The Best Marketing Strategies!

Advanced Marketing For Big Time Results

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Chapter 1
Right Into The Strategies

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

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

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

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

Running with the giants

There are top competitors in every industry. Microsoft dominates software, Google rules search engine technology, McDonalds is the emperor of fast food. However, the Internet is a level playing field, and your company can appear as big and established as you want it to. You only need a fraction of a percentage of the online pie to enjoy business success.

Search engine placement is still the best way to gain exposure for your Internet business. In the beginning of the Internet, the practice of keyword stuffing—placing irrelevant or excessive keywords on web pages to achieve a higher search engine

rank—was prevalent. Today, though, search engine technology is far more sophisticated, and there is no "magic" formula to ascend the ranks.

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

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

- Strive to provide visitors with real, useful, and interesting information that makes your website not only a great selling tool, but a great place to visit and spend some time.
- Plant hooks on your pages for the search engines that are related to the information on each page.
- Build buzz and word-of-mouth for your business using pay-per-click advertising and other relevant avenues for your target markets.

Getting started

All you need is a computer and a dream

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

The first consideration should be your own interests and passions. If you are not passionate about your products or services, your business will not succeed. It's as simple as that. You must be convinced beyond doubt that your product or service is worthwhile, exciting, effective, and something other people will want or need.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Marketing Tips

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

OTO (One Time Offer) Marketing

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

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

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

Some tips to effective OTO marketing:

- One-time-offer marketing strategies are becoming increasingly popular in online businesses. As more companies take advantage of this technique, fewer consumers will be interested. You should strive to find ways to make your OTO offer unique or give it an original spin, to make it stand out from all the other offers out there.
- Bear in mind that you will likely have to deal with an increase in customer support issues as you implement your OTO marketing campaign. Even if your website contains clear, precise instructions for obtaining your freebie, some

of your visitors may still have trouble finding the right link or logo to click. If they don't see it, they will assume you're asking them to pay for something that was offered for free. Exercise patience and point them in the right direction, and you will earn their business.

- Make sure you are able to accept a high volume of payments. With any Internet business, it is a good idea to have several payment options for your customers. This helps you by not overloading your payment processors with a sharp increase in sales due to an OTO program. Some third-party merchant account services, such as PayPal, will often red-flag accounts that have a sudden increase in incoming funds, and you may be frozen from your account while the merchant verifies that you aren't running a scam. Having other payment options in place to cover this possibility will ensure you're still able to do business.

- A subscriber list is one of the best ways to announce an OTO campaign. If you don't already have a subscriber list, it is a good idea to build one before you bring out your OTO program. However, building a solid subscriber list for your newsletter or website takes time. If you don't have the time to get a subscriber list, but you still want to offer your OTO, you could make the announcement about your program through other partners with the promise to reciprocate for one of their promotions at a later date.

- An increase in traffic is good for your business—but it can be bad for your servers. If your product is downloadable, the available bandwidth for your website should also be a consideration. Check with your web service provider and make sure you determine how much bandwidth you'll require ahead of time. If you'll need more bandwidth than your server allows, look into an inexpensive file transfer solution such as www.fileburst.com.

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

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

A Few Good Markets

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

Have you considered these niche markets?

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

- Baby boomers. Everyone knows there are millions of baby boomers in the United States alone. Products and services that appeal to this generation can enjoy enormous success. The baby boom generation is fast approaching retirement age, so products and services that deal with investment, retirement options, and later lifestyle changes are hot topics online today.

Free publicity

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

When it comes to writing press releases, you can't simply write what you would for your website. The people who read press releases are journalists and reporters. They are looking for stories that will sell newspapers or magazines, or get people to tune in to their radio or television show. You will want to make your product or service compelling to reporters and journalists.

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

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

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

Visit the tips page of PRWebs.com here for more tips on writing press releases and a template: http://www.prweb.com/pressreleasetips.php

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

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

Not quite free publicity

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

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

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

Ezine advertising

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

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

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

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

How do you find these ezines? Enter "ezine" or "ezine directory" in your favorite search engine along with your topic, and you will turn up thousands (or millions) of hits. You can also subscribe to a paid ezine database like www.web-source.net for access to an enormous listing of ezines with constantly updated information about subscription bases, advertising rates, and distribution demographics.

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

Pay-per-click programs

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

Programs similar to pay-per-click advertising include:

- Pay-per-lead: These programs list your website on other sites your potential customers may visit. If your products are services interest them, they can fill out a voluntary registration form, download a free product, or enter a contest that will bring them to your website.
- Pay-per-sales: This type of program is also referred to as an affiliate program (you will find more information on affiliate programs further in this chapter). Other websites advertise your products or services for you in exchange for a small commission, according to the predetermined terms you set. Find out more about affiliates at www.clickaffiliate.com
- Banner ads: Banner ads are those flashy, eye-catching square or rectangular graphics you have probably seen on several websites. Banner ads usually operate on a pay-per-click basis: you pay a preset amount to the hosting website each time a visitor clicks on your banner.

For more information on banner ads, visit:

http://www.addynamix.com
http://www.valueclick.com
http://www.i-clicks.net

Opt-in email marketing

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

What is opt-in email marketing? Simply put, you purchase a targeted list of email addresses and start sending them advertisements. Sounds like spam, right? Actually, the addresses you receive with an opt-in list purchase are people who

have expressed interest in the types of products or service you provide, and have agreed to receive advertising. With an opt-in list, you are already a step ahead of the marketing game.

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

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

Autoresponders

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

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

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

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

Basically, there are two types of autoresponders:

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

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

Some of the features of sequential autoresponders include:

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

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

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

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

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

For more information about autoresponders, check out:

Pay-per-click strategies

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

Here's how PPC marketing works: most programs require you to put a certain amount of money into an "account." You then bid on certain keywords associated with your product or service. For example, if you were selling ebook creation software, you might choose *ebook creator, ebook compiler, ebook software, ebook maker,* and simply *ebook* as some of your keywords. Keep in mind, though, that other PPC advertisers are bidding on the same keywords.

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

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

After you have come up with a list of targeted keywords, experiment with them. Visit various search engines and enter your keywords to see what kind of results

they generate. Through experimental searches, you can also learn what your competitors are bidding on their keywords and adjust your bids accordingly.

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

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

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

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

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

Which headline would you be more likely to click on?

Ebook Software for Sale

or…

Create Great-Looking Ebooks in Just Minutes

Most people would choose the second headline over the first.

After your headline is your body text, which is limited to just a few words or sentences. Once again, your text should be brief, succinct, and to the point. Don't offer freebies here; some search engine users are simply searching for free offers, and won't be interested in buying your product or service no matter how compelling it is. Again, make sure that your text demands attention. Rather than:

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

Try something like this:

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

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

Of course, you can also take advantage of multiple pay-per-click advertising programs in order to maximize your exposure. A good strategy is to sign up for PPC programs through several search engines and monitor your results. When you have determined which programs are netting the most visitors and sales conversions, simply discontinue the ones that aren't working.

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

http://adwords.google.com
http://www.overture.com
http://www.Findwhat.com
http://www.7search.com
http://www.Win4win.com
http://www.Bay9.com

Affiliate strategies

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

Many Internet marketers enroll in a number of affiliate programs, because in most cases they only earn a few cents per click for each program. Enrolling in carefully selected affiliate programs that complement but do not compete with your business can be a good way to make money online.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 2
The Startup Phase

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

Free instant Internet business: Just add blog

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

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

What in the world is a blog? The word is short for "web log", and refers to a website that is set up like an online journal: you can "post" to your blog as often as you want, and you can add pictures, sound, and graphics to your posts. Blogs are one of the most interactive media forms available online—with the comments feature, visitors can leave notes on your blog to let you know what they like or dislike about your products or services, and what they would like to see in the future.

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

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

- Go to www.blogger.com
- Click on the orange "Create Your Blog Now" link near the bottom of the page.
- Enter the requested information. You will be asked to select a user name, password, display name, and a valid e-mail address. Choose your display name with care, as it will often be the first thing Internet users see. Your display name will be included at the end of every post you make.
- Click on "Continue"
- Enter a title and an address for your blog. The title of your blog can be your company name, or some creative variation of the products or services you provide. The address, or URL, should be something that is easy for people to remember and type in. The URL for your blog will be http://youraddress.blogspot.com.
- Select a template design for your blog. Blogger provides a variety of different blog styles, and you can change your template at any time down the road.
- Click on "Continue"

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

When you set up your blog, you will be given the option to add a bit of extra earning potential to your new website by signing up for the Google AdSense program. AdSense is a snippet of HTML code you can add to your blog template that will automatically generate a series of brief advertisements displayed on your blog pages. When visitors click these links, you will earn a few cents for each click.

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

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

- Submit your blog information to search engine directories, just like a normal website.
- List your blog on specialized blog directories. If you visit www.PingoMatic.com, you can submit simultaneously to all the major blog directories.
- Visit other blogs and leave thoughtful comments in their comments section. Every blog you comment on creates another link to your own blog and gets your name out there. However, keep the cardinal rule of Internet marketing in mind: thou shalt not spam! Leaving comments that simply say "visit my blog here!" is rude, unprofessional, and will turn the blogosphere against you rather quickly.

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

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

Website words of wisdom

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

The best websites are simple, clear, and easy to move around. If your visitors can't find what they came for with a few clicks, they will look elsewhere. Confusing graphics, fancy plug-ins, Flash animation, and automated music or sound files are often more distracting than impressing. You want your website to get straight to the point: "I have a great product or service that you should be interested in. Here's what it will do for you, and here is how to buy it."

Keep your visitors from clicking elsewhere with their credit cards

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

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

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

- Title: The title of your website is the text that appears in the top bar of the browser window. Your title will be indexed by search engines first, and it will be the first thing potential visitors see when your website appears in a search. The title should contain your most important keyword or keywords, along with the name of your company if applicable. For example, if your business name is "Instant E-book" and you sell e-book software, your title might be: "Instant E-book: Easy, affordable e-book software and e-book solutions."
- Description: The description is the short blurb search engines will display along with your hot-linked title. If your pages do not specify a description in the meta tags or site building software, the search engine will simply display the first few lines of text on your page after the title. Specifying your description yourself allows you a better chance to rise in search engine rank and gain visitors. Your description should be short (less than 200 characters) and include your most important keywords along with a compelling explanation of your products or services.
- Keywords: Your keywords are what search engine "spiders" (programs that "crawl the web" looking for and indexing pages) use to determine when your website will be included in its results. Make strategic use of targeted keywords in your title, description, and page text to increase your chances of high search engine rankings.
- Text: This refers to the words that actually appear on your website. Previously, search engines lent more weight to meta-tags (which are invisible to the casual Internet user), but practices like keyword stuffing and irrelevant keyword usage have led to more emphasis being placed on visible page text. Your website text should be sensible and informative, and contain "sprinkled" keywords (rather than stuffed) that make sense within the context of your wordage. The most important text on your website should appear near the top of the page, so visitors don't have to scroll down to view it.

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

http://www.jimtools.com

http://www.goodkeywords.com

Budgeting basics

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

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

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

If you need professional assistance in designing your website or crafting your copy, hiring a freelance professional is your best bet. Keep in mind that with freelance writers and designers, you get what you pay for. If the cost for the service is cheap,

the service itself will likely be cheap as well. Be sure to ask for samples or portfolios before hiring a freelancer. Most freelancers work at competitive rates as well. The good news is that once you pay a freelancer to design your website or write your copy, the end result is yours—the freelance fee is a one-time investment that will remain profitable for you.

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

- *E-mail marketing:* Hiring an Internet marketing company or buying a list of opt-in leads can prove profitable and cost-effective. However, launching a successful e-mail marketing campaign is not a simple process. First, you must investigate e-mail marketing companies thoroughly. There are many of them out there, and prices vary widely. Some are less than ethical, and may provide you with unqualified leads—which will get you in trouble for spamming. Second, you must provide the marketing company with exact profiles of your target demographics in order to ensure you receive as many qualified leads as possible. Third, the marketing letter you write must be compelling to entice people to your website. And finally, your website itself must be in top form to convert all those visitors to buyers. E-mail marketing is not a complete solution; rather, it is a component of an overall effective marketing plan.
- *Banner ads:* Placing banner ads for your website can be effective—but again, there are many factors to consider here. There are many websites that offer banner advertising space, but force you to share space and compete with other websites offering similar products or services. The most effective banner ad placement comes with an exclusivity guarantee: yours should be the only banner on the page. Otherwise, you risk a sharp decline in traffic when visitors are directed to other websites.
- *Pay per click:* PPC programs are one of the most cost-effective and results-achieving advertising methods on the Internet. With a PPC campaign, you receive only targeted traffic—visitors who click on your PPC ads have looked for your keywords in a search engine. This means they are more likely to

become paying customers when they arrive at your website. The problem with PPC advertising is that there are only so many specific, targeted keywords that will apply to your business. The more popular, generalized keywords are subject to fierce competition, so that only those willing to pay a high per-click price will be able to use them.

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

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

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

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

The most popular PPC program, of course, is Google's AdWords (previously discussed in this book). AdWords gets you listed near the top of the most popular

search engine, and you can change your keywords every month until you arrive at a combination that yields the best results for you.

More on traffic

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

Internet users have all but exhausted their interest in gimmicks, flashy advertising, and cute tricks. Today, they are looking for real information and useful products and services. While PPC campaigns will get your website listed in the fabled "top three" pages of results, your information will be clearly labeled (at least for savvy Internet users) as paid advertisements. Natural search engine results—those listed on the basis of page content—enjoy a whopping 75 percent of all search engine click-throughs.

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

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

- Keep it simple, and keep it real.

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

Chapter 3

The Most Common Mistakes

1. *Gimmicks, false advertising, and other manufactured word-of-mouth tactics.* Though lying is easy and gimmicks are cute, neither one of these represents a successful advertising strategy for your Internet marketing business. Remember the Taco Bell Chihuahua? You may have thought he was cute—or annoying—but did he make you want to rush out and buy tacos? That particular campaign proved a huge waste of advertising money for Taco Bell. The only way to generate true word-of-mouth sales is the original way: give people a product or service that is worth talking about. Once word gets out, you will gain long-term repeat business as well as short-term sales.

2. *Setting sale terms based on your needs (instead of your customers).* It may be easier for you to design your website according to your template or the "style you have always used", but that does not necessarily mean it will be easier for your customers to navigate. Every aspect of your website should be designed with your customers in mind. You must be able to think like a customer instead of a business owner, and decide how people would most logically look around your website. Remember, if they can't find what they're looking for within three clicks, they won't waste much more time in finding another website where they can.

3. *Using the same marketing methods that worked before the Internet came along.* Though some people may not like to believe it, the Internet has changed the face of business forever. More traditional businesses are losing customers to the convenience and the choices that are available online. If you don't take advantage of the opportunities offered by the so-called Information Superhighway, your competitors will—and they will get your customers' business. Remember, too, that getting your message "out there" is not enough. You need relevance and honesty to succeed online.

4. *Believing the Internet is a "one-size-fits-all" environment.* Nothing could be further from the truth. No matter how compelling or wide-reaching your marketing practices are, you will not be able to reach every single Internet user out there (and yes, there are still some people online who have never heard of Google or Amazon!). Diversification is good for your business. One example of this is multiple e-mail accounts, which can give the impression that your business is larger than it seems. Another is multiple websites. If you have more than one product or service, creating a separate website for each one allows more exposure to different segments and market demographics.

5. *Following "best practice" marketing techniques on faith alone.* When it comes to the Internet, there are no established "best practices." This medium is still a relative infant compared to other advertising and business venues. What is best today may not be best tomorrow! The only "best practice" you should religiously subscribe to is the realization that the Internet is changing constantly, and you should be ready to adapt. Keep an eye on current trends and technological developments, and keep an open mind when it comes to marketing practices.

6. *Traffic does not mean success.* This has been mentioned before: you can have thousands, or even millions, of website "hits" and still not have a successful Internet marketing business. Many online business owners make the mistake of "buying" traffic through programs that promise tens of thousands of visitors for one low price, but these visitors are not interested in your website. Many of them are clicking through a series of links in order to earn credit they can exchange for traffic to their own websites, or for "free" merchandise promised by the company hosting the traffic program. They don't want to stop and buy your products or services. You need targeted traffic arriving at a website that is engineered to convert visitors to buyers.

7. *Settling for less than the best results.* In any advertising campaign, the savvy business person will attempt to determine the percentage of people who actually made purchases as a result of viewing the advertisement. This number is called a "return." The rate of return varies among different types of media. For example, a 2 percent return in direct mail marketing—that's two out every hundred people who received a mail flyer and then made a purchase—is considered fantastic. When it comes to Internet sales, marketers typically measure rates of return on conversions: visitors to sales. That number should average from 2.4 to 2.6 percent if you want success. Unfortunately, even that low a percentage is difficult to maintain.

8. *Equating elaborate website design with favorable customer impressions.* A busy, confusing website is one of the biggest mistakes Internet marketers make. Loading your website with multiple products, links, reviews, and sales fluff will only convince visitors that you're trying too hard to substantiate a second-rate offering. Don't make it hard for visitors to find what they're looking for, and keep each website you maintain dedicated to one or two specific products.

Chapter 4
Getting The Recurring Signup

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

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

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

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

To charge or not to charge

Free subscriptions

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

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

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

Paid subscriptions

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

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

However, some information is so specialized and sparsely available that people are willing to pay for it—sometimes dearly. One example is Lexis, which is a an extensive legal online database that charges users $2.00 per minute for access.

Lexis does a brisk business for such an exorbitant fee. This is just one instance; for other examples of trends in e-commerce, check out www.commerce.net.

Chapter 5
Your Affiliate Program

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

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

Multiple affiliations, multiple paychecks

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

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

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

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

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

Remember the three basic types of affiliate programs?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It goes without saying that your website content should reflect that of the merchant's website content. If your website deals with pet care, you should not sign up for an affiliate program that offers e-book creation software. The best affiliate programs are selective about the websites they will allow to become affiliates, as they don't want the affiliate websites to create a poor reflection of them for their visitors. Just as with your own business, your affiliate website should contain clear, relevant information and be as error-free as possible.

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

Top tips for affiliate success

If you have decided to become an affiliate marketer, there are many things you can do to improve your chances for success. Keep in mind that with an affiliate

program, thousands of other online marketers are vying for the exact same customers, using the exact same product. These tips will help you stand out from the crowd.

- Make sure you enter your affiliate business with a positive but realistic mindset. Do not believe you will become rich overnight—and in fact, if the program description promises that you will, chances are it's a scam that you should steer clear of. Realize that your business will take time to develop, and be willing to put your best efforts into affiliate success.
- Use Google AdWords as a supplemental tool to market your affiliate programs. Set your keyword bids so that each click costs you less than the commission you earn. You will get a small side paycheck this way with little effort.
- Instead of using the pre-formatted ads, articles, and reviews provided by the affiliate programs, write your own and make them more compelling. This will not only increase your traffic, but it will also help you stand out from all the other affiliates using the same program and materials.
- Ensure that you choose affiliate programs that match your website's content and your newsletter, or can be connected to it in some firm way. Incongruous or irrelevant affiliate links on your website will diminish your reputation as well as the reputation of the merchant you are affiliated with.

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