
TUI's Net Profits v1.01b

Get Your Business Online NOW!

Easy Tips for Setting Up Your Online Business & Marketing it Profitably

By Stephen Baugh

<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/>

Please give this book to your friends! It's FREE.

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For my beautiful **daughters Alex and Charlotte**. These girls make my everyday, and forever surprise me with their incredible insight.

For my inspiring and loving **wife Sonya**. This woman is the fuel to my fire, and together we make magic everyday. I love you darling.

For my awesome sister **Adrienne**, we have been in business together since we were kids, and she continues to motivate me especially with how she cares for the people in our organizations.

For my loving parents and favorite business mentors **Heather and Ian**.

For all the wonderful people that humble, challenge and wow me everyday at **Queensberry** and **Photojunction**.

To **Carol** who made this possible and through hard work helped me get these words on the page.

And last but not least, for my latest Internet heroes and best friends **Stuart and Sue**. Following my advice they were on page one of Google for 3 Keywords within a couple of days of their website being launched.

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Introduction

Thank you! If you want to get your business online, you've taken a great first step.

In this e-book, you'll find valuable tips that you can implement right away to build your web presence.

As a business professional, you are likely aware that most of your business comes from word-of-mouth. The Internet has taken that traditional marketing method and allowed it to grow exponentially. In order to grow your business today, you absolutely *must* be online.

One of the key things to remember about getting your business online is:

The Internet = Interaction

The Internet is not just another form of classified advertising. If you're used to more traditional ways of getting the word out, it can be challenging to give up control of your message and join in the chaos of interaction. But I firmly believe that it's this interaction that makes the Internet the most powerful marketing venue to be developed so far.

In this book, you'll learn why, and how to make it work for you.

How To Use This Guide:

In using this guide the easiest thing to do is use it while online and work through it from start to finish. However if you prefer, then just jump around as you see fit. Each Chapter has been written as a stand alone item, and at the end contains a list of resources, tips and a summary. All the links like this (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/>) are “live” so you can click on them and go directly to the site.

Of course, the web changes constantly, and although I will do my best to keep up to date, I cannot guarantee that you won't find some old links or outdated information. Also as I am not offering advice personalized for your situation, your mileage may vary. By that I mean it's up to you to evaluate the advice given and apply it as and when it fits your situation.

Before we start

If you want to stay in touch or share your experiences, come over and chat either on Twitter <http://twitter.com/stephenbaugh> or at my blog <http://stephenbaugh.com/blog>. And of course if you enjoy the guide I would appreciate your letting people know by spreading the word - please give it away freely to your friends.

Why I'm Doing This:

I'm doing this as a personal project to help businesspeople trying to find their way onto the Internet. No, I don't have all the answers, but with over 20 years online experience I have seen what works for our two global companies, and perhaps it'll work for your company too. Take what you like and leave the rest!

What's In It For Me?

In some places I have included affiliate links. This is where I get a small commission for recommending the service, and in fact that is one of the tools you'll learn about in this e-book. I have used (and usually continue to use) most of the services or organizations and have been very happy with them, a few have been recommended by friends. I do this to cover the costs of providing this document to you for free, and I honestly believe that you will find these tools helpful in your efforts to get online.

Chapter 1

Let's Get Started

Getting online – and making a profit or increasing the profile of your offline business – is not as hard as most people think. Any reasonably intelligent person can do it, and it doesn't have to cost a lot. But like most things in life, you only get out what you put in. If you follow my advice, you'll be up and running in no time – but only if you expect to put in the work before you reap the rewards.

Here are a few guidelines to keep in mind as you take your business online. If you forget everything else in this book, I hope you'll remember these. Tattoo them on the back of your hand if necessary.

Stephen's Rules for Online Success:

(1) Get involved properly or not at all.

You need to be responsible for, and engaged in your own learning, on-line reputation, and presence. You need to put in the work.

What about earning thousands while you sleep, you ask? You will not make thousands overnight while you sleep – not for yourself at any rate, but if you put in the initial effort to get your online business set up right, you'll soon get to a maintenance level of effort. At that point, your website will be generating income and you'll only have to work on it up to a couple of hours a day to keep the income flowing.

(2) The Internet is interactive. It's a conversation, not just a billboard.

Remember, although the Internet feels like the “Wild West,” it's a lot more formal than it appears, everything is archived automatically, and defamation laws apply. There are rules of etiquette online.

If you wouldn't say something to a person's face, you probably shouldn't say it on the web. This is especially true when you're online for your business. Keep it professional.

(3) Branding is as branding does: You need to manage your personal brand.

The fact is, everyone has a personal brand – whether they know it or not. Your personal brand is also called your reputation. You could say, your track record.

The Internet is a powerful multiplier. It enables people from halfway around the world to develop opinions about you. It's important to manage your personal brand so that the message others get about you is the one you want them to hear.

Now I'm going to dive a little more deeply into each of these topics.

Rule 1: Get Involved Properly or Not At All

VISION: Before you even think of going online, you need to formulate a clear vision of your company's mission and goals. If you don't know where you want to go, you'll never get there.

You also need to be able to communicate this vision compellingly to others. These people could be potential investors, clients, and even employees. There's a useful business concept that can help you hone your vision and communicate it to others.

This is called your "elevator pitch," and here's why. Imagine you get into an elevator, and you realize that the other occupant is an influential businessperson. Perhaps she is a potential major client or investor. She asks you about your business. You have 15 seconds to describe it clearly and persuasively. Can you do it?

Your vision statement should be short, simple, easy to remember, and motivating. It might explain what sets you apart from your competition.

Next, you need to have a clear, concise explanation of **what you will do, how you will do it, and for and with whom**. This will help you decide what kind of website and content you'll need to achieve these goals.

You need to be able to explain what you want the site to achieve for your business, and why:

- Promotion
- Image-building
- E-Commerce (Transactions)
- Community-building
- All of the above

To do this, you'll then need to be able to explain...

- Who is your target market?
- Why will they value your offer and what value are you adding?
- How will you do it better than anyone else?

Rule 2: The Internet = Interaction

The Internet is a bit like a party. There's the potential for very valuable connections if you're on your game – and there's also the potential for the equivalent of walking out of the bathroom trailing a long strip of toilet paper stuck to your shoe.

In the past, marketers crafted the message they wanted to send. They carefully selected the medium they wanted to use. They sent this message exactly when and where they chose.

They had the illusion of control. But it was just that: An illusion.

In fact, marketers could never be sure that their target market, and only their target market, was seeing all those carefully placed messages. Broadcast media amounts to a very blunt instrument. As the old saying went, "I know half of my advertising is wasted; I just don't know which half."

By contrast, the Internet enables marketers to communicate with interested, motivated and targeted customers – a marketer's dream. The Internet enables satisfied customers to turn into salespeople. And by sharing their thoughts on a company or product, Internet surfers can spread the message far and wide.

To help increase the likelihood that this message is one that makes your brand shine, embrace the interactivity of the web, and use it to your advantage.

Rule 3: The Importance of Branding

What is a brand? Many people think of branding as something done by the advertising firm, or at most an activity of the Marketing department. But in fact, an entire enterprise is involved in the development of its brand image.

Why? Because every experience the customer has with that firm, from ordering to payment processing, and including everything from product quality and after sale service, contributes to the brand image that customer carries around with him.

A brand is everything that a person thinks or feels or believes about an item. The brand is influenced by the person's past experience with that item, what other people say about it, and what they can conclude about the brand from the messages it sends out. (I know I said "item" there, but that could also be a company, an individual or a service – not just a solid object.)

Let's take <http://www.queensberry.com> as an example, since that's a brand I know inside out. When our photographer clients, or their clients, think about a Queensberry wedding album, what comes to mind?

I would hope they'd associate with the Queensberry brand: Established, Trustworthy, Genuine, Authentic, High-quality, Artful design, Emotionally connected, Memories made real, Memories to last a lifetime.

Now suppose we decide to cut costs by using a lower grade of paper. Or suppose that we delivered most of our orders after the promised date. Would our brand continue to convey "Premium quality"? "Trustworthiness"? Probably not. (Which is why we'll never do those two things.) And as you can see, neither of those two hypothetical decisions would have been made by the Marketing department. One of them would have been made by Purchasing, and the other the result of a flawed production process.

The entire company contributes to the brand image.

Before you take your business online, carefully consider how you're going to manage your brand. To take your business online successfully, you need to establish yourself as an expert. Establishing a strong personal brand of your own will help you get the word out about your company. I'll cover how in later Chapters.

Tips & Tricks

TIP #1: You need to craft an Elevator Pitch for your overall business in addition to your website. If your web initiative is your entire business, then one Elevator Speech will do.

TIP #2: Keep it simple. Throwing around a lot of fancy jargon just makes you look insecure. You should be able to explain your business concept in plain English to someone who is reasonably intelligent but not an expert in your field. It should invoke a positive emotional response.

Tools To Help

There are some worthwhile tools you can find online to help you refine your plans. One book that was recommend to me was *Give Your Elevator Speech a Lift!* by Lorraine Howell.

<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/elevatorbook/>

You can also visit these websites for more information

<http://www.slideshare.net/fallonj/principles-of-presentation-delivery-developing-your-elevator-speech> and

http://www.businessweek.com/careers/content/jun2007/ca20070618_134959.htm

And I wrote a blog post about this <http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/2009/06/my-elevator-pitch/>

Chapter 1 Summary

You *can* get online – profitably. This guide contains many best practices to help guide you.

Stephen's Rules for Online Success:

- (1) Get involved properly or not at all.
- (2) The Internet is Interactive. It's a conversation, not just a billboard.
- (3) Branding is as branding does. You need to manage your personal brand.

Step-By-Step: Reach for Your Vision of Success

- (1) Define your vision of success. Your statement should be short, simple, memorable, and motivating.
- (2) State clearly what you will do, how you will do it, and for and with whom. Be specific.
- (3) Keep it simple.
- (4) Embrace the interactivity of the Internet.
- (5) Consider how you will manage your brand online.

Chapter 2

Can You Make Money on the Internet?

Make Money Online In Just a Few Hours A Day! (Really?)

Sorry to burst your bubble, but – No.

Ok maybe it would be more accurate to say, not exactly. You *can* make money on the Internet, but it's not exactly the effort-free automatic money-machine that the hype makes it out to be.

You do have to put in the effort, especially in the beginning. To make money on the Internet, you have to make an investment up front, using either your money or your time, and frequently both.

You can do all the work yourself, and spend only a couple of hundred dollars to start with – but expect to spend a lot of your time instead, first learning the ropes and then doing the work. Or, you can hire professionals to do it for you – but then you can expect to spend a lot of your money.

It will be either your money or your time – you choose. But you *will* have to throw something into the pot in order to get started.

It's true that once you've got your system up and running, the time you'll need to spend on maintenance is minimal. But what you'll probably find is that the work is never finished. There's always something new on the horizon, some other fabulous tool that you'll need to apply to your business model in order to keep up or move forward. To stay on the leading edge means that you'll stay on the learning curve as well.

The Internet is perhaps the most purely Darwinian form of competition in the economic sphere. It is fantastically competitive. Yes, you get access to a global market for your product or service. But you're also thrown into competition with other providers who may live in a much lower cost-of-living society, or who have been doing this for a long time and know all the tricks. In the worst case it can take an enormous amount of creativity, time, effort and emotional commitment to figure out how to set your self apart from the crowd – and stay that way.

I don't say all that to scare people away. I merely want you to head into this with your eyes open. The fact is, in this day and age you really can't afford *not* to be on the web – not if you want your business to grow. And, you can take advantage of some pretty amazing tools that will (eventually) bring in cash while you sleep.

Don't go into it expecting everything to be sweetness and light right from the start.

I do believe however that success is almost always achieved by adding value to others and doing the simple 'ordinary' things consistently. The trick is to get started, and grow from there.

“Okay, bring it on,” you say. “I'm not afraid of a little hard work. I'm ready to roll up my sleeves and get cracking. Now what do I have to do?”

Step by step, here's what you'll need to do in order to make money online.

Ten Steps to Making Money Online

(1) Find a good domain name.

Your best domain name should be (a) short, (b) memorable, (c) easy to spell correctly, and (d) connected in some obvious way to your company name or target offering. However, none of these things are worth a hill of beans if someone has already taken your ideal domain name. So the key characteristic of a good domain name is (e) available for use. Domain names based on your keywords will help with your search engine presence.

(2) Get your domain name registered.

You can't use your fantastic domain name until you register it. And, once you've found it, you should register it as soon as possible so that no one else can take it before you do. I have used Godaddy to do this in the past and have been very happy with their service. Domains can be purchased from them for as little as US\$1.99. You can connect to Godaddy here

<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/godaddy>

(3) Find a web hosting service you like and sign up.

One sign of a good web hosting service is the ability to add pages and functionality to your site as your needs grow. Usually, the hosting service will offer a large number of attractive do-it-yourself templates, but should also be able to handle it if you have (or hire) the skills to create your own website from scratch. Also, if you're setting up the site yourself, you'll come to treasure good customer service. I use Hostgator (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/hostgator>) and I've been delighted with my experience. They have hosting packages from US\$4.95 pm

(4) Refine your goals for the site, both now and a year from now.

Some big-picture goals are:

- You want people to be able to find your site
- You want them to stick around once they get there
- If it's a transactional site, you want to convert visitors into customers

- You'll want your site visitors to click through to your affiliate partners
- You'll want them to come back

(5) Map out your site.

Determine the pages you'll need to have in order to achieve your goals. Consider:

- How many pages
- The goal of each individual page
- The functionality and/or content each page will need
- How they will link together

(6) Create your site and launch it.

Whether you hire someone, outsource parts of it, or do the whole thing yourself, get your site up and running.

(7) If the site is about making money rather than just promotion, get your affiliate programs running.

Identify good affiliate programs that will work well with your product or service. Put together a thoughtful package of tools that will be relevant to your site visitors. Ideally, the products or services of your affiliate partners, in combination with each other and with your own business, will solve your customers' problems better than any one of them could do alone.

(8) Start a blog – and keep it fresh.

A blog is a great way to attract attention to your site – both from search engines and the human beings that use them – but only if you do it right. That means your blog must be:

- Informative
- Interesting
- Relevant to your site visitors
- Frequently refreshed

(9) Make yourself an expert.

Draw traffic to your site by embarking on an article-marketing plan (See Chapter 9). Either on your own blog or by submission to online e-zines, or both, write a number of short, informative articles that will demonstrate your expertise – and your offerings' *usefulness*. Make sure the articles are both search-engine-optimised (SEO) and congruent with the e-zines' editorial guidelines.

(10) Get yourself on the search engine radar.

This is helped by article marketing and blogging, but you can also buy ads and sponsored placements which pop you to the top of search engine results. So many people use search engines as their starting point that you can't afford not to optimise your search engine results.

As you can see, I wasn't kidding about the amount of work it will take to get your program up and running. And later, there will be maintenance work – keeping your blog fresh, writing new articles and submitting those to e-zines too, monitoring the results of your ad purchases. But it is true that the maintenance work will only take that often-hyped “couple of hours a day” – but by then hopefully you'll be making money on the Internet.

Tips & Tricks

TIP #3: Keep your Internet content fresh. Even the most informative, interesting and relevant content is only that *once*. It will quickly get stale.

TIP #4: Make sure to integrate all of your Internet initiatives. Your social networking sites should work to support your affiliate marketing efforts, which should also enhance your main product or service.

TIP #5: For services like Hostgator and Godday make sure you have a quick hunt around on their site for a Promo/Coupon Code. Hostgator almost always has one on the front page of their site that will give you an easy **20% discount on your first purchase**.

TIP #6: Don't use your ISP's domain name for your email address eg yourname@yourisp.com, instead make sure you setup your hosting account to run your domain name on your email too. This way you are building your brand with each email for free.

Tools To Help

My business website is hosted by Hostgator <http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/hostgator>, and I can't say enough good things about them. They do absolutely everything a business would want from site hosting, domain name registration to site security. If you're just starting out and want to know how to find a good site host, you can't go wrong with HostGator.

For my blog, I use Wordpress <http://wordpress.org/>. It's been a fantastic platform, and is absolutely free. If you are using Hostgator you can install it free and easily, probably within a couple of minutes by following this video instruction

<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/wordpressfantasticinstall/>

Chapter 2 Summary

You *can* get online – profitably and with effective planning you can launch your website more quickly than you might think – and for less money as well.

Step-By-Step: You Can Make Money Online

- (1) Find a good domain name.
- (2) Get your domain name registered.
- (3) Find a web hosting service you like and sign up.
- (4) Refine your goals for the site, both now and a year from now.
- (5) Map out your site.
- (6) Create your site and launch it.
- (7) Get your affiliate program running.
- (8) Start a blog – and keep it fresh.
- (9) Make yourself an expert.
- (10) Get yourself on the search engine radar.

Chapter 3

Before You Get Online

Now that you have a good idea of what your goals are, and the kind of work that's involved to achieve them, let's take a look at the various types of websites that are out there, and how each one works for you.

Types of Websites

There are several major types of websites available. Each of them is more useful for a particular kind of business, and less useful for others.

- Static Websites
- Blogs
- E-Commerce (Transactional) Sites
- Community Sites

Static Websites

Static websites, as the name implies, are sites that don't change very often.

The simplest is what you might call the equivalent of a business card. You put it up so that if anyone hears about your business elsewhere, you have some sort of web presence. If the visitor wants to know more, they'll have to get in touch with you using the contact info they find on your site.

The next level of complexity is what might be equal to your resume or C.V. This kind of site tells more about your background and gives evidence of your expertise. You might showcase your

background, customer testimonials, case histories, and the like. Again, if someone wants to transact with you, they must reach out and contact you.

There are actually a number of companies for which this kind of site is perfectly adequate. For example, think of professional services companies. For these companies, having an online shopping cart or catalogue, or even a price list, is not necessary. Their customers are buying unique services one project at a time. The sales process requires direct contact and negotiation.

Blogs

A blog is, by definition, an active medium, not at all static. A properly-run blog is updated with fresh content regularly. It can be – in fact, often is – used in conjunction with a static site.

The benefits of a blog are that you can...

- Facilitate an emotional connection between your customers and your firm
- Help establish yourself as an expert
- Get on the radar screen of search engines
- People can engage in conversation with you on your site and rate your content.

The kinds of things you might put in a blog include...

- Updating your customers on the latest news about your firm
- Reviewing a product or book that your customer would find useful
- Sharing useful information and inside stories
- Helping your customers feel like they've got the inside scoop

The main drawback to a blog is the fact that you need to update it frequently! Expect it to take at least an hour or two of your time per week, probably more. And that can take your attention away from running your main business.

E-Commerce (Transactional) Site

This is your traditional online store. Typically this type of site features, at minimum:

- Product catalogues with photos and text descriptions
- A shopping cart
- A check-out/payment processing system
- Security and privacy assurances – both the systems that provide the protection, and the content reassuring customers about this

An e-commerce site may also incorporate or be connected to:

- An inventory-management system
- An order-fulfillment system
- A customer-care center

The e-commerce site is not static, ideally, although it probably won't change as often as a blog should. But you will be updating prices, photos, inventory availability, adding new products, deleting old ones, answering emails, and so on.

Doba have an awesome service, which virtually automates transaction processing, and drop ship fulfillment. If you are interested in this type of service I would certainly suggest trying their free trial <http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/doba/>

Community Sites

A community site is one where the main goal is to gather a group of like-minded people online to share insights and support one another with a common interest.

There can be stand-alone community sites devoted to a hobby or a special concern. This type of membership site may charge a modest membership fee to cover the costs of running it. Also, with a large enough membership and enough traffic, advertisers trying to reach this target market can purchase ad space around it.

There can also be a community-site component to a company's website, to create a "club" of customers. This is usually a free perk of associating with the firm, meant to make the customers feel special and foster an emotional connection to the firm.

Components of a Community Website include:

- Some "free" content available to visitors
- More valuable content available only to members
- Call to action, to sign up as a member
- Membership capture system
- Membership database
- Member profile pages
- Forums and discussion boards
- Security & privacy assurances

If you're going to be the administrator of such a community website, you'll probably find that it takes up a lot of your time, and if you start a community and then don't take care of your members, expect to feel a backlash. So before you start a community site, be sure you can devote the resources to managing it properly.

The Internet = Interaction

Remember, the real strength of the Internet is the ability to have interactions. It's not a broadcast media, where you put your message out there when you want, where you want, and exactly how you want.

Your audience is not passive. They can talk back. Or they can walk away.

The Internet is a conversation, or a party. If you're not ready to engage in the give-and-take required to sustain that conversation, then you should probably stick with a static site. But if you do, you'll be missing out on the most powerful aspect of the web.

How Long Before My Website Gets Good Traffic?

A lot of people new to online marketing ask, “How quickly can I expect to see good traffic on my website?”

It depends on how hard you work at it – and how “smart” you work; if you are really lucky you’ll get a lucky break.

If you put up a website and just expect it to pop to the top of search engine results, it won’t. Sorry to rain on your parade. You’re competing with people who have optimized their content for exactly the purpose of rising in search engine rankings, and your non-optimized site is really at a disadvantage, your domain age will be young and for a while at least things are stacked against you.

If you send out emails to all your friends and relations urging them to visit your new website, that’s not going to deliver the traffic you want. Yes, they’ll come and visit just to be polite; because they’re your friends and relations, they might even leave a friendly comment. But that’s not the kind of traffic that’s going to bring you a lucrative passive income stream.

What Do We Mean By “Good Traffic”?

First, let’s figure out what you really mean by “traffic.” Gone are the days when simply getting eyeballs to your site was a measure of success.

What you want are site visitors who...

- Stick around to read your compelling content
- Take whatever action you wanted them to do on your site... buy, join, click on an affiliate link; this is known as “converting” them, from visitors to customers
- Come back over and over again
- Tell all their friends and link from their sites to yours

So what we mean by “good traffic” is not just large numbers of people clicking in and then navigating away again. What you want is for your site to be found by *people who want what you have to offer*.

To achieve this - your site must be relevant and your content must solve a problem or entertain. Ideally, it will solve a pressing problem, better than anyone else can.

Luckily for you, there are large corporations out there whose sole business model depends on linking up people with the information they’re looking for: ***Search engines***.

Roughly 85% of web traffic comes from one of the big search engines: Google, Yahoo, and MSN (now known as “Bing”). LOL don’t ask me where that Stat comes from but somebody did tell me that recently. On my blog however it’s more accurately around 40%

So, to really get your content out there in front of the people who are desperate to find it – and to get good traffic – *you have got to master search engine marketing*. (See Chapter 6.) This will drive traffic to your site faster than anything else.

So get out there now and start building traffic!

Tips & Tricks

TIP #7: A lot of the tactics that help you rise in the search engine rankings will also be things that help you drive targeted traffic to your site in other ways.

TIP #8: Nothing is worse for a site's image than a stale blog. If you're not going to devote the resources to keeping it fresh, you should stick with a static site.

TIP #9: Similarly, if you can't devote the resources to doing your transactional site properly, you should think about whether an e-commerce site is the right move for you.

TIP #10: Unless you've got a huge budget, focus on starting small, if you like "step 1" challenge yourself to experiment, develop and grow over time. Get in the game, and then stay true to your purpose.

Tools To Help

If you are interested in a Transaction Site then make sure you do a free trial of Doba, they are an awesome dropship company with millions of items listed. You get to sell stuff without even holding stock, and they have excellent educational resources to show you how.

<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/doba/>

If you don't know what you want you can explore sites like <http://websitedesignawards.com/> or <http://www.stumbleupon.com> to get ideas, but don't get caught up on the "look" until you have decided the what, how and for whom first.

Chapter 3 Summary

There are several types of sites; think about which types will work best for you:

- Static Websites
- Blogs
- E-Commerce (Transactional) Sites
- Community Sites

The Internet = Interaction. Embrace this fact and put it to work for you!

Step-By-Step: What To Do *Before* You Get Online

- (1) Decide what type of website will work best for your business goals.
- (2) Get to know your target market: The people for whom your website will solve a pressing problem, better than anyone else.
- (3) Develop a plan to help them find you online, beginning with search-engine optimisation (more on that in Chapter 6).

Chapter 4

The Value of Outsourcing

In this Chapter, you'll learn how to *delegate* the work of getting online... and more importantly, why you should.

You Don't Need to Do It All. In Fact, You Shouldn't.

Are you one of those people who think that "If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself"? Do you have a nagging feeling that you're being irresponsible if you get someone else to do something important for your business? Do you think that "It's my business, so I should be involved in everything"?

Well, crumple up those ideas and toss them right out the window. Outsourcing is tremendously important in your effort to make money online.

Why? Because as painful as this may be to admit, you don't know it all. No one can.

In fact, when you get right down to it, you shouldn't want to know it all. For all of us there are tasks related to our business that our performance is mediocre at best. And these are frequently also tasks where we have no desire to spend our valuable time and brainpower on.

Wouldn't it be more responsible to find the top performer for each task and get them to do it? And that would free you up to do the things that only *you* can do. Chances are, these are the things that made you want to go into business in the first place.

The great thing about it is someone out there would be delighted to do this service for you and finds the task that bores you to be interesting and worthwhile. And because they're more involved in it, they probably do it better and faster than you could. The Internet makes it easy to connect with other firms or freelancers who want to take on these tasks for you.

Grow Your Business

There's only so much one person can accomplish in a day. This is true even if you are one of those people who only need 4 hours of sleep a night. To grow your business, you'll need to move the amount of work your firm can produce beyond the level you can produce alone.

Reclaim Your Life

Delegation is a valuable skill that will give you more time for what's important to you and outsourcing will help you...

- do higher-value tasks for your business – things that only you can do, or that you can do better than anyone else
- do the activities that you enjoy most
- spend more time with your family
- have more time to exercise
- do whatever you think is best!

The point is, your time is yours – reclaim it.

STEP 1: Decide What Tasks To Delegate

First, make a list of all the tasks you need to accomplish to get your business online. Also, make sure you add tasks that you really wish could get done but you never seem to find time to do.

(See my helpful Step-by-Step Checklist towards the end of this book.)

Next to each task, note whether it is an activity that...

- You enjoy doing.
- You do better than most other people.
- Will be of high value to your customers.

Also note when a task is one that...

- You don't have the skills to do, yet.
- You don't want to spend your time on.

Look for tasks where there's overlap between the first three criteria. Tasks that you enjoy, that you do uniquely well, and that your customer's value should definitely remain on your plate.

Tasks that you find boring, or that you know others can do at least as well as you can, possibly even better? Mark them down as candidates for reassignment.

Are there any tasks that you don't want to do and that your customers won't value? Consider eliminating them entirely, or automating them at the least possible cost.

STEP 2: Divide & Conquer

Now, consider the tasks you've decided to reassign. You don't enjoy them and someone else can do them at least as well as you can.

First, break them down into sub-tasks that will take roughly 1 hour to complete. Then, group these in a way that makes sense to you.

Some useful categories to consider:

- Website Development
- Online Research
- Writing

- Graphic Design
- New Business Development
- Paperwork
- Accounting

STEP 3: Build an Employee Position

Now, you can build a position that you'll later hire someone to fill, whether you outsource it or hire an employee for. To do so, ask yourself: Can you put the 1-hour tasks together in such a way as to create one or more full-time positions? Or, are they really a group of unrelated part-time positions?

STEP 4: Outsource or In?

Consider whether the work can be done off-site. Do you really need to see the person in your office? Keep an open mind – a lot of tasks that would have required an in-office presence 5 years ago are now routinely done off-site.

STEP 5: Find Help & Delegate

OUTSOURCE: You can find a freelancer or another firm to take on the tasks you plan to reassign. You can hire them on an hourly basis, or project by project.

This may be your best option when you're first exploring the idea of delegating and growing your company. The relationship is clearly defined, and if it works out well, you can always extend the contract. If the productivity gains you had hoped for don't materialize, you have no obligation beyond the end of the contract.

EMPLOY: If you're ready to commit to on-site, long-term help, then conduct your search with care, ensuring that you abide by all the applicable employment laws.

Help Your Helpers Succeed

Done right, delegation can help your company increase productivity, and help you regain control of your life. Your company grows, and you don't go crazy. It's a win-win.

Whether you outsource or employ additional personnel, following these guidelines can help make the effort a success:

- Do your homework and find a reputable source.
- Define expectations clearly and in advance.
- Make sure that all deadlines are clearly understood. It helps to have them in writing.
- Check up on the work from time to time, but don't hover. Strike a balance.
- Provide constructive feedback on a regular basis.
- Pay fairly (according to your initial agreement) and on time.

Harness the power and creativity of others, and your business will take off.

Where To Find Freelancers

E lance (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/elance/>) is an online jobs board for freelance professionals in all kinds of fields. You can find a writer, an accountant, a lawyer, a web programmer, and a graphic designer, all on Elance. You're protected by the Elance escrow payment system. You post your job for free, but can "Sponsor" your posting for \$15. Sponsored postings are profiled listings, and service providers know that you're serious about hiring, since you paid real money to list the job.

The awesome thing about Elance is the incredible depth of skill and experience of the providers (people doing work). They can be inexpensive, although not always, but for me the surprise was the fact you could employ a skilled person for just a couple of hours to get a difficult job done, opening up so many possibilities.

10 Tips on Getting the Best Work from Your Freelancers

(1) Don't post a job unless you really mean to fill it.

Elancers spend points, called “Connects,” to bid on your jobs. They purchase Connects as part of their monthly membership fees. In other words, Elancers spend actual money for a chance to make bigger money. They also spend their time working up proposals. Clients who post jobs but never fill them don't have a great reputation on Elance. You won't get the best contractors to bid on your jobs if they see that you have a low award ratio.

(2) Have a clear idea of exactly what you want done, *before* you post the job.

If you clearly convey what you want, Elancers will have a better idea of whether their skills would be a good fit. They'll appreciate that, since they won't waste their time and Connects bidding on jobs that they don't have a chance of winning. And it'll save you time, since you won't need to wade through umpteen off-target proposals.

In fact, this is such an important point that Elance itself has been known to cancel projects whose requirements are too vague.

(3) If you have a firm budget in mind, say so.

Again, this will save both you and the Elancers time. If someone's hourly rate is \$50, and you're not willing to pay above \$35, why waste each other's time? If you want cheap and cheerful, say so. If you want top quality – and are willing to pay for it – say that, too.

(4) Be cautious about accepting the lowest bid.

You're certainly free to go with your lowest bidder, and many clients do. However, I frequently find that more expensive bidders are more experienced, more qualified, and more committed to keeping you happy.

(5) Check out the bidders' Profiles.

E lance providers maintain their own Profiles, where you can review their backgrounds, and feedback from their previous clients. In some cases you can review sample work that they've posted in their "portfolios." It's also perfectly legit to request samples of previous work as a condition of submitting proposals.

(6) Don't demand customized free samples.

It's one thing to ask Elancers to submit samples of their previous work as part of their proposals. That's just doing your due diligence.

It's quite another to ask them to create all-new samples just for you that – purely by coincidence, of course – resemble the work you've described on your job posting. That's you asking them to do your job for free. In fact, that's asking them to spend their Connects (their own money) to do your job for free. Elance frowns on this practice, and will cancel any posting that includes it.

(7) Provide timely input.

Once your selected Elancer is on the job, don't ignore them. If they have a question for you, your responsiveness will help them stay on track to meet your project's deadlines.

(8) If you begin to have any concerns about your Elancer's work, bring them up quickly – while you can still do so calmly and respectfully.

Chances are, your Elancer wants to keep you happy. Their goal is, or should be, to develop a list of satisfied clients who come back to them again and again. The best Elancers welcome feedback, even if you're telling them to do things a little differently. The only way they'll know if you feel something needs to be changed is if you tell them.

(9) Pay on time, according to your project terms.

Your Elance service provider is in business too, with bills of their own to pay. They can't afford to do the work, and then not get paid for months on end. Once you've received the work as agreed, then you need to pay as agreed, too.

(10) Provide your Elancer with fair feedback once the project is complete.

"Feedback" on Elance is a specific metric which shows how satisfied clients have been with a given Elancer's work. This metric, shown as "% Positive Feedback," appears on their Profile and can influence how likely they are to be hired in the future. Naturally, Elancers are keenly interested in getting positive feedback. And negative feedback can be a black mark on their record for 6 months or more.

If you have any reason to give negative feedback, be sure you give your Elancer a chance to work it out with you before you put it into their "official" Elance Feedback. And, if your Elancer kept you satisfied and happy, make sure the Elance Feedback you give reflects this.

Freelance Graphic Designers

Another site, called 99designs (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/99>), is devoted to freelance graphic designers. That's all you'll find there, period. No accountants. No database programmers. Graphic design, and lots of it.

You do have to pay to list your design brief, typically around \$40, and eventually will have to pay a "prize" to the winning bidder – typically between \$100 and \$600. However, the designers who want your business actually create finished design ideas in a contest to win you over. This means you don't have to guess at which designer will work best for you – you can actually pick the one whose concept does work best for you. Then the winning designer then puts the design into final form and provides it to you.

Tips & Tricks

TIP #11: Remember, there might be job positions, which could grow from part-time to full-time once the additional help increases your company's productivity.

TIP #12: Some things you could get a free lancer to do for you

- Write blog posts or an ebook
- Install your blogging software
- Design your site layout
- Write software
- Colour correct images
- Interview people
- Basically most things you can think of, for example I heard a story once of a person who was able to find a freelancer who wrote an ebook on "How to teach your parrot to talk". That person then started selling that ebook online and started making up to US \$3500 per month. The book I am sure only cost him about \$500

Tools To Help

Online job boards provide a marketplace where companies can find freelancers to help them. They frequently provide other benefits as well, such as an escrow system for transmitting payments.

Personally, I use Elance (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/elance/>) and I've had great results. Freelance professionals in computer programming, writing, legal and financial consulting, and more, bid on projects using the Elance system.

Another worthwhile site I use, for graphic designers only, is 99designs
<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/99>

Chapter 4 Summary

You don't have to do it all – and in fact, you shouldn't. Your business will benefit if you free up your time to work on tasks that you enjoy and that you do uniquely well.

Step-By-Step: Outsourcing & Delegation

- (1) Decide what tasks you want to delegate.
- (2) Divide those tasks into 1-hour increments.
- (3) Build a position (or more than one) by grouping those 1-hour tasks in a way that makes sense to you.
- (4) Decide whether to outsource or hire an employee.
- (5) Find help and delegate. You can use an online service such as Elance to find freelance professionals.

Chapter 5

Go Get Your Site!

Now you're ready to create your site. You've done your homework, you have a clear vision and a step-by-step plan to get there. You know what type of website will work best for you. Time to get online!

There are a couple of main options.

- You can sign up for the blog offered by your ISP. A lot of Internet newcomers seem to feel that this is quicker, easier, and cheaper than the other main alternative.
- To sign up for your own domain name (URL) and put up your own website. Many people find this intimidating, believing that you need to know HTML programming to achieve it. In fact, it's a lot easier than you might think.

I'm a firm believer in the value of getting your own domain (URL) when you start your online business. Here's why.

(1) The number one reason: Credibility.

It makes you look so much more legit, right from the start.

Think about it. Which one of these alternatives would you trust with your online business? Which fits best on a business card? Which is easier to remember, and to associate with your company's name?

<http://tinyurl.com/wr13dsc>

http://www.your_isp.com/sellers/everybodyelse144

<http://www.yourcompany.com>

Both of the first two options make your company look like a backroom, part-time, newbie effort.

It doesn't matter if you *are* a backroom, part-time newbie. When you have your own URL, you don't have to look like one. And don't you want to move beyond backroom, part-time newbie status someday?

(2) Be ready for your company's growth.

Once you've become a real, established Company, will you really want to redo all of your marketing materials and retrain all of your hard-won customers and site visitors to go to your Real, Established Company domain name? How many people do you think you might drop, during that switch?

Moreover, if you want to branch out into related lines of business later, your own URL provides the flexibility you'll need to do so. You can build subdomains onto your original URL in whatever way makes the most sense for you. Your ISP or other provider – not so much.

(3) Why should you give free advertising to your ISP or some other service?

You want to be promoting your own business, not theirs.

(4) It's every bit as simple and inexpensive as using your ISP's service.

For some reason, people have this impression that the ISP's service is free and easy. The fact is, hosting services are incredibly cheap, and easy too. And they provide you with a level of functionality, flexibility, control, and professionalism that your company needs, or will need as it grows.

For \$5 - \$15 dollars a month you can get your own domain from a site-hosting service. And at that price, why wouldn't you? If you can't devote \$5 a month to your business, you might want to give some more thought to whether you're really ready to go into business for yourself.

As for ease of use – if you can use a word-processing program, you can figure out how to manage your own domain.

(5) You can get email at your own domain.

Again, many people seem not to realize this. Any reputable site-hosting service will allow you to add unlimited email addresses associated with your domain. And once again, it comes down to professional image. If your business card shows your website and your email address pointing to the same short domain name – one that is clearly related to your company name – this enhances your professional image tremendously.

The bottom line is this: If you're serious about getting your online business up and running, you need your own domain name. That's the only way others will take you seriously, too.

Self-Hosted Blogs are Like Owning Your Own Farm

The same line of reasoning applies to having your own, self-hosted blog.

If you've only done personal blogging, or haven't done any blogging at all, you probably think that the free blog hosting sites are just fine. After all, they're free. And they're easy. If you can run a word processor, you can build a blog on these sites.

But if you want to start a blog to benefit your online business, or monetize your blog and turn it into your online business, you'll quickly run up against limitations and constraints in the free blog world.

True, self-hosting does take a smidgen more work to begin with. But it's not as hard as it used to be – the tools are getting more user-friendly all the time – and the long-term benefits are huge. If you're serious about blogging for business, sooner or later you'll end up self-hosting. Why not do it once, right from the beginning?

Reasons to self-host your business blog:

(1) It looks more professional.

Your free-hosted blog will always have a URL that looks something like this:

yourblog.BLOGHOST.com. Why should they get all the name recognition from your blog?

(2) More flexibility.

Add a forum. Add a guest book. Encourage comments. Encourage emails. Do whatever you like with your self-hosted blog, to encourage interaction with your readers. On a free-hosted blog, you're much more limited.

(3) Affiliate marketing.

Many affiliate marketing programs require you to prove that you have your own website before you can sign up. You'll need to provide an email address at your own (self-hosted) website, i.e. yourname@yourblog.com. And, many free blog hosting sites discourage or even prohibit affiliate marketing activity by posters.

(4) Ad space.

On your free blog host, you cannot control the ads that the host places around your posts. And you do not reap the resultant income. Now why should they get all the money from your great content?

(5) Peace of mind.

You own your domain. You can back up your self-hosted blog and store it on your own computer.

If your free blog hosting company goes out of business or for whatever other reason causes your blog to be inaccessible, you have no recourse. You own the blog posts, but not the domain

itself. They own that. And if your content builds up a following and a brand image around your username – that is, the domain – guess who owns that username? Hint: Not you.

In general, running your business blog on a free blog host is sort of like... Well, to use an old-fashioned image, it's like being a tenant farmer for an absentee landlord. Granted, you don't pay them rent, unlike the tenant farmers of old, but they do take all the income. Why shouldn't you reap those rewards?

If you self-host, you may have to do a little more work, granted. But in the end you'll have the satisfaction of owning what you've built.

Tips & Tricks

Tip #13: Wherever possible, own your own domain. This helps you project the image of being established even before you get there... and will help you in the long run, once you've become established.

Tools To Help

Hostgator (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/hostgator>) provides site-hosting services and so much more. My company has been more than satisfied with the service we've received from them.

Again, I use (<http://wordpress.org>) for my blog and it's an outstanding, and flexible platform.

Chapter 5 Summary

Establishing your business website and blog on your own domain (URL) is worth the effort in order to add legitimacy to your company's image. And can be nearly as easy, fast, and cheap as some of the alternatives that too many Internet newcomers choose to use.

Step-By-Step: Go Get Your Site!

- (1) Find a good domain name.
- (2) Get your domain name registered.
- (3) Find a web hosting service you like and sign up.
- (4) Map out your site.
- (5) Create your site and launch it.
- (6) Keep it fresh.

Chapter 6

Search Engines Rule the Web: Get Found!

In this Chapter, you'll learn how to optimize your site content so that search engines can find you. This is crucial to your online success.

Before your fantastic website can attract the attention of your human site visitors (see next Chapter for more on that), you'll need to attract the attention of the *search engines*.

Search Engine Optimisation

There are a number of factors that determine search engine results. In general, however, the search engines worship at the altar of “useful and relevant content.”

Search engines exist to provide their visitors with useful and relevant information about whatever word they entered into the search field. Search firms know that if they serve up content that turns out to be neither useful nor relevant, the searcher will go elsewhere. And so will their ad revenue.

In general, search engines assess how “useful and relevant” web content is according to the following factors:

- Keyword Density
- Keyword Placement
- Freshness of Content
- Inbound and Internal Links
- Popularity of content

Keyword Density

Your “target keyword” is the search term that your site visitor wants to learn more about.

“Keyword density” refers to how often your target keyword appears in your content. It’s usually described in terms of a percentage, or a certain number of times “per hundred words.”

So, for example, in a 500-word article, if your keyword appears 5 times, your keyword density would be 1 occurrence per hundred words, or 1%.

Up to a point, the higher the keyword density, the better. This shows the search engine that your site is likely to be relevant to the topic of the search.

But it is possible to have too much of a good thing. If your content consists of nothing *but* keywords and no interesting information about them, readers are unlikely to find it either useful or relevant.

3% - 4% is the absolute maximum density typically found in reputable content; a better target to shoot for is a range between 1% and 2% for your main keyword. Secondary keywords can come in at another 2% - 3%.

Keyword Placement

“Keyword placement” refers to where your keyword appears within your content.

When a search engine assesses sites for relevant content, it typically starts with...

- The title
- The tagline (if any)
- The URL
- The first and/or last sentence
- The first and/or last paragraph

This means that even if you have a good keyword density, your content may still languish at the back of the pack if you don't salt a few keywords into these strategic places.

Freshness of Content

Content created yesterday is likely to be more useful and relevant than content created 7 years ago. Search engines take this into account.

This is why a blog is so useful to your online efforts. If you update your blog a few times a week, and your posts contain good keywords, that helps keep your site content fresh.

Inbound Links

It's crucial that you understand this: **Search engines are not just about keywords.**

A strong measure of how useful and relevant readers find your content is the number of other sites that link to yours.

If someone finds your content so useful and relevant that they want to link their site to yours, the search engines figure it's probably something that their visitors want to see.

What other ways can you get inbound links? Well, you can...

- Arrange a link swap with related sites. (But more and more, search engines are onto this.)
- Set up an affiliate program. Every time a satisfied customer puts a link to your site on theirs, that helps you rise in the search rankings – not to mention the direct benefit you'll reap from the referral.
- Seek listings on directory sites. There are both paid and free directories.
- Set up your own social-media accounts, and link them back to your original site and to each other.

- Put up a button for Digg, Reddit, StumbleUpon, and so forth – and invite your site visitors to vote for your content.

Internal Links

Link your pages to one another within your own website. This is probably of lower importance than inbound links, but it does help somewhat, as it is an indication to the search engine of what you think is important.

Popularity of content

Google will prioritize content that is seen as “popular”. This may be measured in Retweets, number of comments, number of views etc, and how often your content is bookmarked.

Other Factors To Consider

Getting all the forms right is no use if your text isn’t also functional. Form is no good without function. This means that your content actually has to *be* interesting and informative.

Your text should be couched in reasonably short, easy-to-read sentences. Avoid long run-on sentences. Avoid long blocky paragraphs of more than 4 or 5 lines. Avoid intimidating polysyllabic vocabulary (big scary words) that makes your readers feel you’re talking down to them. Feeling stupid is not a good way to feel connected to a brand.

Local Search: A Powerful Tool

Think globally, act locally. Make sure your SEO efforts include local search. Focus your online efforts on your local audience, and Google will love you for it.

What is “local search”? Local search is a search term (keyword) combined with the name of a place. “Apartments in Your Hometown,” for example. Google will throw out a map with flags showcasing a number of local apartments in and around Your Hometown.

Now you can probably see the benefit to you as a businessperson, if your company's website is ready to be found on local search. Local Search is conducted among a much smaller universe of competing sites, making it that much easier to claw your way to the top of that list. Big frog, small pond. A small enough pond makes any frog seem big.

But why does Google like it? Because it uses two of their core products, search and maps, in a way that provides better benefits than either one separately. It is also the pinnacle of "useful and relevant" information.

If you want to get found by people making a Local Search, you'll need to register your business with Google's Local Business Centre (<http://www.google.com/local/add/>). The system will send you an email with an activation code. Activate your registration, by clicking on the link in the activation code email and following the instructions. (You will see a notification that it can take up to 4 – 6 weeks for your listing to become active.)

If you don't already have one, open a Google AdWords account (<https://adwords.google.com/>). Create an AdWords campaign targeted to your local area. This means that your keyword-targeted ad will show up only when (more or less) local people search for that keyword – not for people across the country or world.

Once you have gotten this far, but not before, you'll be able to create a Local Business Ad (<http://www.google.com/local/add/>). Essentially, this is an even more targeted version of your AdWords ad. But it's more powerful because it appears in Local Search results in two ways. First, your company will appear in the list to the side of the map. And second, it will appear as a highlighted push-pin on the map itself.

Now you're ready to give Local Search a shot. And good luck!

Tips & Tricks

TIP #14: If content is provided with metadata tags, the search engine checks those for relevance, too. This is an often-overlooked resource, so make sure you provide them whenever you have the opportunity.

TIP #15: There's an art and science to creating content that (A) attracts the attention of the search engines, and (B) proves useful and relevant to the real live readers who click through. But if you can do it – you'll be well-positioned to succeed in your online venture.

TIP #16: Search engines love video. I cover this later in my chapter on Video Marketing, but if there was one tool that you should absolutely try and use to dominate the search engines then that would be Traffic Gyser. Mike will describe it much better than me so have a quick look at his intro video here <http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/traffic>

Tools To Help

Google (<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordTool>) has tools that can help you hone your keywords even if you're not a paying customer of their AdSense program.

I'd highly recommend having a look at Stompernet. It's an expensive service but well worth the investment for all the Internet marketing information and networking you will get there.

<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/stompernet>

I use SEO Elite (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/seoelite>) to help with all the SEO setup and analysis and I use Keyword Elite (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/keywordelite>) to find, and evaluate Keyword. I hate keyword research and this certainly makes the result much more valuable and fun.

Chapter 6 Summary

Search engines sniff out “useful and relevant” web content according to the following:

- Keyword Density
- Keyword Placement
- Freshness of Content
- Inbound Links
- Internal Links

Step-By-Step: Search Engine Optimization

- (1) Figure out what keywords are relevant to your target market.
- (2) Next, make sure your website content is relevant to those keywords.
- (3) Find a good stats counter program, and get ready to monitor your site traffic.
- (4) Make sure your site has multiple pages that link to each other.
- (5) Start a blog and keep it updated with relevant content. Link it back to your main site.
- (6) Embark on an article-writing campaign for e-zines. Always link back to your main site.
- (7) Join relevant forums and social-media sites – relevant to your target customers, that is. Link back to your main site.
- (8) Sign up your site with relevant directories.
- (9) Don't forget PR. Write up press releases for your site, and submit them to online PR sites such as PR.com. And of course, link back to your main site.

Chapter 7

Outstanding Content: Make It Sticky

In this Chapter, you'll learn about how to create content that will help you attract readers and get them to "stick around" your site: Sticky content.

Sticky Content

Sticky content is electrifying, engaging content that achieves the following goals:

- Allows people to find you through search engine results
- Grabs their attention by the eyeballs and doesn't let it go
- Sticks with them after they've left your site
- Makes them want to come back
- Makes people tell their friends about you
- And of course is either informative or entertaining (adds value)

STEP 1: Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

Search Engine Optimisation, or SEO, should be familiar after having read the previous Chapter.

For now, just recall that search engines take into account several factors:

- Keyword Density
- Keyword Placement
- Freshness of Content
- Inbound Links
- Internal Links

STEP 2: Grab Their Attention

Question: What content will your target market find sticky? Well, that depends on them.

The kind of content that is sticky for the customers of a quilting supply company is, um, let's just say quite a bit different from sticky content for the customers of a tattoo parlor. (I'm not going to say that there aren't *any* quilting grannies who also have tattoos, but I'm guessing it's a much smaller niche.)

It's Not About You

When it comes to creating effective web content, remember: **It's not about you. It's about them**, and if you want the site to work for your business, it can't be all about you and how great you are.

The Internet is a conversation, remember – be a good conversationalist.

How do you like being around people who only talk about themselves? And how great they are? (Ugh.) Aren't you more likely to enjoy spending time with someone who's interested in your life?

Write what your site visitors want to hear – not (necessarily) what you want to tell them.

- Know what they like and what they're interested in.
- Talk to your target market as if you were one of them.
- Use the tone and vocabulary that they use.
- Translate the features of your product or service into a description of the benefits they can expect in their lives as a result of purchasing it.

STEP 3: Make Them Want To Come Back

Here are a couple of ideas on how to inspire your site visitors to come back:

- Keep it fresh. If they've already seen all your content, why should they come back?
- Create a sense of community. Make them feel that they're trusted insiders.

Tips & Tricks

TIP # 17: The first thing you need to do to define effective content for your site is Know Thy Customer. Know their likes, interests, hot buttons, vocabulary, media habits. Get inside their heads and see the world the way they do.

Tools To Help

Blogs help keep your content fresh. I use WordPress (<http://wordpress.org>) for my blog and I couldn't be happier.

Social media pages linked to your website can help create a sense of community among your loyal customers. (You'll learn more about these in Chapter 13.) Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com>), StumbleUpon (<http://www.stumbleupon.com>), and Twitter (<http://twitter.com/stephenbaugh>) are just three of the social-media sites I like to use.

There is a wealth of resources on line helping you write great content such as <http://www.problogger.net/>, <http://www.copyblogger.com/> and Insiders Circle <http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/insiderscircle>

Chapter 7 Summary

The right content will make your online venture a success. Make it sticky: Electrifying, engaging content that grabs your target market's attention and makes them want to come back.

Step-By-Step: Making Your Content Sticky

- (1) Optimise your content so it is found by search engines (see previous Chapter for more on SEO practices).
- (2) Know Thy Customers, and create content that will grab their attention.
- (3) Give them a reason to come back, by keeping your content fresh and creating a sense of community.

Chapter 8

The Business Blog

What is blogging? Blogging isn't just for social networking anymore.

Blogs have huge potential, and are some of the most tried and true types of the so-called "Web 2.0" movement. Whether you're trying to promote your offline business online or whether you're starting an online business from scratch, blogging has huge potential for you.

It's important, first off, to understand a little bit about blogging and what makes a blog different from another web site. In a traditional static website, the content on the front page generally stays the same. You might change things around from time to time, but it's not updated on a regular basis. With a blog, the most recent thing you post is at the very top of your site's front page. Blogs are chronological in nature.

In addition, blogs tend to be more interactive than traditional static web sites. The blog comment section is a place where visitors can react to your blog posts and where you can interact directly with their readers. Blogs are built such that they interact well with their visitors, as well as with other blogs.

Nowadays many companies use blogging as an important marketing tool. How? Why? **There are several reasons.**

Reason #1:

A blog encourages an emotional attachment, a sense of community, between your customers and your company – and between your customers and one another.

This helps to build positive associations with your company's brand. It makes your customers feel special for having selected your firm to meet their needs. It gives them a sense of being part of an "inner circle" related to your brand. And by keeping them coming back to your company's website, your blog provides you with opportunities to give them more direct information about your products or services.

Reason #2:

Having a blog – and keeping it fresh – helps you rise naturally in search engine rankings.

You already know that search engines crawl the web cataloging where to find certain keywords. Blog entries that are focused on subjects related to your business can certainly help you achieve an effective keyword density. But you also know that keyword density is only one part of optimizing your content to be found by search engines.

Another thing search engines check is the freshness of content. Think about it from their perspective. If you're a search engine, which site would you want to have pop to the top of your search results list: (1) A site which contains one article on the keywords, that was written 2 years ago, or (2) A site which contains 10 related articles on different aspects of the keywords, the most recent of which was posted last week? Which one do you think the person conducting the search would find more useful?

And finally, search engines also check how many links there are to your sites. That is, to, among, and within your sites. So, if you have a blog with a separate URL and it's linked back to your main company site, that's a good thing from a search-engine marketing viewpoint. If your blog entries link to one another, that's another point in your favor, and of course if you have great content, that will be rewarded with lots of incoming links as your site is referred.

Reason #3:

Your blog can itself contain information that your customers find useful. (Imagine that!) It's not just a matter of building a community, or rising in search engine rankings; as a practical matter, it's also simply one more way to get your message out.

Of course, implementation counts as well. Production values count. But given a focused, thoughtful, well-written approach, these are some very real ways that blogging can help your business.

Blog v. Static: Pros & Cons

The Internet is an essentially interactive medium. While many businesses do have attractive, informative websites without a blog, the fresher your content the more useful your visitors will find your site.

But why might an online entrepreneur choose *not* to blog? Under what circumstances could a static site actually work better for a company?

1. If you're selling a professional, business-to-business service.

You may be custom-designing each project for specific clients. Since your "product" (your professional expertise and time) is unique with each transaction, standard pricing doesn't apply. You interact directly with each client through personal emails and phone calls, perhaps even meals and meetings. You grow your customers' emotional connections through personal contact.

Moreover, you aren't relying on random consumers to search for your service, so search-engine rankings aren't your top concern.

In this case, while a blog probably wouldn't hurt, it also may not provide a great return for the time you put into it. Worst case it might provide a distraction that causes your customer to **not** pick up the phone and phone you.

2. You don't have the time or personnel to do it right.

A blog that's never updated fails to achieve its goals. In fact, it can even work against you.

You make time for what's important to you; if you can't make time to update your blog, then by definition it's not important to you. Far from showing your interest in connecting with your customers, a neglected blog tells them that you don't really care.

In order to make it work, you have to set aside the time to keep it fresh. Or, you have to spend the money to outsource it. Be honest with yourself. If you're not willing or able to do either of these things, you're probably better off not starting a blog at all.

Tips & Tricks

TIP #18: Nothing is worse for a company's image than a stale blog! If you can't commit the time or money to do it right, don't start.

TIP #19: Here's a little secret: A blog is one of the easiest tasks in the world to outsource! Yes, there are professional blog writers who will contract to ghost-write your blog for you.

Tools To Help

For my blog, I use WordPress (<http://wordpress.org>). If you can use Word, you can use WordPress. And it's free. So if you want to handle a lot of your website yourself and don't want to hire a programmer to manage it for you, WordPress is a really attractive option.

Also, you can find freelance ghost-writers to write your blog for you on jobs boards such as Elance (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/elance/>).

When you start blogging or if you are doing it now, I would thoroughly recommend an ebook called **31 days to build a better blog**. It's written by Darren Rowse from a famous website called Problogger, and you can link to it here. <http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/31days>

Chapter 8 Summary

A blog can help you foster an emotional connection with your customers, rise naturally in search engine rankings, and provide one more way to get your message out.

Step-By-Step: Start Your Business Blog

- (1) Either add blog capability to your existing domain, or find a good, available domain name for your blog as well.
- (2) Find a platform that works for you. WordPress is a good one, and it's free.
- (3) Write up at least 10 blog entries in advance, and keep on top of it.
- (4) Consider outsourcing your blog to a professional ghost writer (find one on Elance).

Chapter 9

Article & E-Book Marketing

Here's a tool that a lot of Internet newcomers aren't aware of: You can post your short articles in places other than your own blog.

This is known as article marketing, and it can help you establish your credentials as an expert, rise naturally in search engine rankings, and expose your ideas to a wider range of readers than those who stumble across your blog directly.

Article Marketing

There are numerous websites, called e-zines or simply zines, which serve as a resource for people who wish to learn about literally any subject you can imagine. Examples include Ezine (<http://EzineArticles.com/>), eHow (<http://www.ehow.com/>), Hubpages (<http://www.hubpages.com/>), and Squidoo.com (<http://www.squidoo.com/>).

"Experts" write up articles and submit them to the e-zines. If the articles conform to the e-zine's editorial guidelines (which vary from zine to zine – make sure you understand the guidelines for the particular one you're targeting), and contain no plagiarised content, the e-zine will generally publish them.

Generally, the more articles the e-zine accepts from any given expert, the higher that expert ranks among that e-zine's contributors. Also, readers can frequently rate or vote on the usefulness of an article's content. Plus, because the e-zines want original content, you cannot simply republish your blog articles; they're considered already published if they appear on a blog. Therefore, you'll need to write unique, fresh content for your article-marketing efforts.

As you can see, article marketing requires a fairly substantial commitment of time and resources to produce all the necessary content. Why is it worth the effort?

Article Marketing...

- Helps you establish your personal brand as an “expert” in your field.
- Provides links back to your main website, driving traffic directly from the article, and indirectly by enhancing your rankings in search-engine results.
- Helps your ideas get found by e-zine readers – who may not otherwise stumble across your blog or website directly.

E-Book Marketing

What is an E-Book? An e-book is a searchable, downloadable document, usually in PDF format, of at least 10 pages in length, and usually divided into several Chapters.

To protect your intellectual property, you can add security to your PDF file to make it impossible to print or save, or even cut and paste from the body of the document – until someone has paid for it. On the other end of the security spectrum, as a form of viral marketing, you can encourage your readers to forward or share it freely, as long as they cite your e-book as the original source.

Why am I lumping E-Book Marketing into the same Chapter as Article Marketing?

Because, if you organise your thoughts effectively, you can turn one outline into two types of online content. Separately, you can write up your topics as 500-word articles. Put them all together in a logical way, and they become an e-book – with very little additional writing.

If your e-book is informative enough, you may be able to sell it as an informational product. If you go to the effort of setting up an affiliate marketing program for it, you can turn your satisfied customers into your salesforce. (More on that in Chapter 10.)

Or, you can give it away as a free benefit to your customers. In this way, you can use your e-book to promote that feeling of being “in the inner circle” and enhancing the emotional connection between your customers and your company.

In either case, E-Book Marketing provides yet another means of establishing your personal brand as an “expert,” and improving your search-engine rankings.

Tips & Tricks

TIP #20: Before you begin to write your blog articles, e-zine articles, or e-book, create a logical outline for your topics. This will help you ensure unique content for your blog and e-zine articles, and will also help you repurpose those articles into an e-book.

TIP #21: Like a blog, your e-zine articles and e-books can very easily be outsourced to a professional ghost writer at Elance (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/elance/>).

Tools To Help

Ezine Articles (<http://EzineArticles.com/>), eHow (<http://www.ehow.com/>), Hubpages (<http://www.hubpages.com/>), and Squidoo.com (<http://www.squidoo.com/>) are good places to start your article-marketing efforts.

You can use Adobe Acrobat (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/acrobat/>), or other PDF creation software to create the PDF files for your e-books.

You can use SEO Elite (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/seoelite>) to automate the submission of your articles to article directories.

Chapter 9 Summary

Article and E-Book Marketing can help you establish your credentials as an expert, rise naturally in search engine rankings, and expose your ideas to a wider range of readers than might stumble across your blog or website directly.

Step-By-Step: Article & E-Book Marketing

- (1) Review the editorial guidelines at one or more leading e-zines.
- (2) Develop a logical outline for your topics, before you begin to write anything.
- (3) Decide which topics you're going to address on your blog, and which topics you hope to submit to e-zines.
- (4) Write your articles. Post them to your blog, and submit others to your chosen e-zine(s).
- (5) Referring back to your outline, repurpose the content into your e-book.
- (6) Decide whether to give your e-book away, or sell it as an informational product.
- (7) If you decide to sell it, consider developing an affiliate marketing program for it.

Chapter 10

Affiliate Marketing

How would you like to have countless salespeople worldwide sending motivated shoppers to your website?

How would you like your website to make money for you automatically, while you tend to the rest of your business?

How would you like to have products to sell without needing to buy and sell stock, handle order processing or handle payments?

If you can see how these things would help your bottom line and quality of life, then you understand the value of affiliate marketing.

Let 10,000 Salespeople Bloom

Affiliate marketing is nothing complicated; it's essentially word-of-mouth or referral marketing taken online.

Before you went online, you probably encouraged your most loyal customers to send their friends your way. Perhaps you even offered them a discount or some other reward for having done so. And the benefit of this from a marketing standpoint is tremendous.

Good word-of-mouth from a trusted friend beats media advertising, hands-down. When the referred customer enters your shop, he already has a positive view of you and is motivated to

make a purchase. All you have to do is live up to that expectation. And if you were good enough to inspire the original customer's recommendation, you'll probably manage to satisfy her friend as well.

Now, when you start an affiliate program of your own online, you are simply asking your online customers to recommend you to their friends. You set up an account to track the effectiveness of their recommendations, you provide them with a link to your website or product, and you pay them some sort of commission based on the number of sales that come through that link.

In other words, you turn your satisfied customers into your global sales force. In this way, you grow your main business.

You Can Earn Commissions, Too

Now look at it from the other direction. Surely you find there are certain websites, products, and services that you use which are absolutely brilliant. You'd gladly recommend them to a friend who needed something similar.

Fantastic, but here's the kicker: Why should you do this for free?

If you sign up for your favorite website's affiliate marketing program, you'll put their link on your website, or in your email newsletter etc – and they'll pay you a commission for every referral.

You probably should initially explain why you think they're worth plugging, and you may need to reiterate that from time to time. But on the whole, once you get the relationship set up, the whole process works in the background to provide you with an additional revenue stream that can help your bottom line.

How do you find a good product? Well, there are some people who sign up for every affiliate program they can get their hands on. But in my view, this is not the most effective way to go.

Why not? If you have too many affiliate links on your website, it diminishes the credibility of each. How can anyone possibly have personal experience with five different brands of shoe inserts? Or golf balls, or site hosting services, or what have you.

And if your affiliate links are completely unrelated to each other, or if the connection to your original business is too tenuous, then they may not be relevant to your customers and actually distract them. For example if on the one hand you're plugging your favorite site hosting service, and elsewhere on the page you're pushing shoe inserts, where's the relevance?

Choose Affiliate Products That Work Together

What I recommend is to plan carefully a bundle of affiliate links that support each other and your original business.

So for example, if you're a graphic designer selling your services to create custom logos, then a good affiliate programs might be one that prints Custom T-Shirts (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/customtshirts/>). And it wouldn't be too big of a stretch to recommend your favorite site hosting service as well.

Your customer wants a logo; they'll probably also want to print some t-shirts, and business cards etc once they have their new logo. And if they don't already have their own website, they'll need to set one up and put their logo on it too.

But if you also promote a weightloss supplement (or, er, something even worse), that's much less relevant to what's on your customer's mind while they're at your site. Your customer is not

as motivated to pursue that purchase and click that link. And that particular affiliate program won't yield much for you.

ClickBank: Affiliate Marketing Tools & More

First of all, you can't be effective at affiliate marketing unless and until you master search-engine marketing. And secondly, it takes an extraordinary amount of work, and programming savvy, to start up an affiliate program from scratch. So for most people just starting out online, you'll really need to sign up with a website that specializes in managing affiliate programs.

ClickBank (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/clickbank>) is a leading source for affiliate programs on the web.

- They offer more than 10,000 products for affiliate marketers.
- They track statistics and handle all the payments.
- They put money from your affiliate marketing efforts into your bank account twice a month.

What's not to love?

Granted, you may need to wade through rather a lot of lengthy hypey sales pitches for "me-too get-rich-quick" schemes. But that's life on the Internet today. Lately, I am told, ClickBank has become stricter on the types of products they'll accept, so this issue should resolve itself over time. And, even so, there are plenty of legitimate, high-selling products there.

Granted also, there are other affiliate networks that take a lot of the work of managing your affiliate program off your hands. But they do require you to have your own website, with your own domain name, which ClickBank does not (at present). Also, ClickBank is the least expensive option.

So, if you're just starting out in affiliate marketing, ClickBank can offer you a quick, inexpensive way to get started even before you've set up your own website. In fact, the regular income stream from ClickBank could theoretically help you fund your other online startup initiatives.

Tips & Tricks

TIP #22: In affiliate marketing, it pays to be choosy. Take the time to put together a great package of affiliate partners whose products or services work hand-in-hand with each other and your own main business.

Tools To Help

ClickBank (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/clickbank>) is a great place to get started in affiliate marketing. They take care of all the transactional details for you from providing products to sell to automating the sale of products you offer.

If you want to make sense of all those ClickBank products, work out what is selling and what's not, find products to sell, and build automated offerings then **try Click Bank Engine** (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/cbe>), it's pretty cool.

E-Junkie (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/ejunkie>) is another affiliate marketing / processing site. This one is also very popular and used by people like <http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/31days> and <http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/zentodone>

Chapter 10 Summary

Affiliate marketing is nothing complicated; it's essentially word-of-mouth or referral marketing taken online. But it can be a very powerful money-maker for you – if you implement your affiliate plan effectively.

Step-By-Step: Affiliate Marketing

- (1) Choose a product or service that you have personally experienced and that you could honestly recommend to a friend.
- (2) Make sure it's relevant to the reason your customer came to your website in the first place.
- (3) Try to set up a network of affiliate links that will work together synergistically to solve your customer's problem better than any of them would on their own.

Chapter 11

Video Marketing

Video, video, video. It's online everywhere these days. Thank YouTube for that. But it's not just about cute kittens pouncing on strings.

Videos can grab your site visitors' attention, help demonstrate your product, and enhance your company's brand image. But so much video out there is done poorly: Video just for the sake of video; video that's boring. It's almost easier to find examples of what *not* to do in video marketing, so that's how I'm going to approach it.

To be honest I am writing here from experience, my videos leave something to be desired, so here is what I am going to try not to do in the future

Top 10 Video Marketing Don't-Ever-Do's List

(1) Don't rely on attention-grabbing gimmicks like pouncing kittens or fat guys singing.

(Unless, of course, you're selling cat toys or singing lessons.)

The modern Internet user is all about finding relevant information, fast. This point is about relevancy. R-E-L-E-V-A-N-C-Y. Whatever video you post, make sure it's relevant to the search that brought them to your site. If they wanted to see cute kittens, they'd go to YouTube and find them.

(2) Don't make it too long! Cut to the chase.

See point 1: Relevant information, FAST. This is about the fast part. Don't spend 5 minutes maundering on about the history of your firm. They don't care. Give them the information they came for, fast.

(3) Don't waste your opportunity.

You need to grab the viewer's attention by the throat, in the first 7 seconds, or they're gone.

Follow the age-old advice for orators:

- Tell them what you're going to tell them (that's in the first 7 seconds of your online video)
- Tell them
- Tell them what you told them

This format helps people track what you're telling them, since the first summary told them what to listen for. Then the last summary reminds them of the key take-aways.

(4) Don't be too informal or assume a deeper relationship than you've got.

Your marketing video is like a professional greeting, or a handshake, at the start of a meeting. It should be brief, businesslike, and shouldn't leave people with a clammy feeling for having touched it.

(5) Don't hide your video link.

Make sure it's front and center on your landing page. Give it plenty of real estate. Again, it's the intro and handshake; you don't want them stumbling on it after they've already surfed your site a bit.

(6) Don't start your video running automatically.

This one's a bit controversial. If you don't want them to miss your video, you ought to force it on them as soon as they hit your landing page, right? Certainly plenty of people seem to think so. But I'm not one of them.

(7) Don't make it boring.

You might not think I'd have to spell this one out, but believe me, I do. Okay, you've got your video down to 2 minutes – that's short enough, right? Not if it's tedious. 2 minutes can seem like an eternity if some boring nobody is droning on in a bland conference room.

Your video is a success if you leave them wanting more – not if they can't wait for it to be over.

(8) Don't discount the value of production values.

Yes, I know that we've all gotten used to grainy, washed-out, shaky hand-held videos, from watching all those kittens on YouTube. That's no reason not to make your business video stand out from the amateur crowd through fantastic production values.

Spend a couple of hundred bucks and make your business look legit. Get a nice color scheme and background – based on your logo. Build a few titles that include your logo.

(9) Don't waste your precious video seconds on marketing fluff.

On first glance this seems to contradict the previous point, but it doesn't. Your video should contain useful information – a product demo, or some such thing. It shouldn't all be hyperventilation about how great your product will be. Your video should show, not tell. And there's absolutely no reason why you need to neglect production values in order to show valuable information.

(10) Don't be all about you. Be all about them.

Your listener wants to hear about how you can help them – not about how great you are. Tell them what they'll gain from watching your video – in the first 7 seconds – and then tell them what they'll gain from buying your product or service.

Tips & Tricks

TIP #23: Less Is More. The shorter, the better. Cut your video to the bone – and then cut it some more.

TIP #24: Get a script. Believe it or not, the shorter your video, the more you need a script! The script helps you make sure you don't leave anything out, while maximising the effectiveness of every second of running time.

TIP #25: Search engines love video. One tool that you should absolutely try use to dominate search engines is Traffic Gyser. Mike will describe it much better than me so have a quick look at his intro video here <http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/traffic>. The service takes a little bit of getting use to, but it can have incredible results if you apply his methods consistently.

Tools To Help

There are several good free video-editing software tools that will serve the needs of a beginner quite well. Microsoft MovieMaker and Apple iMovie are good basic programs.

If you don't have access to a camera then you can use a slide show creation package to achieve the same. Like iMovie above Traffic Gyser can do this for you by converting still images into video. Actually Mike has some introductory videos about creating video on this page <http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/traffic>

Finally if video editing or production is not your thing then here is another opportunity to out source the work. You will find plenty of experts on Elance (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/elance/>)

Chapter 11 Summary

You can use videos effectively in your online marketing efforts. Videos can grab your site visitors' attention, help demonstrate your product, and enhance your company's brand image. Just make sure you do it right.

Search engines love video and will often prioritize, or feature it above other text-based content.

Step-By-Step: Using Videos Online

- (1) Plan out aspects of your website that could benefit from a video.
- (2) Write a script, no matter how short you intend your video to be. If you're not a professional videographer, don't concern yourself with the technical aspects. Just note down what you want to happen, when, and about how long it should take.
- (3) Pay attention to production values. Shaky handheld video induces nausea – and screams “amateur.”
- (4) Expect to spend a lot more time editing your video than you do producing it. Editing video can take 2 - 3 times as long as shooting it did – or even more.

Chapter 12

Email Marketing

Email is the new direct mail. In fact it's far more powerful than most direct mail. If you're starting an online business, you really need to know how to do email marketing. Sooner or later, you'll want to tell your existing customers about a new product or program or service you've developed. And if they've been happy with your company so far, they'll probably want to hear about it.

Email marketing lends itself to one kind of "viral" marketing. People use the web to pass things around to people they know – just like a cold, only without the sniffles and the hacking cough. And if they're passing around your newsletter, that's building sales opportunities for you.

Now, how are you going to email your satisfied customers? Are you going to send them each an individual email? Probably not. And what if they no longer want to hear from you? This can happen even if they still want a business relationship with you – they may just want to come back to your site in their own good time. Are you ready to handle opt-outs?

10 Tips for Great Email Marketing

(1) Maintain a good list.

People have been known to change their names and their email addresses. (Yes, really!) And their life circumstances change too. I've known one woman who was really surprised when offers of nappies and free baby formula began flooding her inbox – when her youngest child was starting school.

(2) You can't assume that everybody can receive HTML in their inbox – or wants to.

Believe it or not, some people still have dial-up connections. They don't want to wait forever to download your fancy promo. On the other end of the technophile spectrum, others are now checking email on their handhelds and only want to see the text.

(3) Make sure you put in a clear opt-out link.

How is it helping you to send email to someone who doesn't want it? Answer: It's not. In fact, if you annoy them, it might actually hurt your business.

(4) Make sure you can get through the firewall and spam filters.

Ask them to add you to their "safe senders" list.

(5) Don't miss an opportunity to integrate your campaigns.

Make sure you include links to your Twitter, FaceBook, or any other social media sites you maintain.

(6) Take advantage of analytics to hone your pitch.

Monitor your open rates, your click-through rates, and if possible, the conversion rates beyond. Find out what works – and do more of that!

(7) Engage their interest with your subject line – but hold something back.

Make them want to open your email, not delete it. They can't click through if they don't open.

(8) Summarize your pitch in the first paragraph, and again in the last.

In other words, follow the great orator's structure: Tell them what you're going to tell them; tell them; then tell them what you just told them.

(9) Make them feel special for being on your email list.

Provide special offers or coupons or promo codes that aren't available elsewhere.

(10) Let them give feedback.

People love to feel included, especially if they value your company's product or service. They like to feel they're part of an inner circle that can help shape that product or service going forward. And you can actually get a lot of good ideas from involved customers. You can also nip problems in the bud if people feel comfortable mentioning them to you.

Tips & Tricks

TIP #26: Provide a link to a survey or feedback option, to unsubscribe or to a “tip jar.”

TIP #27: Once you’ve started your email list, make sure your website and/or blog contain links so that visitors can “subscribe” (add themselves to) your email list. This is the beauty of the internet! You may never have to add another email address to your list manually. Get them to click the Subscribe link, and they’ll add themselves.

TIP #28: Always include wording in your emails to the effect of, “Forward this to anyone you know who might also be interested and invite them to subscribe too.” Viral Marketing at its finest!

TIP #29: Set up an auto responder list that sends out a regular stream of emails over time, eg one per week from the moment they sign up, and automatically. If you can get people to sign up while on your website you can market to them every day or week automatically and build depth to story and offering time. If not, you potentially lose them forever.

TIP #30 DO NOT SPAM. If you don’t have permission to email someone then don’t

Tools To Help

AWeber (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/aweber/>) is a fantastic system for email marketing. The system is incredibly user-friendly. They’ve designed their website to be easy to use right from the start. They provide terrific training and support, including video demonstrations of how to set up your account and then how to use it. Use them for Email Newsletters, Auto Responders and RSS to email.

Chapter 12 Summary

Email is the new direct mail. If you're starting an online business, sooner or later, you'll want to tell your existing customers about a new product or program or service you've developed.

Having an effective Email Marketing plan in place will help you do that.

Step-By-Step: Email Marketing

- (1) Begin collecting customer emails, if you haven't already.
- (2) Find an email subscription service you like. AWeber has been great for my business.
- (3) Build a list on your email service. Allow people to subscribe and unsubscribe themselves.
- (4) Encourage your email recipients to pass the email along to interested friends.

Chapter 13

Social Media Marketing

In this Chapter, you'll learn to use Social Media – or social network marketing, as it is also known – to your advantage.

This is probably one of the most powerful phenomena to arrive on the Internet in recent years. And yet many companies fail to capitalise on it. Why? And how can you make it work for you?

What Is Social Media Marketing?

Perhaps you're wondering, "What all the fuss about social media is?"

Sure, you understand that people sign up for FaceBook, MySpace, and others, and "connect" in some way with "friends." Great ... you can see how this helps an individual keep up with the lives of friends who might have moved away, or find old school chums. Maybe you're even on these sites yourself as an individual. But how can it help your business?

Get That Snowball Rolling

Members of social media sites share with each other all kinds of information. They send each other links, and educate each other. They also chat up movies, books, and companies they like – and "flame" those they don't. This can provide a positive or negative "snowball effect" – also known as "viral marketing."

As a marketer, this can work for you – or very powerfully against you. But how will you know which unless you're in the game yourself?

An Opportunity To Connect

Look at social media marketing as an opportunity to build a connection.

You can...

- Network with others in your field
- Identify your most loyal customers
- Help your loyal customers feel like a valued “inner circle”
- Get a lot of great ideas from suggestions your customers make
- Pay attention and nip negative trends in the bud

How To Do It

STEP 1: First, pick one big established network.

Ideally, find one that is meaningful to your target market, and has a large population of related users already.

STEP 2: Start making contacts and then solidify your presence there.

Make sure you can handle the workload before you start up any other social media initiatives. And then start making contact with people, comment on posts, “follow” or “friend” people you are interested and share information of interest to others (without spamming).

STEP 3: Keep it fresh!

This is true of just about everything on the web, but even more so on social media. Social media users expect to have a conversation. This means that you need to log in regularly and respond to their comments. If you can't keep it fresh, you're better off not doing it.

STEP 4: Branch out.

Once you're confident that your efforts on Network #1 are going well, you can branch out into another one, but be careful not to dilute your presence or over load yourself.

Leading Social Media Sites

Here are some social media sites that I personally use – both as a web surfer and for my company. I can tell you that they regularly serve up valuable info, and have also provided great leads for my company.

Facebook (<http://facebook.com>)

Facebook is a rich and robust network. It is one of the oldest social networking sites, and is used by individuals to keep up with friends. People post photos and write short notes about what they're doing.

One of the most powerful aspects of Facebook is the fact that as you update news on your "wall," your news appears in the activity feed of all your fans or friends. As your friends then comment these responses are then promoted to 'their' friends' activity feed etc – and that's the power of the social network. To give an idea of the scale of this, I meet a photographer that had 500,000 visitors to his FaceBook fan page each month largely due to this cross commenting / and promotion through sharing.

To some cutting-edge netizens, Facebook might seem a bit fusty, but for a business it's powerful and even allows incredibly demographically targeted advertising. Facebook has many members who don't go to other social-networking sites.

Stumbleupon (<http://www.stumbleupon.com>)

StumbleUpon is a fantastic blend of a social networking site and a search engine. StumbleUpon members, or "stumblers," submit content to the network, which then "votes" on it.

Combining member votes with a search-engine-esque algorithm, the StumbleUpon system serves up sites that ‘may’ be of interest to the user. This is a random site that meets the users interests and hence the term “to stumble upon”. I used to get huge traffic from Stumbleupon.

Digg (<http://digg.com>)

Digg is something like a user-edited magazine. Digg members can recommend content that they discover and value. The content identified becomes accessible from the Digg website, where the Digg community votes on (“diggs”) the content they find most valuable. Community members can also discuss the content with each other. If your content rises in the Digg rankings, that can only be a good thing for traffic!

LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com>)

LinkedIn is a business networking tool that can help you keep track of your past and present business contacts, and through them, give you an introduction to future contacts. You can join groups of your profession, interests, or region, and you can post to forums on these groups. You can send emails to your entire list of contacts. But you need to tread carefully. People don’t go to LinkedIn to get a hard sell or to feel spammed by their trusted business associates.

Twitter (<http://twitter.com>)

Twitter opened up a whole new social-media world a few years ago: Microblogging. Twitter members send out “tweets,” or updates, of no more than 140 characters. Anyone who has chosen to “follow” them receives their tweets.

How much can you really say in 140 characters or fewer? You might be surprised. Twitter grew out of the IM (Instant-Messaging) culture, and the generation that grew up thumbing “im here. Where RU?” finds it second nature.

One of the most powerful uses of Twitter involves putting a URL in your tweet. In that way, you can direct your followers to a website where you can communicate with them in more than 140

characters. The tweet points them to the place where more detail can be found. Through Re-Tweeting content can be explosively shared across the Net if it is of genuine interest to people.

Tips & Tricks

TIP #31: Promote interaction by asking questions. People love to share their opinions. Give them a chance to tell you what they think, and you'll be lauded as a brilliant social networker.

TIP #32: Update about your activities only when you're doing something newsworthy, like taking a business trip or some personal interest. ("Sitting on couch" – not so newsworthy, if you do it needs to be entertaining.) When you find an interesting resource on the web, share it.

TIP #33: Try to diversify your efforts by choosing a different type of social networking site for your second attempt. For example, if you chose Facebook for your first effort, choose Digg or Reddit for your next one.

TIP #34: Add an invitation to "Follow me on Twitter" or "Find me on Facebook" (you get the idea) to every other business communication you give out – business cards, blog posts, everything.

TIP #35: Support your online communities and "friends'" activities and websites, and etiquette says they should support you back. Only do this however if you do in fact support the information. Remember your integrity must come first

Tools To Help

Facebook (<http://facebook.com>)

Stumbleupon (<http://www.stumbleupon.com>)

Digg (<http://digg.com>)

LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com>)

Twitter (<http://twitter.com>)

Chapter 13 Summary

- (1) Social Media offers an opportunity to build a connection.
- (2) Embrace this reality and put it to work for you.
- (3) Remember, **the Internet = Interaction**. Social Media offer rich opportunities to interact.

Step-By-Step: Social Media Marketing

STEP 1: First, pick one big established network.

STEP 2: Solidify your presence there.

STEP 3: Keep it fresh!

STEP 4: Branch out into a different type of network.

Chapter 14

In Closing

Creating a strong online presence can certainly do wonders for your business. Getting online will help to get the word out about your business and attract new clients. It can also help you build your business network.

Within this guide you have been presented with an outline of some important things to think about and opportunities to consider, and with a little focus you should be able to get onto the Internet quickly and easily.

Managing a successful website, no matter what the subject, does require time and dedication. It will also evolve and change over time as you hone your interests and consider more refined ways to promote your business online. This guide hopefully gave you the steps that you need to get started.

Journey of a Thousand Links

Don't just sit there! Do something!

Over the years I've been and done many things. Everyone has. In my case, I've been a Xerox salesman, a volunteer firefighter, and a successful entrepreneur. Believe it or not, all these seemingly unrelated personas had at least one thing in common, and that is: **A bias toward action.**

What do I mean by this? I mean, if there's a choice between sitting in a conference room planning what I'm going to do, and getting out there and doing it, I hope I choose action.

This is not to knock planning, discussion, and consensus-building. Believe me, I've done my share of those too. I know that you can't reach your goals unless you take some time to define them and plan how to reach them.

What I mean is, there comes a time when you need to stop planning, talking, thinking, dreaming, and get out there and make it happen. And, too often people use the excuse of planning or researching to keep themselves from taking needed action. They confuse planning how to do the job with the real job itself.

As a salesman, my "real" job was not to sit at my local office and plan to call on clients; it was to get out there and make those calls. And can you imagine if a volunteer firefighter arrived at the scene of a blazing building, sat down and whipped out his laptop, and began to develop a keen Powerpoint presentation about how best to put out the flames?

No, there comes a point when your plans are good enough; a point when it's time to get out into the real world, and make your plan a reality. So whether you're just starting a business, or you want to take your existing business online, you're going to have to take action.

I know it can be overwhelming at times. You realize just how much you'll need to do to succeed, and it can freeze you up so you can't take that first step. The thing to do is try not to think about all the tasks you'll need to do, and concentrate instead on just doing one thing, no matter how small.

Take one baby step toward realizing your goals, and you'll get a boost of confidence and energy. You can use that enthusiasm towards taking your next step, and so on. Just do something. And

then do something else. Before you know it, you'll see all those baby steps added up to that proverbial journey of a thousand miles, and your goal is within reach.

Here's to your success. Good luck and have fun!

Get Online: Step-By-Step Checklist

(I) Reach for Your Vision of Success

- (1) Define your vision of success. Your statement should be short, simple, memorable, and motivating.
- (2) State clearly what you will do, how you will do it, and for whom. Be specific.
- (3) Keep it simple.
- (4) Embrace the interactivity of the Internet.
- (5) Consider how you will manage your brand online.

(II) What To Do *Before* You Get Online

- (1) Decide what type of website will work best for your business goals.
- (2) Get to know your target market: The people for whom your website will solve a pressing problem, better than anyone else.
- (3) Develop a plan to help them find you online, beginning with search-engine optimisation.

(III) Outsourcing & Delegation

- (1) Decide what tasks you want to delegate.
- (2) Divide those tasks into 1-hour increments.
- (3) Build a position (or more than one) by grouping those 1-hour tasks in a way that makes sense to you.
- (4) Decide whether to outsource or hire an employee.
- (5) Find help and delegate.

(IV) Get Your Website Up & Running

- (1) Find a good domain name that isn't already taken.
- (2) Get your domain name registered.
- (3) Find a web hosting service you like and sign up.
- (4) Refine your goals for the site, both now and a year from now.
- (5) Map out your site.
- (6) Create your site and launch it.
- (7) Get your affiliate program running.
- (8) Start a blog – and keep it fresh.
- (9) Make yourself an expert.
- (10) Get yourself on the search engine radar.

(V) Search Engine Optimisation

- (1) Figure out what keywords are relevant to your target market.
- (2) Make sure your website content is relevant to those keywords.
- (3) Find a good stats counter program, and get ready to monitor your site traffic.
- (4) Make sure your site has multiple pages that link to each other.
- (5) Start a blog and keep it updated with relevant content. Link it back to your main site.
- (6) Embark on an article-writing campaign for e-zines. Always link back to your main site.
- (7) Join relevant forums and social-media sites – relevant to your target customers, that is. Link back to your main site.
- (8) Sign up your site with relevant directories.
- (9) Don't forget PR. Write up press releases for your site, and submit them to online PR sites such as PR.com. And of course, link back to your main site.

(VI) Make Your Content Sticky

- (1) Optimise your content so it is found by search engines (see previous step).
- (2) Know Thy Customers, and create content that will grab their attention.
- (3) Give them a reason to come back, by keeping your content fresh and creating a sense of community.

(VII) Start Your Business Blog

- (1) Either add blog capability to your existing domain, or find a good, available domain name for your blog as well.
- (2) Find a platform that works for you, such as WordPress.
- (3) Write up at least 10 blog entries in advance, and keep on top of it.
- (4) Consider outsourcing your blog to a professional ghost writer.

(VIII) Article & E-Book Marketing

- (1) Review the editorial guidelines at one or more leading e-zines.
- (2) Develop a logical outline for your topics, before you begin to write anything.
- (3) Decide which topics you're going to address on your blog, and which topics you hope to submit to e-zines.
- (4) Write your articles. Post them to your blog, and submit others to your chosen e-zine(s).
- (5) Referring back to your outline, repurpose the content into your e-book.
- (6) Decide whether to give your e-book away, or sell it as an informational product.
- (7) If you decide to sell your e-book, consider developing an affiliate marketing program for it.

(IX) Affiliate Marketing

- (1) Choose a product or service that you have personally experienced and that you could honestly recommend to a friend.
- (2) Make sure it's relevant to the reason your customer came to your website in the first place.
- (3) Try to set up a network of affiliate links that will work together synergistically to solve your customer's problem better than any of them would alone.

(X) Using Videos Online

- (1) Plan out aspects of your website that could benefit from a video.
- (2) Write a script, no matter how short your video will be. Just note down what you want to happen, when, and about how long it should take – in seconds.
- (3) Pay attention to production values.
- (4) Expect to spend a lot more time editing your video than you do producing it. Editing video can take 2 - 3 times as long as shooting it did – or even more.

(XI) Email Marketing

- (1) Begin collecting customer emails, if you haven't already.
- (2) Find an email subscription service you like, such as AWeber.
- (3) Build a list on your email service. Allow people to subscribe and unsubscribe themselves.
- (4) Encourage your email recipients to pass the email along to friends.

(XII) Social Media Marketing

- (1) First, pick one big established network.
- (2) Solidify your presence there.
- (3) Keep it fresh!
- (4) Branch out into a different type of network.

10 Questions to Help You Decide If You're Ready for the Internet

It takes a certain mindset to get noticed on the web. Is it a mindset you share?

1. What unique value can I offer that few others can?

Everyone and his brother, and sister, are getting on Facebook, Twitter, setting up an online store and so forth. To get your site noticed at all, you need to offer something special.

Don't follow the herd; only the front cow has a good view. Is there a subject for which you're truly passionate, where you have a unique wisdom to share with the world? You'll have better luck with your online business if you can think of a way to capitalize on that.

Sometimes being unique is just getting started, or simply doing simple things consistently.

2. Do I have a vision of where I want the business to go?

If you don't know where you're going, you're never going to get there. If you want to succeed, you'll make your own luck by crafting a clear and achievable vision of where you want your business to be at the end of the year, 3 years out, 5 years out. Keep your eyes on the prize.

3. Do I have clear goals and a plan for achieving them?

Vision is long-term and high-level. Goal-setting is much more tactical. Paying attention to the larger goals that you've set, break them down into smaller step-by-step goals.

4. Do I have a bias for action?

This is key. If you like a quiet life of contemplation, then entrepreneurship, whether online or otherwise, is probably not for you. If you love to plan but procrastinate when it comes to implementation, then entrepreneurship is probably not for you.

If you test the water by jumping off the end of the dock – well, a complete lack of planning has its dangers too, but this inclination is closer to what an entrepreneur needs in order to succeed.

5. Do I enjoy continual learning?

If you're going to succeed on the web, understand this: You will never know it all. *Never.* By the time you master one skill or tool, it's already yesterday's fish. There's always something new coming over the horizon. You need to enjoy self-directed learning, because you'll be doing an awful lot of it.

6. Can I devote the time and/or money to get it off to a good start?

When you're starting up your own online business, you'll need to spend freely and lavishly, one of two things: Either money or time.

If you outsource your web design to professionals, it can cost rather a lot. If you don't have a large pot of cash lying around the house not being used, you may wish to implement the website yourself.

Many site hosting services offer do-it-yourself templates. Chances are, though, your functionality may be limited. And it will take time. Since you'll be learning the process as you go, it may take a lot of your time. If the value of your lost time is greater than the cost of a professional site design firm, you should probably hire them if you have any money at all.

7. Do I have – or can I acquire – sticky content?

Why yes you can! If writing is not your forte, this is something you can outsource very easily.

“Sticky” means, content that pulls readers in to your site, and compels their attention. It sticks with them, so to speak. And it bolsters your standing as an “expert” in your chosen field.

8. Am I organised enough to stay on top of things?

To succeed in any business, you'll need to be very well-organised. This is especially true on the Internet. Things move very quickly, your competition is global, and there are a lot of distractions.

9. Can I handle it if my business takes off?

This may strike you as rather a strange question. "Of course I can handle it! Isn't that what I'm hoping for?" Yes, but.

The question is, if the volume of your business suddenly grows far beyond what you were expecting or what you're used to handling, do you have the personnel, the processes, and any necessary equipment in place to deal with it? Or can you get access to them on short notice?

If not, your quality could suffer in order-fulfillment and customer care. That will damage your brand, and in the end, that will damage your business.

10. Do I know what solutions I'll use to handle email (both inbound and outbound), order-fulfillment, customer care, and last but not least, payment options?

You may initially be thinking that all you'll need is a website that does the work of a business card, or at most a resume. You put your info up, and people who stumble across it call you if they really want to hire you or buy your product.

The problem with this is, it makes your site visitor work too hard. The web is all about instant gratification. People don't necessarily want to make a phone call, even a free one. And they especially don't want to wait. If they want to buy what you're selling on your site, you need to let them – right on the spot.

That means you'll need to offer an email link, an online ordering process, an online payment option. You'll need to purchase a solution, or outsource these processes to a firm that specializes in them, such as PayPal.

And you'll need the people working behind the scenes to respond to all of these. In addition, while you're gathering everyone's email address, you may as well set up an email-marketing plan. This will require yet another technological tool or outsourced service.

Top 10 Mistakes Beginning Internet Marketers Make

Check this list. Do any of these describe you? If so, here's your chance to avoid making these potentially costly mistakes. And the time to do so is now, *before* you get online.

Mistake #1. Go into it expecting to reap huge rewards with little effort.

Succeeding on the Internet is just as much hard work as succeeding anywhere, only it may be a different type of work than you're used to.

Mistake #2. Don't do any research.

The fact is, countless millions of Internet marketers are making mistakes all the time. Many of them have written articles and books on how to avoid those same mistakes. If you want to fail online, make sure you fail to learn from the mistakes of those who've gone before you.

Mistake #3. Jump onto the latest big thing.

One of the best ways to fail is to do what everyone else is already doing. By the time you learn about the latest weight-loss supplement fad, that ship has already sailed.

Mistake #4. Avoid playing to your own strengths.

Every person is unique, and there is undoubtedly something that you know or do better than most other people. To fail in your Internet venture, all you have to do is ignore your own strengths and try to compete with established businesses on their terms.

Mistake #5. Never mind the niche.

Your online business has a great chance of failure if you try to be all things to all people. If you're selling books, why not try to compete head-to-head with Amazon? Defining a narrow niche and filling its needs deeply is a much more likely route to success, not failure.

Mistake #6. Sign up for every affiliate marketing scheme you can find.

It's true that if you set it up right, an affiliate marketing program can bring in a reliable source of income. But if you work at it, you can still fail at affiliate marketing. For example, take a scattershot approach and sign up for every affiliate program in sight. By making sure you've got a lot of competing, irrelevant affiliate links on your site, you can confuse and bore your site visitor, and yes, even fail at affiliate marketing.

Mistake #7. Push your affiliate links too hard.

Everyone loves a hard sell, and people come to your site hoping to experience it. If you believe this and act on it, you can fail quite easily.

Mistake #8. Ignoring customer service.

That's the beauty of the Internet, right? Automate everything, don't hire staff, and sit back and watch the money roll in. This is a good plan if you want to avoid success. Internet customers are very impatient, and if you make them wait for anything – especially a response from a real live person if they're having difficulties – you can almost guarantee your failure.

Mistake #9. Don't make any effort to shape or monitor word-of-mouth about your site.

The Internet gives a great deal of power to the grumblers, whiners, and outright liars of the world. If you want your Internet venture to fail, the best way to deal with them is simply to ignore them. There's one action you can take to help your site fail, and that is to make clumsy heavy-handed attempts to squelch negative word-of-mouth if it occurs. Internet customers love to ridicule such efforts, and countless thousands more will jump on the negative bandwagon if you do this. Failure is just about guaranteed.

Mistake #10. Give up too soon, or better yet, never launch your site at all.

The best way to guarantee your failure is never to try at all. Almost as effective is to give up right before you might have seen your efforts pay off. By the time you give up, you'll have invested either your money or your time into the idea, or both. And when you give up, your money, time, effort, emotional involvement are all wasted – whereas if you never try at all, the only thing you waste is your dreams.

If there was such a thing as Internet Marketing Gods ...

If there were such as a thing as Internet Marketing Gods, I would point at these people. Ok that might be over stating it, but they certainly are talented and I have learned a lot by following them and using their products. The good thing is, if you can handle the stream of email its worth signing up to their lists just to get the free stuff. **The best information however like everything requires a little investment.**

Mike Koenigs with Traffic Gyser (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/traffic>)

Frank Kern with Masscontrol (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/kern>)

Eben Pagen (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/eben>)

Dan Kennedy and **Bill Glazer's** with Insiders Circle (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/insiderscircle>)

Howie Schwartz. My first experience with Howie was buying his “Howie’s Pool Party”, in truth I don’t like some of his techniques, because it is boarder line spamming of search engines. But I do admire him in many other ways. This is worth buying just to get an idea of the scale of some people’s Internet marketing strategies. (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/howie>)

Brad Callen with SEO Elite & Keyword Elite (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/seoelite>)

Jeff Johnson with Under Ground Training Lab (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/underground>)

All the people at **Stompernet** (<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/stompernet>)

About the Author

Stephen Baugh is a successful entrepreneur based in Auckland, New Zealand. He currently serves as a Managing Director, working with other family members, of two significant international companies in the photographic and wedding industries. As the company IT expert, Stephen led the technology side of the two businesses during their successful expansion outside their home market, to become true globally focused enterprises.

Stephen showed his entrepreneurial stripe many years ago collecting coke bottles, lawn mowing, working in the family retail store, and learning the value of hard work. Early in his career, he installed computer systems for a legal firm, worked in the hospitality industry as a waiter, and spent seven years as a salesman for Xerox in Australia.

In 1996, Stephen returned to New Zealand with his wife, when the family business only had about 12 staff but bold ambitions of going international. Now, with the business having evolved into a group of companies with a staff of well over 100 and revenues many times multiplied, Stephen's passion is for the company to benchmark itself against the worlds best in HR, IT, quality, design and service.

Over the years these companies have won many awards and have been recognized for their excellence in Human Resources, Customer Service, IT, Exporting, and Innovation. Stephen himself has done extensive public speaking for a number of organizations with in New Zealand.

<http://stephenbaugh.com/blog/>