, paid search engine marketing resources can definitely help you to improve the way your store functions and improve the overall results you get. To get you started, the company does offer some nice bonuses.

The first is Yahoo! Search Marketing. The company provides you with a \$100 credit, unless you already have a current Yahoo! Search Marketing advertiser account. These fee funds are designed to allow you to choose specific keywords to rank with and then to be listed on those search engine results pages at a high level.

Paid marketing like this may place your ad on other pages or it may increase your page ranking in the search engine results pages. The

bottom line is that this product does provide you with the ability to get into the face of your customers.

In addition to providing you with a credit for Yahoo! Search Marketing, the company also provides you with a \$50 Google AdWords credit. This works in the same way, but is designed specifically for Google instead. This too is not available to those who are current Google Advertisers.

Do you need these services? In most cases, they are a nice add on bonus and will definitely help you to get noticed. Take advantage of the free services and then decide if you want to add more later on.

In addition, you have access to the Yahoo! Keyword Generator. This tool is an excellent one to help you with choosing the right keywords to add to your website as well as to help you with choosing keywords for Yahoo! Search Marketing and Google AdWords.

This generator tool allows you to download the list of keywords that you learn about, URLs and the product names as well, and then you can simply cut and paste that information into the paid search marketing campaigns. It is that easy to use this tool.

SHOPPING PORTALS

As an ecommerce business, you need to get your website in front of other people. Specifically you are looking for those people who are interested in buying what you have to offer. This is why it is important to get listings on important shopping portals, including Yahoo! Shopping.

As mentioned earlier, creating your Yahoo! Store does not automatically get you listed in the Yahoo! Shopping network. Rather, you will need to list your products with this and other sites yourself. The most popular of these includes:

- Yahoo! Shopping (the company provides you with a 20 percent off default minimum bid)
- Next Tag (Yahoo! Store provides you with a \$50 credit towards this purchase to help you to get started.)
- Shopping.com (An all-important site, you get one month free here with your Yahoo! Store account.)
- Shopzilla (With this account, you get a \$50 credit with your Yahoo! Store.)

These sites allow you to get your products listed on them. These are some of the most popular shopping destinations associated with the Internet. People go to these sites to get what they need.

OTHER TOOLS

Other marketing tools offered by the company, of which you should take advantage of, include the following:

- **A Store Grand Opening Email**
This may sound simplistic, but it is one of the signature marketing tools you can use when you open your Yahoo! Store. You get to announce your store to family, friends and others with a professional email that will automatically match your store's design. You can add a coupon to entice visitors and feature products in the email.
- **Email Marketing**
Email marketing allows you to promote your products to your customers after they have signed up at your site to receive emails from you. Yahoo! Store does give you a tool to do this with called Campaigner. You get this feature for a low price on a monthly basis.
- **Newsletter Marketing**
Newsletter marketing allows you to send periodic emails to customers regarding the products you are selling, sales or other information to get the customer back to the site. You do this through email. It is also a part of the Campaigner product line and well worth the investment.

Of course, you do have the ability to promote your business online and offline on your own. You can pay for banner ads, distribute business cards, use word of mouth advertising and even market your online business in your offline store. However, the features offered here are some of the most important for online success.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF ANALYSIS

When it comes to building a successful business online, you need to know what is happening within that business at any time. Yahoo! Store provides you with what they call in depth analysis. As your business is running, you will want to know things such as who is visiting and what they are looking at. This service is available, but you have to know how to use it.

With it, you can:

- Track the sales that you get from your site. This includes seeing where your revenue is coming from, the number of items you are selling and the number of orders you are taking. This is helpful to pinpoint trends.
- You can use it to identify how the traffic is coming in to your site. You do this through what is called referrers. This includes affiliates who may be helping you to gain business to your site.
- Page views is also important. Here, you will learn how many people visited the page so that you can see which pages are doing the best for you.

This is basic information, but it is information that you need to have in order to do well on the web. You can then tailor your marketing around the trends you find.

YAHOO! WEB ANALYTICS

If you do decide to go with the standard or the professional plan, Yahoo! Store will provide you with Yahoo! Web Analytics. This is a much more detailed tool for you to use in tracking the success of your business. With this tool, you will simply be able to page through results pages that tell you what is happening with your site, including the following information:

- You are able to see real time reports, as they happen, and key performance information that will tell you what is happening with your site at any time.
- Use it to help determine what your top sellers are and how often the products on your site are being viewed.
- Make changes to your site so that you can get more shoppers to buy from you. You can do this by learn how and why customers do not complete their order and to determine what pages make shoppers leave.
- You can also learn how visitors who get to your site are using it. This way, you can tailor the design and appeal of the site to better serve their needs. For example, you can track page views, first time visitors, return visitors, find out how they found your website, what they did when they arrived at your site and so on.

As you can see, these tools are highly effective in providing you with information in regards to how well your site is doing. However, you have to take the time to use them in order for them to work. The good news is that most of these tools are very simplistic to use.

By tracking this information, you can go back into your wizard for setting up your site and make changes to it that you see fit. For example, you might notice that customers are visiting one page and leaving the site from there frequently. You can improve that page to make it more alluring or you may want to change the web pages that point to that page.

It is recommended that you do wait a few weeks after getting your site up to start using these tools so that you can see a clear description of what is happening with the site. Nevertheless, use them. They are going to give you incredibly important information that you will benefit from.

CONCLUSION

Yahoo! Store provides you with information, resources and tools to help you to get your business on the web. Online ecommerce sites continue to grow by leaps and bounds and this is one of the easiest ways for you to get your site on the web.

It is true that you can hire a professional to build a website for you and then count on that professional to provide you with the information you need to get online. They can build you a site, help you to get your products on it and even market it. However, one thing that you do want to focus on is the benefit of being associated with Yahoo!

Look at the features and benefits that Yahoo! Store offers to you. What you will find is that these features and discounts are well worth the investment all to themselves. In addition, keep in mind that the company's pricing is often very low compared to what you may pay for other services.

Look at the ecommerce packages currently available through Yahoo! Store. When you get there, consider the options available and how well they will work for you. One thing many people miss is the goal of creating a Yahoo! Store using a professional company. Even Yahoo! Store itself offers resources to help you to find a web designer that is affiliated with the company. You can and should do this, but what you should not do is avoid setting your website up through this service. The fact is, you will save money and have a better final product.

Many people who use Yahoo! Store have been able to get their businesses off the ground faster and usually with better long-term benefits. This is one of the key benefits to using this service. If you have yet to determine if this is the right option for you, just check out the other clients who are using this service. You will quickly see that the right fit is the easy one.

Set up your business with Yahoo! Store. You will be able to start taking orders as soon as you hit that open for business button!