

# **How to Start a Home Based Business**



## **Step by Step Training**

**by Laurie Neumann**

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## Foreword

Well, here we go on our journey of starting a home based business. I am excited and hope you are too!

There are twelve chapters in this ebook. Each chapter has a lesson and an assignment.

The way I suggest that you use this ebook is to take one chapter at a time. Read through it and do the assignment. Try to complete the assignment before moving on to the next chapter.

Ideally, do one chapter per week. However, if it seems like there is too much to get done in a week, go at your own pace. **But do something every week toward starting your home based business.**

My goal in this ebook is to give you a clear, step-by-step approach to starting and marketing a home based business. I want this ebook to help you overcome any "overwhelmed" or "confused" feelings you have in starting a business.

Let's get started!

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

**Welcome to Home Business Beginners! I am thrilled that you have joined me in this journey.**

Over the next twelve chapters, **you will learn how to choose and start a home based business, get it up and running and market it.** You will have marketing strategies to implement week after week to grow your business.

The purpose of this ebook is to help the person who is just starting a home based business and really does not know what to do or where to start. That can be overwhelming. I know because I've been there.

This ebook will also help you if you already own a home based business, but are having a difficult time seeing success.

I started my journey of working from home about three years ago. I started out by owning an online Christian bookstore. I joined an existing company and purchased a bookstore from them. I loved the business because I was selling Christian books, music, Bibles – all items I believed in. I also enjoyed the contact I had with other bookstore owners through weekly calls that were held.

About a year later, the company ran into some financial difficulties and had to close down for a period of time. It was then that I started my current business of owning a home business website, where home business seekers are connected with legitimate home based opportunities.

This has been quite a journey. I have had the opportunity to learn so many new things, which at times has been challenging, but that's how we keep growing, right?

I want to present you with a step-by-step process to get you started in your own home based business. I know there are so many people out there who want to own their own business, but get discouraged because they don't know where to start.

### **What Will We Cover?**

In the coming weeks, we will walk through the process. Here are the topics that will be covered.

- **Choosing a Niche** – this is the fundamental lesson. This is where you will decide which area you are going to start a business in. You will also learn how to research the market *before* you get into a business in that niche to check for profit potential.

- **Decide on what type of business you will start.** Will you join a direct sales company or start your own business? We will explore the different options you have. Will you offer a service or product?
- **Website setup, choosing a domain name and web hosting** – three of the basics.
- **Writing Content** for your website. You will learn how to write for the web and for search engine optimization purposes.
- **Getting inbound links** – very important if you want your website to rank well in the search engines.
- **Marketing strategies** – we will cover six important marketing strategies (one to two per lesson), most of them being free to implement.
  - **Article writing**
  - **Forum Posting**
  - **Joint Ventures** – an important strategy for success
  - **Paid advertising** – learn about where to advertise and learn the basics of Google adwords
  - **Email list/autoresponders** – having an email list is VERY important. You will get this set up.
  - **Affiliate program** – learn how to get others to promote your products/services for free.

As you can see, we will start at the beginning and move on to the next steps. I believe the reason so many businesses fail is that the owner did not do their research beforehand. They saw something they thought they would like to do and dove in without checking the market.

Or possibly they were under the misconception that once their business got up and running, people would flock to their website to buy what they were offering. Wouldn't that be nice? No, that's not the way it is. You need to promote and market your business where it will be effective. And you need to do it consistently.

## **Scams**

I would like to say a word about scams. It would be hard to have a discussion on the topic of home based business without addressing this issue, so let's do it now and get it out of the way☺

What is a scam? According to definitions listed on the web, a scam is a ploy to raise money, or a fraudulent business scheme. Therefore, when you are dealing with a scam, you will end up paying money and getting nothing in return.

There are certain situations that should raise a red flag in your mind when you encounter them.

Things to avoid:

- Any type of “job” that requires you to pay before they give you the job (**not to be confused with investing in the start-up of a business, or paying a membership fee to acquire a telecommuting jobs listing. These can definitely be legitimate**).
- Any promise of making a certain amount of money in a specified period of time. No one can follow through on that kind of promise.
- An opportunity that promises a good amount of money for no work. Stay away from these. Work is good, and you will get out of a business what you put into it.
- No contact information – there should be a way to get in touch with them - phone number, address, or email address, preferably all three.

### **Scam or Lack of Research/Effort?**

Now, I need to confess a “pet peeve” of mine. I do not like to hear people blame a failure on the opportunity being a scam when it was really them that did not put the time or effort into it. Or they may not have put ENOUGH time and effort into it.

Be prepared to give consistent time to your business every day/week. You will need to work on these things every week:

- Promoting and marketing your business
- Establishing and growing relationships – through forums, joint ventures, etc.
- Gaining new subscribers to your list
- Posting to your blog (optional but recommended)

There are definite scams out there, but I don’t feel it has to be as prevalent as it seems to be. If you do your research and know exactly what the business involves, what you have to do to earn money, how much money can be earned and if there is a market willing to spend money on this type of product or service, then you can avoid the scams. Remember the old saying, “if it seems too good to be true, then it probably is”? Apply it to home based opportunities.

You will need to work – not twenty hours a day, but a good, consistent amount of work each day. Of course, one of the reasons people work at home is for the flexibility. This is a benefit of a home based business. I am not saying you need to be at your computer from 9-5 every day. I have other commitments that I have to work my business around. However, I do try to spend some time each day working at my business. And you know what? I look forward to it because I love what I do.

You will need to be patient and persevere, even when things are slow going.

## What is Your REAL Reason?

It is a good idea to write down why you want to work from home, and more specifically, why you want to get into the particular type of business you choose. When you get discouraged, read what you have written and regain your perspective.

Think about the “real” reason you want to work from home. Do you have young children and don’t want to be away from them? Do you have aging parents that you would like to be available for? Is there stress in your marriage because of the long hours you are both working now? Would a little extra income make your life better? This is what I mean by the real reason. You may say you want to work from home, but what is the reason behind your desire? That is what will keep you going through the tough times of getting a business up and going.

It is also good to get involved with a group of people who have similar goals (whether it be online or offline) so you can encourage each other. It also helps to share ideas and strategies. This is also a great place to make contacts for your business and for joint venture partners (we will discuss this further in a later lesson.)

Right now, I just want to lay the groundwork for this whole process. **You can start a successful home based business!**

See Assignment below.

### This Week’s Assignment

Write down why you want to work from home. Think of the REAL reasons.

- Want to be home with your kids
- Want to have more time with family – why? For a closer family, to take care of aging parents, etc.
- Want more freedom/flexibility in your life
- Want extra income – why? To help with college costs, pay the bills, take a vacation – it is important to be specific

What I am trying to get at here is that you need to write down the specific reasons you want to be home. The “surface” reason may be to earn more money, but if you dig deeper, more money can mean developing closer family relationships on vacation, or taking stress off your marriage because the financial burden is lessened.

It is the “specifics” that will keep you going through the challenging times, so this is an important beginning exercise.

## Chapter 2

### How to Find a Profitable Niche

First and foremost, what is a niche? A niche refers to a specified field or topic of interest. Some examples of niches are golfing, web design, scrapbooking, etc.

The people who are interested in these niches are your “target market.” In staying with the above example, your target market would be golfers, business owners who need a website and scrapbookers. Your market could also include people who buy gifts for golfers and scrapbookers.

No matter what type of business you decide on, you will be marketing to a certain group of people. This is true whether you are joining a direct sales company or starting your business from scratch. It is also true whether you are offering a product or a service. There will always be a specific market of people who you will need to reach with your offer.

Let's look at some examples.

#### **Business**

Daycare  
Web Designer  
Candle Distributor

Tutors  
Fitness Coach

#### **Target Market**

Parents of young children  
People who need a website  
People who love candles for themselves or as gifts  
Parents of school age children  
People who want to get in shape

So, no matter what business you want to go into, you will be entering a niche. Before you jump into a niche with both feet, there are a few things you will want to check into.

For a niche to qualify to have profit potential, you need to determine if it is worth pursuing. To determine this, make sure it possesses the following two characteristics:

1. It is actively searched for on the Internet
2. Some “competition” already exists in the marketplace



#### **Is it Actively Searched For?**

Let's look at possibly the most important factor, being that it is actively searched for.

First, go to [www.wordtracker.com](http://www.wordtracker.com), which is a tool you can use to see how many online searches there has been for a particular product/service. To do this, you can sign up for their free trial or you can pay to get more detailed results. The free trial only gives results of how many competing sites there are for the chosen keywords in MSN. With the paid version, you get the results in Google, Yahoo and other search engines.

Let me give a quick explanation of the term “keywords.” These are the words someone will type into the search box of a search engine to find the product they are looking for.

For example, if you are looking for golf clubs, you will go to Google’s search box and type in “golf clubs.” Those are keywords. Now, if you are looking for a specific brand of golf clubs, you will type that in, such as “Callaway golf clubs.” Those are also keywords – more specific ones. The more specific you get with a term, it will reduce the number of competing sites there are. It also reduces the number of searches there are for the term, but it will be a more focused, potentially a more “ready to buy” market.

Type your keywords (the same words you would use to search for the type of product/service you are thinking of offering) into the search box in Wordtracker. A list of phrases will come up. Click on the phrase you want to check out, then you will be shown how many searches that phrase has gotten. You will also be given other related keyword phrases. You can then select as many phrases as you want (step 2) and click on “step 3.” This will show you your list of selected terms. Then go to Step 4, where you will see your selected keyword phrases, the number of searches they got, and the number of competing sites there are for that particular keyword phrase.

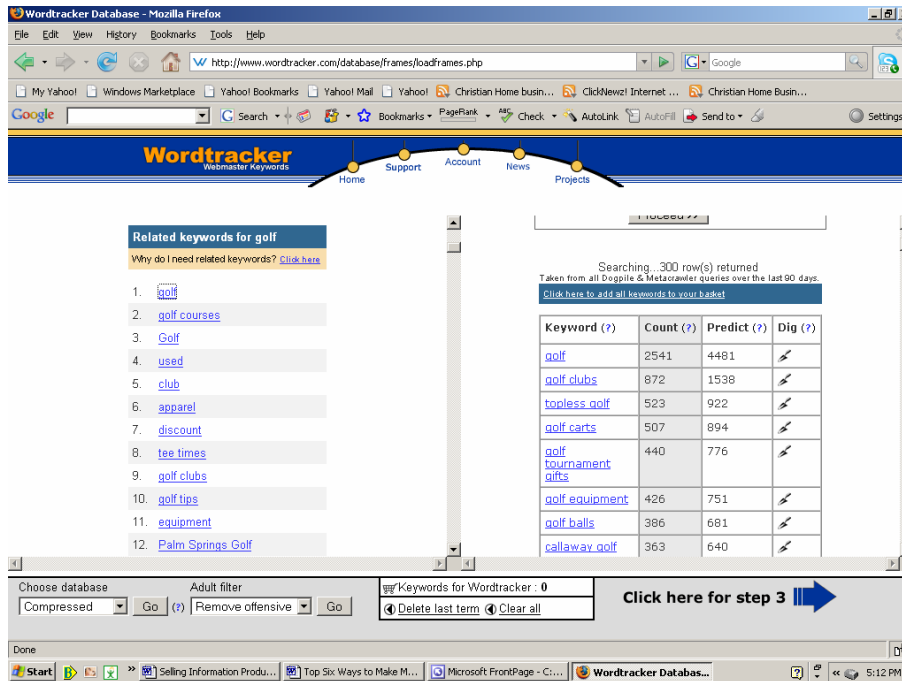
Let’s look at an example. Look at the general term “golf.” At the time of this writing, there are 2807 searches for the term. That is a decent amount. You want to look at the other terms in the golf niche that are searched for to see how many other more specific niches are available.

Here are some of the results given at the time of this writing.

- golf clubs 284 searches
- golf carts 535 searches
- golf equipment 458 searches
- golf balls 432 searches
- Callaway golf 391 searches
- golf travel cases 344 searches
- golf vacations 333 searches
- golf gifts 320 searches
- discount golf clubs 311 searches

And so on. As you can see, there are many niches within “golf” that you could capitalize on. So, the niche seems to be a good one as far as how many people are searching for golf related items.

See the screenshot below of Wordtracker in step 2.



## What is a good number of searches?

There is no specific answer to this. Let's look at the golf example again. For the general term "golf" there are over 2800 searches. That's a good amount of searches. There are also many other more specific terms with a good amount of searches within that niche. This opens up possibilities for future niche products, so picking a good sized niche is important. If you go with one that only has one or two well searched keyword phrases, that will limit your potential in that niche.

## Narrow it Down

Now, if you just look to market to those looking for "golf", you are going to get people looking for everything from golf clubs to a gift for someone that is a golfer. The majority will probably be looking for something other than what you are offering. You will want to pick a more specific market. Again, look at the possibilities below.

- golf clubs 284 searches
- golf carts 535 searches
- golf equipment 458 searches
- golf balls 432 searches
- Callaway golf 391 searches
- golf travel cases 344 searches
- golf vacations 333 searches
- golf gifts 320 searches
- discount golf clubs 311 searches
- used golf carts 344 searches
- golf shoes 343 searches

By being more specific, you will attract people who are looking specifically for what you have. There will be less searches than a more general term, but will be more targeted. Those are the people you want to bring to your site because those are the people that will ultimately buy your product.

Once you have found a topic with good potential, you will want to check some other things.

### **Check Amazon and Bookstores**

Check amazon.com to see if there are books and magazines published on your topic. If people are paying to publish books, we can assume that it is a profitable topic.

Also, check your local bookstore and look in some of the magazines published on the topic. If people are paying to advertise items related to your potential niche in these magazines (which is not cheap!), then there must be a buying market for it.

We all know there are many books and magazines published on golf, so check on the specific niche you want to target, such as golf gifts or golf shoes. Are there ads in the magazines for these types of items? If yes, this is another green light.

Here's another way to check the market.

### **Google Adwords**

Go to google.com and type in your search phrase. Let's stick with the golf gifts niche. Put that phrase into Google and check to see if there are ads down the right side of the page and on top of the page. You bet!

This shows that people are paying to advertise in this niche, for the type of product you want to offer. People do not continue to pay to advertise if it is not profitable for them. That is why this a good tool to use to research what the market is buying. What you are doing here is taking advantage of the testing that has already been done for you. People who are advertising usually have tested the market and concluded that it is worth their advertising dollars to reach this market. Just research what has already been tested.

## **Some Competition already exists**

When developing niche products, your goal is NOT to reinvent the wheel. You want to find markets that are *underserved* on the Internet, but **not totally ignored**.

If there is no competition for a particular niche, it could be because of the following reasons:

- The niche is too small to be profitable OR
- Someone has already tried to dominate the niche, but found it unprofitable

While there may not be anyone selling your exact product, there still needs to be other products being sold and bought by the market you would be targeting. In other words, you may have come up with a new invention for dogs. Maybe a shampoo/soap that really helps with your dog's itchy skin. There may not be anyone else selling your particular products, but there are other products being sold to dog owners. That constitutes competition.

Competition is also good to be able to find joint venture partners, meaning people who are targeting the same market as you are, and that will offer your product on their site, or link to your site. You want to approach others who are targeting the same market as you.

So, as you can see, competition can be a blessing, as well as a challenge.

### **Do You Enjoy the Niche?**

This is one last thing to consider. It is not essential that your niche reflect your passion. You can make money in niches without being particularly interested in them.

While it does not have to be your passion, it does help if you have some interest in it. It will make it much easier to stick with the niche and be enthusiastic in your sales letters and recommendations.

This is the first step in choosing a home based business. Find a niche that has profit potential. Figure out who your target market is by thinking who it is that would be interested in buying your product. There may be more than one group, but who is the main group going to be?

See below for Assignment.

## Lesson #1 Assignment

1. **Choose a niche.** Take an inventory of your interests, skills values, strengths and passions. Write them down.

Then, write down any business that could be home based that relates to each of the areas you have written down.

For example: Let's say one of your interests is cooking. Think about what type of businesses you could be involved with that relate to the cooking field.

- Catering
- Writing cookbooks
- Start a blog and share cooking tips and recipes. Make product recommendations (affiliate marketing).
- Join a direct sales company that sells cookware, kitchen items, gourmet food items

Write down any business that comes to mind that relates to the field. You can go back and assess them later and decide which best fits your personality, strengths, time frame, etc.

2. **Find out if the niche is actively searched for.** Refer back to the section on Wordtracker. If it gets a good amount of searches, great! If not, check on some other keywords that could be used to search for this type of business.

Think like your potential customer. What words would they use to look for your type of product/service?

If there are absolutely no keyword phrases that have many searches for this type of business, go on to something else. People have to be actively looking for it and want it for it to be profitable.

Be sure to also check out Amazon and Adwords. (refer to previous sections)

3. **Find out who your target market is.** After you have found a niche you would like to pursue with profit potential, decide who you will be marketing to.

Who are the people that would be interested in your product/service? Back to the golfing niche, your target market would be golfers and those wanting to buy gifts for golfers.

For scrapbooking supplies, your market will be those interested in scrapbooking.

If you are selling pet items, your target market will be pet owners.

## Chapter 3

### What are Your Options?

I hope you have found a niche that seems like it has profit potential. If you haven't, go back to Lesson 1 (Finding Your Niche) and go back over the steps that were outlined. You may need to go through this process several times before you find a niche that passes the test!

Let's assume you have found a niche. There are different options you have for a home business within that niche.



#### **Option 1. Direct Sales (join an existing company)**

First, there is the option of "direct sales". What is meant by direct sales? According to a definition given by the American Marketing Association, direct sales is a marketing approach that involves direct sales of goods and services to consumers through personal explanation and demonstrations, frequently in their home or place of work.

This would involve finding an existing company that sells products within your niche. You would join them as a consultant or distributor. Then, you would promote and sell their products and earn a commission on any sales you make.

Sales are generally made through home parties, online sales (through a website or blog) or referrals (word of mouth).

**Advantages of Direct Sales** (joining an existing company and selling their products):

- The product is already created – you just have to promote it.
- You can get an idea from other people working this business as to how the product sells before you join.
- You are usually given some type of training.
- You will be connected to others who are doing the same type of business as you – you can share ideas and information and gain wisdom from their experiences. You are a part of something "bigger" than you would be if you were starting a business on your own.
- You can get started on a home business quicker than if you were developing the business from scratch.
- You normally have the option of "building a team", which means recruiting others to start a business of their own. This allows for another source of income besides selling the product.

### **Some disadvantages of direct sales:**

- Because you are joining a company, you will need to abide by their rules and policies. You may not agree with everything the way it is set up, but you will need to do things their way.
- You will only make a percentage of what the product sells for, not the entire amount.
- There may be limitations or restrictions on how you can sell online, or what you can include on your website.

Some examples of well-known direct sales companies are Tupperware, Mary Kay, and Amway and there are numerous others. Each company will have its own compensation structure and its own way of handling training, etc. Below are some things you will want to check out before joining any company.

- How long have they been in business? I recommend going with one that has been in business for at least 3-5 years. The longer the better.
- Are they profitable? Ask the leaders for past profitability information.
- Are they as concerned with selling the product as they are with recruiting new business owners?
- What is the compensation plan? In other words, know exactly what you need to do to earn money. Does this seem doable to be able to reach the earnings goal you have set? Can you explain it to others if they are interested in the opportunity? Look for a plan that isn't geared only for the seasoned consultant. If a new recruit isn't able to earn an income, they won't remain for long.
- What are the start up costs? Are there any monthly/quarterly or other quotas to meet or fees to pay? If you are required to purchase a minimum amount each month, you'll probably want to look elsewhere.
- Will you be given a website, and if so, what are the costs associated with it?
- Are the leaders accessible – can you contact them by phone if you need them?
- Talk to others who have been involved with the company for a while and glean all you can from their experiences. Ask them for the negatives as well as the positives about the company and the business opportunity.
- Are the products priced so people can afford them? Are they exclusive to the party plan company? If the products are exclusive to the company, make sure they are effective and competitively priced so your customer will want to purchase more in the future.
- Will the product bring repeat sales? Will the initial sale be the only one because the product isn't consumable? If the product you sell is worth the money, provides great results, and is consumable, it is likely you'll have a customer for a long time.

- Is there a money back guarantee on the products? With the problems that have been reported recently, it's important to find a company that will offer a 100% satisfaction guarantee. People will be more willing to make the initial purchase if they feel the company will fix any problem they might have with a product.
- Check the company out with the Better Business Bureau. Make sure they have a satisfactory rating with them.
- Does the company value the same things that you value? If you cannot stand behind what the company believes in, it might not be the right one for you.

If you check into all of the above items, you should have a good idea of what you are getting involved in. Go in with your eyes open.

Another thing you will want to consider with doing a direct sales type of business is that, if home parties are going to be a big source of your sales, these are normally held at night or on weekends. Will that work with your schedule?

I definitely recommend going with a product that you use and believe in. Your personal stories and experiences with the product will go a long way in promoting it.

How do you find a direct sales opportunity in your niche? Visit the many work at home/home business sites there are. Many will have opportunities listed. Another way is to do a search in Google. Put in your niche + home business opportunity. For example, "home décor + home business opportunity" (without the quotes.) Explore any relevant sites that come up.

Another source of information on opportunities can be home business forums. There are members with many different opportunities represented there, so spend some time there and observe what is being said. Ask them if they are happy with the business and the company.

## Option 2. Start a business on your own

This means you would be starting your own business and not joining up with any particular company. While this does not have to be a one-man show, you will be responsible for setting up the business and making the decisions. Some people love this idea, while others are intimidated by it. You should determine which category you are in and let this help guide you in deciding which type of business option to go with, whether you will start a business on your own or join an existing company

The **advantages** of starting your own business:

- You decide how things are run and you make the decisions
- You keep the entire profit from a sale if it is your own product or service
- You can recruit affiliates to promote your product or service

## **Disadvantages:**

You are it! You are the boss, the decision maker and the employee. This can seem a little overwhelming when starting out.

Here are your options for starting your own business.

### **Sell a Service**

This can include consulting, daycare, bookkeeping, transcription, etc. There are many options of providing a service. Think about your own skills and strengths. What can you offer that other people would benefit from? Again, do the research that was outlined in lesson 1 to see the demand for this type of service.

### **Sell a Product**

Have you developed a product of your own? Many people make their own soap, candles, bath products, etc. Others write information products such as ebooks and reports. Either physical or digital, this constitutes your own product.

### **Affiliate Marketing**

Aside from promoting your own product or service, another way to start your own business is by affiliate marketing. You would still decide on a niche, then look for affiliate products to promote. Again, these are other people's products that you would sell and earn a commission whenever you make a sale.

Go to Google and type in your niche + affiliate. For example, home décor + affiliate. This will bring up websites in the home décor niche that offer affiliate programs.

Affiliate marketing is a quick and simple way to get a business started, because you do not need to develop the product yourself. It is also a low cost way to start.

You need to get to know the products you are promoting. It is ideal to purchase them yourself so you can write up a personal testimonial of what you like about the product and how it has made a difference in your business, your life, etc.

You will need to promote the affiliate products just as you would your own. Write up a review page on the product and put it on your website or blog. Use a link to the review page of the product in your signature line of your emails, forum postings, etc. Pay to place ads either in Google adwords or on websites that would attract your target market. (we will cover this in more detail in future lessons.)

One thing to keep in mind when looking for affiliate products is to choose high quality products. Remember your reputation is at stake here. If you are promoting a product, whether it's your own or someone else's, you want it to be something you feel good about and that others will too.

Products (whether they are your own or an affiliate product) can include physical products or digital products. So you can build a business around selling something like candles or you can sell information products such as ebooks. The choice is yours. There are many of both kinds to choose from.

### **Sell Wholesale/Dropship Products**

Wholesale/dropshipping involves working with physical products, as opposed to digital products (such as ebooks). You can sign up to buy products at wholesale prices, then resell them at retail price. With wholesale, you would hold the inventory and be responsible for sending out the products to your customers.

Dropshipping means you would take the orders through your website (or can take phone orders), then place the order with a company that dropships to your customer (sends the product directly to them.) In the case of dropshipping, you do not hold the inventory.

## **This Week's Assignment**

Decide which option you want to go with to start your business – joining a direct sales company or starting a business from scratch.

If it is a direct sales company, do your research. Find a company that offers what you would like to sell. Go through the checklist in this lesson and make sure you know the answers to all the questions about the company.

If you are starting your own business yourself, what will you offer? A product or a service?

For now, just decide on how you will do business. In later lessons, we will cover several ways to promote your business, most of them being free!

### **\*\*\*RESOURCES\*\*\***

#### **Wholesale/Dropship Product Directory**

[One Source](#) – through Worldwide Brands – the only wholesale directory certified by Ebay

#### **Business Cards**

[www.vistaprint.com](http://www.vistaprint.com) – get 250 free (just pay shipping)

## Chapter 4

### Basic Setup of Website, Domain, Web hosting

Well, you have found a niche and decided what way you are going to start a business. You know what you want to sell. Now, you need to have a “place” people can go to find out about your product/service.

#### Creating a Website



You now need to create a website. This can seem like an overwhelming task if you are not “technically” inclined. You have a few different options to accomplish this. Please see the resources listed at the end of this lesson.

1. **Build it Yourself** If this is the option you choose, you will need a webpage editor and a working knowledge of html. If you have some experience with it, this may be a very doable project. If you don't, you should think about getting some help with it.
2. **Hire a professional web designer.** This is a great option because it leaves you free to get your business up and going, but it *can* be expensive. Try to find a reasonably priced designer who has a portfolio of good designs. Also, look for one that communicates what they will do for you clearly. A good designer will be concerned with not only the look of the site, but also how it communicates with your customers.
3. **Use a template and site builder** to assist you in creating your own site. These can be a great help in getting your site up quickly and easier than doing it yourself. Check out the costs. Some require a monthly fee or that you host your website with them.

#### Fundamentals of Your Website

Your website speaks for you. What do you want it to say? You are not there to greet your visitors, so your website has to do it for you. Think about what your website is meant to accomplish. What is its overall purpose?

- Are you trying to sell a product or a service?
- Are you providing information?
- Is it a forum/message board/community type of site?

On the last two types, you would most likely be promoting affiliate products or using adsense to generate income (more to come on these in later lessons.)

After you determine the overall purpose of your website, look at each page individually. Each page has its own purpose. It may be to sell a product. It may be to provide information (as in an article). It might be an “about us” page that tells your visitors who you are and helps them get to know you.

Whatever it is, make sure it is clear. Someone should be able to scan down the page and quickly determine what the page is all about.

## **Navigation**

Make sure you have a clear and consistent form of navigation. The common position is down the left side of the page. However, sometimes you will also see it along the top. You determine what you want, and then be consistent on each page.

## **Graphics**

Use **professional looking graphics**. If you have your own product and are taking your own pictures, make sure they are high quality.

Graphics are helpful to use, but don't let them take the place of words. You also need to tell your visitors about the products, not just show them pictures. Give them a written description.

**A professional header** is important. If you can't do this yourself, it is worth the money to hire someone to do it for you. This is the first impression of your website someone has, so make it a good one. Give a professional image.

Include your **contact information** on your website. I have gotten several phone calls from people telling me I was the only home business site they could find that had a phone number. Think about it – don't you feel better doing business with someone who has a phone number listed? It doesn't have to be your home number. You can get a toll-free number or have a separate phone line for business calls.

## **Domain Name**

A domain name, simply defined, is your address on the web. It is the address someone types into the address bar to get to your website.

### **How do You Choose a Domain Name?**

There are a few things to consider. First, you will want it to identify your business. The domain name should tell someone what your business is all about. For example, my domain name (christianhomebusinessconnection.com) tells that we connect others with home based businesses and our service is based on Christian principles. You will want to include your keywords as much as possible in your domain name. My keywords are Christian home business and Christian home based business. So my keywords are included in the domain name. Why does it matter? Because when someone links to your site, they usually link to the homepage, which will just be your domain name. It is to your advantage to have your keywords in the domain because this helps confirm with the search engines what your site is all about. It should help in your search engine rankings. It is not essential to include all your keywords in the name, but do your best.

It is good to keep it short and easy to remember. You also want to get a dot com ending as most people assume it is dot com and automatically put that in.

When possible, choose a name without using any hyphens or terms that could be interpreted different ways (such as "four" can be put in as "4" or "for." Your goal is to choose a domain name that describes your business and is easy to remember and spell.

You need to check for your choice of a domain to see if it is available or if someone else has already secured it. To check, you can go to [IPower](#) (that is who I use) and click on "domains" in the upper left corner. Fill in the name you are thinking of. I believe you will have to register for an account to do this (free to register.) Or you can go to Google and type in "check domain availability" and use a resource that is listed there.

## Web Hosting

In order to publish a website online, you need a web host. The web host stores all the pages of your website and makes them available to computers connected to the internet.

(definition according to techterms.com)

Check around to find a web host that offers the features you will need. Most offer more than enough server space, technical support, and other features such as a forum board option, etc. I would recommend finding a host with 24/7 phone support. Not all have this feature and it is important. If you are having an issue with your website, you do not want to wait until you get an email back from them, or if it happens over the weekend, you want someone there to help.

Web hosting pricing is pretty similar. We pay \$7.95 per month (that includes the domain name), which is pretty typical.

## This Week's Assignment

1. Decide how you will create your website. Will you do it yourself, use a site builder, or hire a professional? (See Resource section at the end of this report)

Take the step and get it done.

2. Choose a domain name. Check it out for availability and purchase it.

3. Sign up for web hosting.

This seems like a short lesson on paper, but quite a bit to implement. Do not get overwhelmed. Take it one step at a time.

- Register a domain name
- Sign up for web hosting
- Set up your website (or have it created)

**Congratulations!!!** You now have a website and are ready to get out there and promote your new business

## Chapter 5 – Part One

### Writing Content

Now it is time to write the content (also called copy) for your webpages.

Search engines are looking for websites that provide content relevant to the niche they are in. The more relevant the information on your website is to the topic (keywords) the higher of a ranking it receives.

First, let me say that I am not a professional copywriter, so what I am going to cover is just some basic information. Things to consider when you are writing up the content for your pages.

- Write your content in an **average level vocabulary**. The average internet reader wants clear, easy to understand information.



- Write it in a **conversational tone**. This means to talk to your visitor as if you and they were having a conversation. Most websites do not need formal writing.
- Make the **content targeted to your visitor** and about them. Don't use a lot of "I's": instead use "you" (referring to the visitor). Instead of saying, "I offer the best service" say, "**you** will be given the best service."
- **List the benefits** of your product/service to your visitor. This will describe how using your product/service will *benefit them*. Will it save them time or money? Will it make them look younger? This is what will sell it – tell them what they will get out of it. Give them specifics. Tell them **how** it will save them time or money, or how it will make them look younger. People need to be convinced before they buy.
- Make sure your information is **accurate**.
- **Use your keywords** (keywords are covered in the next part on search engine optimization) in the title and naturally in the text on the page. Don't make it sound forced; use your keywords naturally so it doesn't sound like you are trying to manipulate the search engines. They won't like that 😊
- **Headlines** (the title on the page) are very important! Say something that will get their attention. It is also good to use some sub-headlines throughout your text to break it up. This will be helpful to people who are skimming the page to let them know what it is about.

I find it is helpful to look at other sites' headlines, or headlines on sales letters and take notice of the ones that get your attention. What kind of headlines do

they use? Try rewording some of them with your own information, but you can use the general idea.

- **Write short paragraphs** (2-3 sentences.) Most people scan down a page, looking for the information they want. They won't bother to read lengthy paragraphs.
- **Use bullet points** to list things like benefits. This will make them stand out and people can quickly scan them and see what interests them.
- **Keep your content updated.** Search engines like this as well as your visitors.
- **Include testimonials** on your webpage whenever possible. Have someone who has used the product/service write one up and tell how it helped them. These go a long way in making the sale.
- Make sure every page has a **"call to action."** What is the purpose of the page? What action do you want your visitors to take?
  - Buy your product
  - Sign up for your service
  - Sign up for your newsletter/ mailing list

Every page should have its own purpose. You need to tell your visitors what to do – what action you want them to take. Here are some examples:

- Click the "buy now" button to purchase\_\_\_\_\_
- Fill in your name and email to sign up for our newsletter.
- Click the link below to order your copy

It is important that you direct people to what to do. You are familiar with your website so it seems obvious to you, but it isn't always obvious to your new visitor.

- Last, but not least, **proofread for grammar and spelling errors.** Your writing does not need to be formal, in fact, for most websites, it is better if it's not. However, having mistakes in spelling and grammar looks unprofessional. You want it to sound friendly, yet professional.

## **This Week's Assignment (Do after you have read the section on Search Engine Optimization)**

Start writing your content for your webpages. Take one page at a time and think about what you want to convey on that page.

Do your keyword research and choose your keywords for the page.

Follow each step outlined in this lesson on every page. Check:

- Does it have an attention-getting headline?
- Do you tell the benefits of your product/service?
- Are you writing it as if you are talking to your visitor?
- Do you use mainly "you" instead of "I" or "we"?
- Are you keeping your paragraphs short?
- Are you using sub-headlines to make important points stand out?
- Do you use bullet points where applicable?
- Have you written your copy in a friendly tone?
- Have you included testimonials?
- Do you have a call to action on every page?
- Have you proofread your copy for errors?

## Chapter 5 – Part Two

### Getting Traffic

#### Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Over the next few lessons, we will be discussing bringing targeted traffic to your website. Notice that I said “targeted.” There are places out there that will bring you a ton of traffic, only to have someone click in and get back out. That is useless traffic.

We are going to be talking about traffic from people who are actually interested in what you are offering. After all, that is what is going to make a difference and turn those visitors into buying customers. Isn't that the goal? You can have a thousand visitors per day, but if no one is buying anything, it is not going to benefit you.

We will start out talking about search engine optimization (seo). A scary phrase? It doesn't have to be.

What is search engine optimization? I am going to put it in simple terms. It is the process of working with your website to bring in more natural (organic) traffic through the search engines. This can be accomplished by using targeted keywords, providing relevant content, and having a good number of inbound links from other relevant sites. I hope I haven't lost you yet. We will go over each strategy.

**Note: If you are joining a direct sales company and given a website from them, you may not be able to change the content on the pages or optimize them for different keywords. You may be limited on how many (if any) changes or additions you can make to the site. Ask them about this. If this is the case, focus on the other methods of bringing traffic to your site that we will discuss in future lessons**

#### Keywords

Although you want your website to be centered around a general theme, you will want to optimize each page individually for its own keywords. How do you choose your keywords? Ask yourself, “what is this page really about?” If you have a website centered around golden retrievers, you don't necessarily want to bring in people who have a general interest in dogs. You want to attract people who are crazy about golden retrievers, who own one, and who are ready and willing to spend money on products and information that would be helpful for owners of golden retrievers.

Let's look at some examples:

Poor SEO title: “Why I had a terrible day”

Better SEO title: “The effects of acne on self esteem”

Notice the second title tells you exactly what the page is about.

Poor SEO title: “A lesson I learned at the grocery store”

Better SEO title: "Disciplining Your Child in Public"

Notice that the first title could be about anything. The second one will attract parents who have struggled with disciplining their children in public and are looking for help.

Your title and keywords are going to tell the search engines exactly what your page is about so that they will send you the right kind of traffic.

You will need to do some research on what keywords people are searching for before you choose the ones to use on your pages. You don't want to pick keywords that are not searched for because this will not result in bringing traffic to your site.

The tool I recommend using to do keyword research is [wordtracker.com](http://wordtracker.com)

Go to [www.wordtracker.com](http://www.wordtracker.com), which is a tool you can use to see how many online searches there has been. To do this, you can sign up for their free trial or you can pay to get more detailed results. The free trial only gives results of the number of competitive sites in msn. With the paid version, you can get the results in Google, Yahoo and other search engines.

**There are 4 steps to wordtracker.**

**Step 1.** Type in your keyword phrase (words you would use to search for the type of product you are offering on that page) into the search box in wordtracker

**Step 2.** Shows you your keyword phrase plus other related phrases. Click on the phrase you want to select and to the right it will show you how many searches that particular phrase has gotten.

Then click on the phrases you want to check out further (to see how many competitive sites there are using that same keyword phrase) and proceed to step 3.

**Step 3.** Gives a list of all the keyword phrases selected from step 2.

**Step 4.** Shows your selected keyword phrases, number of searches it has gotten, and the number of competitive sites there are for that same keyword phrase. Ideally, what you are looking for is a good number of searches and a low number of competitive sites. There is no hard and fast rule as to what these numbers should be. As you get more experienced, you will get a better feel for this. However, in the beginning, look for phrases that are not too competitive. Look at the overall size of the niche. For example, the golf niche offers many keyword phrases you could build pages around and products you can offer. So, even if they don't all get a lot of searches, the volume of potential possibilities may make up for it.

The more pages you have on your website optimized for different keywords, the more you will bring traffic in from people looking for these different products.

Think of your website as a house, with many different doors. People can enter the house from any door, but they still end up in the same house. It is the same with your website. The more pages you have that people can enter through, the better. They still end up at your website. So your goal is to end up highly ranked in the search engines for many different keyword phrases (all related to each other, i.e. all

in the golf niche.) So, you may have a page that sells golf balls, another that sells golf shirts, another that sells golf shoes, etc. These pages are all part of one site – your golf site. People can enter through any of these pages. Your goal is to be highly ranked for each of the keywords that go with these pages.

When you “optimize” your page for a specific keyword phrase, that means you should use it in your title tag (meta tag – see below), and use the phrase naturally a few more times on the page.

### **A quick word about meta tags**

Let me begin by saying if you do not understand this part, do not worry. This is not a major part of search engine optimization. If you have your website designed for you, your designer should know about these and be able to do this for you.

A meta tag is a special html tag that provides information about a web page. Many search engines use these meta tags when they determine what your site is about for their index. (definition according to webopedia.com)

Although meta tags are not nearly as important in your ranking in the search engines as they used to be, you should still take the extra step to change them on each page.

The tags that you should be concerned with are the title tag, the description tag, and the keyword tag. All three of these tags should include your keyword phrase for the page.

**Note:** if you are joining with a direct sales company and receive a website from them, you may not be able to change the meta tags.

**See Assignment below.**

## This Week's Assignment

1. Look at each page of your website. Ask yourself:
  - What is this page really going to be about?
  - What type of person do I want to attract to this page?
  - What are the keyword phrase/phrases they would put into Google or any search engine to find my page?

These are the keywords you want to start researching in wordtracker.

2. Go to [Wordtracker](#). Sign up for a free trial. Find the best combination of keywords as far as the number of searches and the number of competitive sites there are. Make sure the keyword phrase REALLY describes what the page is all about.
3. If possible, change the meta tags (title, description, and keyword) on each page to reflect the keyword phrase you have chosen.

**Don't forget to do your homework from Part 1 – Writing Content. That should keep you busy!**

## Chapter 6

### Inbound Links

After your website content is written and the pages are optimized for keywords, it is time to get links to your new site.

#### Getting Inbound Links

Inbound links are links from another website, linking to yours. There are different ways to get inbound links. The search engines look at links coming from other sites kind of like a “vote” for your site – on its relevancy and value.

##### Link exchanges

This is where you ask another website owner to exchange links with you. Make sure the site is relevant to yours.

Link exchanges (also called reciprocal linking) are not very effective anymore with the search engines. They don't give much weight to a simple link exchange anymore. Even so, it may help to get the word out about your site, and may bring some traffic by people clicking through to your site from the other site.

So, by all means, request a link exchange from other related sites in your niche. They will be targeting the same market as you are, so it can help bring your target market to your website.

Your focus, however, should be on getting one-way links. (see below.)

##### One-way links



This is where a site links to yours, but you do not link back. This is much more effective for search engine rankings.

##### How can you get these types of links?

- One way is to provide good, quality content that will encourage others to link to you naturally.
- Another way is to submit your website url to directories. Many times, you can be included in their directory without having to link back. Just go to Google and put in “submit url + directory”.
- Article writing is another way to get good one-way links. Write articles that are on topics relevant to your niche and submit them to article directories. At the end of your article, you can include an authors' resource box where you can have a link to your website. One-way links! A good article directory to submit to is ezinearticles.com. Also, other website owners will pick up your articles from the directories and publish them on their own site, providing a

link back to your website.

- Start an affiliate program. If people have the opportunity to earn money from linking to you, they are much more likely to do it. This is especially helpful to those sites that are mainly a storefront, and don't have a lot of content. It still gives people a reason to link to you.
- Write a press release about a newsworthy event going on with your business. This will cause links to your site from the press release distributors, and you might also have a chance to get your story picked up by newspapers or radio shows. You can write up a press release to announce the opening of your site.
- Write a column for another website. Contact websites in your niche and offer to write a column for them - or maybe just a weekly tip or idea. You will pick up links plus build relationships with people interested in your niche.
- Leave comments on blogs in your niche. Most give you a one-way link back to your website.
- Join forums in your niche. Respond to the questions and posts there with a link back to your website in your signature.

Notice that most of these are free ways to get one-way links. There is also an option to buy links, but I have never done that. I would recommend getting your links from the natural methods listed above. If you are providing good quality, relevant content, then other website owners will automatically link to you. Those are the best links of all to get.

This is just a brief overview on getting inbound links. As I mentioned in the last lesson, you can take a good free course at [www.gnc-web-creations.com](http://www.gnc-web-creations.com) in search engine optimization and website marketing. It covers linking strategies also.

Getting good quality inbound links from related sites in your niche is a very important strategy to get your site known and to increase your place in the search engines. It is well worth putting time into this.

## **This Week's Assignment**

1. First, you should look over your website and try to be objective. Would you link to your site if you were the owner of a different website in your niche?
2. Submit your website to directories for one-way links. You can also do some link exchanges if that is required, but one-way is better.

If you find some websites that are in your niche that you feel would be helpful to you to have your link on them, go ahead and ask them for a link exchange. Even if it doesn't do much for your search engine rankings, it can bring you some good, targeted traffic.

## Chapter 7

### Marketing

We have discussed a couple of very important marketing strategies already – search engine optimization and getting inbound links. Now we will talk about some other great things you can do to get the word out about your business.

#### Article Marketing

We already touched on writing articles on a topic that would be of interest to your target market. Let's look at it in more detail.

Why should you write articles?

First, it shows your target market that you are knowledgeable about the field you are in.

It also helps them to get to know you better. If you write the articles in your own style, your thoughts and personality show through. It will help your target market to relate to you.

After you write your article, you should submit them to article directories, which are visited by people looking for information on particular topics. Other website owners who are looking for unique content to put on their website also visit the directories. So, your article could end up on a number of different websites related to your niche. What great free advertising!

I can attest to this when an article I wrote for a homeschooling magazine was picked up by a very popular website. I saw my traffic (and sales) increase greatly.

You should write an article that addresses a concern or problem common to your target market. Start out by stating the problem, showing that you understand how they feel.

Go on to offer a solution to the problem. That solution should somehow be related to your business.

For example: If you are a fitness coach, you can write an article empathizing with your readers about how frustrating it can be to try to lose weight and then you step on the scale and see you haven't lost any. You can offer a good tip for weight loss in the article. Then, at the end of the article, you include an author resource box. This is where you will give your name, title (Fitness Coach) and a link to your website. This is a good one-way link, plus if other fitness websites pick up your article and either put it on their site or use it on their blog, newsletter, etc., your information will go out to a whole group of people that would be interested in your services. See how effective this can be? And it's all free.

Article length should generally be between 400-750 words. Check each directory for their guidelines.

Here are some article directories to submit to:

ezonearticles.com  
articlecity.com  
goarticles.com

You can also submit your article to magazines in your niche if they accept submissions. This is a great way to capture the offline market.

## **This Week's Assignment – Part I**

Write an article that would be of interest to your target market. Submit it to the above article directories and any other ones you find that would be helpful.

## **Forum Posting**

Another good way to get known is to join forums (message boards) in your niche. Take notice of what questions are being asked and what problems are being discussed. These are great tips on what your target market needs solutions for.

Do not join to just advertise your business. You will quickly be asked to leave.☺

Introduce yourself and offer any help you can to the members. Be a positive source of information, and you will find people will come to you for guidance and recommendations.

In most forums, you can set up a signature, in which you can list your name, title, and website link. This is great so that, if people like the information you share, they can go to your website for more.

A word of caution: You can spend a LOT of time in these forums. It's a good idea to set an amount of time you allow yourself in the forums, (ex. 30 minutes a day or every two days) or you can easily spend hours there without even realizing it. They are good for networking, but there are other aspects of your business you need to keep up on, so be careful not to let other things go.

When looking for forums in your niche to join, look for active ones. You can tell this by how recent the postings are. If there isn't some posting going on every day or two, it's not going to be worth the time.

Also try to find one with a large number of members. This will give you a broader range of questions/concerns to work with and more people with which to network.

To find forums in your niche, go to Google and type in "forums + your niche." Don't use the quotations marks. For example, if you are in the scrapbooking niche, type in "forums + scrapbooking."

Forums are also good places to find joint venture partners, which we will cover in the next lesson.

### **This Week's Assignment – Part II**

Find 2-3 forums you can join that are in your niche. Make sure your target market frequents it.

Make a commitment to visit them once a day and post some good, helpful responses to some of the issues being discussed.

## Chapter 8

### Joint Ventures

What is a joint venture? It is partnering with someone who has a business that is related to yours. You want to team up with someone who has skills that are complimentary to yours, not one who is competing with you.



There is no reason for you to do every aspect of your business alone – that can be burdensome, especially trying to carry responsibilities that are not your strong points. This is where a joint venture can be advantageous and help you move forward with your business quicker and stronger.

Let's say you want to partner with someone to create a new information product. You are both skilled at writing. You will, most likely, end up with an excellent product, but if neither of you knows about marketing or list building, your product will just sit there. You will not see the profit you hoped for. When teaming up with partners, make sure you have all aspects covered to give you the results you hoped for.

#### **Examples of a possible joint venture**

- A partner with a large opt-in list or list building skills with a partner that has proven experience in product creation.
- A partner that has proven sales and marketing skills with a partner that has a proven product
- A partner that has a high blog or ezine subscription rate with a partner that has a proven product/website/service and can guest blog in exchange for part of the profit
- A partner that has excellent web design skills with a partner that has excellent writing and copywriting skills. You could put together a profitable affiliate website or information site
- Two people who form a membership site together. You can both contribute content each month, thereby decreasing the amount you both need to add. In addition, you can both promote it your lists, increasing the exposure for your new product.
- Affiliates are a joint venture. Create an affiliate program to allow others to promote your product.
- A partner that has a number of relevant products and an opt-in list with a partner that has a number of relevant products and an opt-in list.

As you can see, the last possibility has the same skills on both sides. This is one time it can work, assuming both partners have quality products and marketing skills. In this case, you can each add another good product that you can offer to your list, and you can benefit from having a new list of subscribers who have access to your product.

As you seek out joint venture relationships, consider what it is that you bring to the partnership, and try to find others with complimentary skills and resources. It is a great way to bring your business forward and will help alleviate the frustration of tasks that you do not feel equipped to handle.

### **Benefits of Joint Venture Partnerships to Online Business Owners**

Other than the potential increase in profits, a joint venture partnership offers many compelling benefits. True, the potential for incredible profits is certainly a benefit; however, in the grand scheme of things, it really is just the icing on the cake.

Here are some truly compelling benefits of Joint Venture Partnerships:

**Benefit #1: Bigger lists.** How big is your current opt-in list? Does it have room to grow? Would a bigger list mean more profits tomorrow, next week, next month and next year? A joint venture partnership has the power to broaden your opt in list in many ways. If you are list leveraging with a partner, then anyone who responds, visits your website, or makes a purchase can be added to your opt in list.

Cross promotions have the same list building capabilities. Imagine if you post an ad for your partner in your ezine and they post an ad for you, then everyone on their list that responds to your ad is now on your opt in list.

**Benefit #2: Better customer relationships.** Offering your customers a new opportunity, new product, or new service with a reputable partner gives you instant credibility - not only as a respected business owner, but one that has their customers in mind and takes the time and effort to find and present quality opportunities to them.

When you offer your customers a quality product or service, you not only increase your credibility with them, you increase the likelihood that they're going to buy from you again. You earn their respect and gratitude for bringing them valuable and beneficial opportunities and for connecting them with other spectacular businesses like yours.

**Benefit #3: New products.** Partnering with another online business introduces new products into your product base. For example, say you own and operate an information marketing business where your products range from a book on how to organize your home from top to bottom, to personal organization services.

You could partner with a small business coach and create a product about organizing your home office for maximum productivity. Your partner will promote the book to their customers and add the product to their product base, and you can market the product as part of your product base. Down the line, you could bundle the product with others and create a larger book package. You could interview your partner and create a product from that.

When it comes to online joint venture partnerships, there really isn't a downside. You get the opportunity to make your customer's happy, you build your list, you increase your product base, and you make money. No negatives!

## **How to Approach a Potential Joint Venture Partner**

**Step #1 Do some research** on them to make sure they're a person you really want to work with. This can include researching them on Google, a credit check, a Better Business Bureau check. Get to know them behind the scenes first. Are you in forums with them? Notice how they relate to the other members and make sure they seem like an ethical and honest person.

**Step #2 Learn as much as you can about their business** so that you are well prepared and knowledgeable about their business, demographic marketing target, profit margins, problems, aspirations, strengths, and weaknesses.

**Step #3 Initial contact.** Now it's time to approach them. You can email them or call them. Make a proposal to them either on the phone or in writing.

A phone call may bring better results, as many people just delete emails from people if they aren't expecting them.

So what do you say..?

Any good salesperson knows that the pitch has to be all about what benefits the person will receive by partnering with you. Start the conversation enthusiastically with a brief intro about who you are and then jump right into what you know, and are impressed with, about their business. A little bit of honest flattery and the fact that you've done your research will generally get you the attention you need for the next phase...your pitch. Here is some of the information you'll need:

- What you bring to the table
- What your partner will bring to the table
- What the potential profits are and how you came to those numbers.
- What is fair for each person involved
- How and when each person will be paid

That's it. Offer to send the proposal to them in writing and then give your potential partner time to think. Set up a time to communicate again and say goodbye. That's it. You're done. Chances are you may have a strong indication of their interest before you hang up. If you feel it is a no, you've learned something from the process and next time you'll do better. If the answer is a yes, you could be on your way to profitable partnership.

## **How to Handle the Money Side of a Partnership**

This is a very common question for many who are considering entering into a joint venture partnership. Here's how to confidently handle the money:

**Step #1** If you're unfamiliar with your partner and have not worked with them before, research them a bit before you enter into an agreement. Google, the Better Business Bureau, and a credit check are a good start.

**Step #2** Determine how you're going to track sales and profits. You want to find a way of tracking value, transactions and sales so that you can be sure who gets paid and how they get paid. Simple systems are often the best. For example, if your partner agrees to pay you 50% of all gross sales resulting from your advertising to your opt in list, you might have people respond directly to you and then pass the leads on to your partner. This way, you can keep track of sales, while having your partner handle the payment side of the operation.

**Step #3** Document how each of you are going to get paid and how you're going to track sales and profits. Put it in writing to avoid any potential misunderstandings. If you agree to be paid or to pay on all future business transactions, make sure you specify how long this agreement will last for, what is expected from each party, etc. It is also advised to get advice from an attorney if you have questions or concerns about your joint venture agreement.

**Step #4.** Relax and let go. Most people are honest. If you're busy focusing on the fear that you won't get paid, you'll potentially miss out on the fun you could be having focusing on how much money you're actually making. Joint venture partnerships are powerful business building tools.

True, not every partnership is a successful one and there are people out there who are dishonest, however you're a smart person with good instincts. You've taken care of the details of the agreement. Now sit back and enjoy the rewards of your efforts.

### **Possible Online Partnerships to Pursue**

There are literally thousands of online joint venture possibilities to pursue. However, they generally fall into a few basic categories: list leveraging, product creation and general sharing. Here are ten online joint venture possibilities:

1. List leveraging. This is a common and generally simple joint venture. If you have a great opt in list and someone has a great product, you can promote their product to your list for a percentage of the sales. This can be an affiliate type of arrangement or other situation you have agreed upon.
2. Information marketing businesses can partner to bundle their products together and promote them to their combined email lists. The benefit to this type of arrangement is potentially huge. Each business increases their exposure and customer base, each business makes money, and each business gives their customer and email list an opportunity to benefit from a new product.
3. Another simple joint venture might involve sharing or exchanging text links or banners with other related web sites.
4. Partner with another online business with a similar target market to create and share a web site. For example, you create dog training information products and your partner makes homemade dog treats. You will both be marketing and advertising the same website which means double the traffic.

5. A very simple online joint venture is to exchange testimonials or endorsements for each other's products or services. For example, if you are a virtual assistant, you could promote the services of a web design firm or copywriter you've used. In return, they could promote your services as a virtual assistant.
6. If you have a product that is nearing the end of its life and sales are dwindling, you could offer it as a free bonus for another business's product or service. In exchange, ask for a small portion of the profits.
7. Offer to insert a promotional ad for another business into your product package. You could take a small percentage of the profits or ask them to return the favor.
8. Trade ezine ads with relevant businesses that have similar target markets.
9. Create a promotional giveaway with another business and publish your ads and links in the report, ebook, or even talk about them in a video or audio product. You're essentially sharing the labor to put together a promotion that will reach both your list members and the list members of your partner, which means you're doubling your reach.
10. Create a freeware program with another business. Include a promotional ad for each of your businesses in the program. Submit it to freeware and freebie sites.

When considering the many possibilities of joint venture partnerships, consider what skills, strengths and assets you can bring to the partnership. This will likely give you numerous possibilities and then all you have to do is find the right partner.

### **Do I Need a Legal Agreement for a Joint Venture?**

The short answer to this question is...it depends. Joint venture partnerships can be entered into with anyone. It can be with your neighbor next door who has an affiliate business, or with a person you've only read about who lives in another country. Due to the variety of joint venture partnership possibilities a legal agreement may not always be needed.

**Here are a few pros and cons to signing a JV partnership legal agreement.**

#### **Pros:**

- **Everything is spelled out.** A joint venture partnership legal agreement will leave no room for interpretation, miscommunication, errors or frustration. Absolutely everything from who handles what task, to how profits are tracked, to how each partner gets paid can be detailed explicitly. This means there will be no questions halfway through the project about who handles the next step or what profit percentages were originally agreed to.
- **Less stress.** When everything is clearly detailed and written down, it can take the stress off of the relationship and allow the partners to work together more amicably, and to be more productive. This can be particularly important when you're working with someone for the first time or you have concerns about the partnership.

- **Checks and balances are outlined.** A legal agreement makes it possible for checks and balances to be put into place and to be followed through on. For example, if one partner is handling the marketing of a joint venture product and the payment of the profits, the other partner should have a system that enables them to keep track of the sales. That way there is no uncertainty about whether each partner is getting paid fairly.
- **Payments are defined.** People tend to get caught up in the money. A legal agreement will define who gets paid what, when and how, so that there is no uncertainty, resentment or questions.

**In the event of a disagreement, a legal agreement gives you recourse.**

**Cons:**

- It may produce the **wrong impression**. A legal agreement can start things off on the right foot, but in some circumstances, it can start things off on the wrong foot. **It can create a sense of mistrust.**

**A legal agreement is not always necessary.** If you're working with someone whom you are comfortable with, whom you have worked with before, or whom you're friends with, then a legal agreement may not be necessary. It is fine to simply write down what each person will take care of and how you'll split the profits and go from there.

If you choose to use a joint venture agreement, you can find many legal forms online. Simply type "Joint venture agreement" into your favorite search engine and you'll have plenty to choose from. Some of the forms are even free.

### **This Week's Assignment**

There is no formal assignment this week. If you are just beginning your business, you may not be ready to seek out a joint venture partner right away. Go with your instincts, but don't wait too long.

Begin observing other business owners in your niche that seem ethical and honest, and who seem like they would be a good fit to work with.

When you feel confident in your own skills and assets, approach them and propose a joint venture.

## Chapter 9

### Marketing – Paid Advertising



This week, I'd like to talk about advertising, meaning paid advertising.

Most of the other forms of marketing we have discussed have been free to implement – search engine optimization, getting inbound links, article marketing and forum posting. Now we need to talk about paying for advertising.

When you are thinking about paying to advertise on a website, there are some things you will want to consider.

- Is the website related to your niche and will it reach your target market?
- How many visitors does the site get in a day/month? You can ask the website owner for this information. If advertising in someone's newsletter, find out how many subscribers it goes out to and how responsive of a group it is.
- Where will your ad be placed? Make sure it is on a page that gets a lot of traffic. Normally, this will be the homepage.
- Take a look at the other ads that are allowed to advertise on the site. You want to be in good company. In other words, you will want to advertise on sites that limit their advertising to good, quality, wholesome ads.
- Compare pricing of different websites. Make sure you are getting a good deal.
- Be consistent. By this I mean that a person usually has to see an ad several times before they will act on it. So you may want to advertise for a few months on the same site or in the same newsletter to provide some consistency and give people a chance to see your ad more than once. You will have to use your judgment on this one. If you get no clicks from the website, then that may not be the best place to advertise. However, if you are getting quite some click-throughs, it may just take some time for people to respond.

### Google Adwords

#### How Exactly Does Google Adwords Work?

Google Adwords is a pay-per-click advertising system that allows a web publisher to create an ad based on keywords and key phrases. This type of advertising campaign can be an effective method for generating traffic to a website.

Creating an ad with Adwords is fairly easy and doesn't take much time. Google supplies the users of this service with quite a few tools to help them create the most effective ads possible.

A person can choose to have their ad placed on specific websites or have their ad seen on the right side of the screen on a Google search results page. An ad that is seen on websites will be known as a placement specific ad and a search results ad is known as a keyword-targeted ad.

A placement specific ad can be billed in two ways, either for the number of impressions, which is the number of times it is seen by people, or through pay-per-click. All keyword targeted ads are billed in the pay-per-click manner. What this means is that Google only charges the advertiser when someone actually clicks on the ad.

This can really help stretch a small business owner's advertising budget. Google may display the ad quite a few times, but the advertiser is only charged when the ad catches the attention of someone who clicks on it, and is then directed to the advertiser's site.

Google allows people to pay up front for their Adwords campaign as well as the option of being billed later. For someone who doesn't want any unexpected surprises, paying up front and having each click or impression debited from the funds is a great way to stay on budget.

To further help stretch an advertiser's budget, Google allows the advertiser to set a daily limit on how much money is used. If a person has a budget of \$50 for the month they can set those limits within their Adwords account and Google will not let them have more clicks or impressions than their budget allows for that day. This will ensure that they get a small amount of advertising each day.

There are many reports within Adwords that can be used to determine the effectiveness of the ad. An advertiser can easily create a few versions of a similar ad and focus each one on specific keywords to see which ad and which keywords are the most effective for them.

In this way, Adwords can be a very effective tool, as well as a great way to drive traffic to your site. By taking some time to modify their ads and track their results, a business owner can find out exactly which ads bring in the most traffic and the highest profits.

### **Tips for Creating Attention-Grabbing Adwords Titles and Descriptions**

Writing effective ads is imperative in order to succeed with Google's Adwords. With a limited amount of space, advertisers must get their message across quickly and powerfully to capture attention and achieve click-throughs.

Keep titles and descriptions focused and relevant. Be as specific as possible, while still communicating a good reason for viewers to take action. They must be convinced in the course of a few lines of text, so every word counts.

Focus on the reasons a viewer would want to know more: what is the benefit of the product or service? Marketing experts have identified three primary reasons people buy: to fulfill a basic need, to solve a problem, or to improve their self-image. The title and description should state what is being offered as well as the need it fills, the

problem it solves, or the emotional benefit it brings. Without this message, the ad will not be as compelling as the competition's.

Focusing on their needs is central to advertising success. The initial goal is not to achieve a sale, but rather to convince the viewer to take the first step toward making the purchase. Make the landing page as compelling as the title and description, and publish a sign-up form so the viewer can take the next step, requesting more information. With their name and email address, future contact is made possible - another important step in the sales cycle.

Maximize keyword usage. Targeted keywords will bring more qualified impressions – viewers who are in the market for what is offered. This is important, because reaching the wrong audience results in a higher cost per click but fewer conversions. Using a good keyword list also helps advertisers maintain a better ad position. Higher ad positions lead to more click-throughs.

As in all forms of advertising, titles and keywords should give a strong call to action. Creating a sense of urgency is one way to accomplish this. For example, a limited-time offer gives the viewer a reason to click now, instead of putting off the action until later. Other possibilities include offering a sale price through a specific date, or offering a “freebie” to the first 100 people who respond.

If ads are not receiving the desired number of clicks, try using different information in the ad. If the price is a competitive advantage, include it in the title or description. Use attention-grabbing words such as download, free, or trial, but only if these are appropriate.

Be focused, and emphasize the advantages of the product or service. And above all, be willing to try new approaches while designing an effective Adwords campaign.

## Offline Advertising

Let me say a quick word about offline advertising. In many businesses, it makes sense to advertise both online and offline. There is a whole population of people that may not yet be internet literate, so you want to reach them also.

When considering where to spend your advertising dollars offline, you will want to think through the same things as you would for online advertising. What will reach your target market the best?

If you are advertising baby items, you will want to see if you are allowed to leave flyers in baby shops/boutiques and advertise in newspapers/magazines that go out to new parents.

Find out the demographics and general subscription information of local newspapers to determine if it would reach your market.

## This Week's Assignment

As we are moving along in our lessons on marketing, review the past few lessons and decide where you are going to focus your marketing efforts. Begin to market your business!

To review:

- Search engine optimization
- Inbound links
- Article marketing
- Forum posting
- Joint Ventures
- Paid Advertising

**This is a very important step** to take now and to continue to be consistent every week to do some form of marketing your business. People will not find you without you making the effort to get the word out.

## Chapter 10

### Starting an Email List

Starting an email list is of utmost importance. It is the best way to keep in touch with someone who visits your website. Most people will not take any action the first time they come to your site. So, if you don't have a way to capture their email address, you will not be able to stay in contact with them.

The most common form of an email list is a newsletter list. I will use the words "newsletter" and "list" or "emails" interchangeably in this lesson. This would involve sending out a newsletter on a regular basis (weekly, bi-monthly, monthly.) Sometimes, people don't want to be bothered with this, but it is really a good way to stay connected with your target market.

A newsletter does not need to be long. In fact, many people don't read long ones and prefer shorter and to-the-point emails. Think of yourself – you most likely prefer to quickly find out what the email is about. Your subscribers probably feel the same way.

A newsletter should be informative. You should offer them some quality information each time you write (again, this can be accomplished in 2-3 paragraphs.) After you have provided some good information, you can go ahead and promote your product (s).



If you do not keep a list of email addresses, people will come and go to your website. It will be like a bunch of "window shoppers" walking by your store. If you can at least get them to leave their contact information with you, then you have many future opportunities to sell your products/services to them.

To capture your visitor's information, you will need to have a sign up box on every page of your website (a good position is in the upper right corner of the page.) You should also have it in a prominent place on your homepage.

Your newsletter can be as simple as sharing a proven tip. Maybe you are marketing to dog owners and you have a proven tip for helping with your dog's itchy skin. Share it and then promote a product. The product should be related, of course to what you have shared in the email. As we learned earlier, it can either be your own product or you can promote an affiliate product.

Maybe you read an ebook (an affiliate product) that really helped you out in a certain area. Write a review of the ebook and tell specifically about how you were helped. What personal benefit did you receive from the information? Share it with your subscribers, then at the end of the email, give a link where they can read more about it and purchase it (an affiliate link.)

My point is that you don't have to write a book each time. Just share a helpful piece of information.

## How to Get People to Sign up for Your List

So, you need to get people to sign up for your list. You need to give your visitors a reason to sign up for your list. Offer them something of value for free if they sign up. People don't part with their contact information just because you ask them. You will need to give them something worthwhile for doing it. Some things you can offer are:

- a free report
- a free ebook
- a mini course
- a phone consultation with you
- free advertising space for a month (if you offer that on your site)
- a free graphic to use (if you are so inclined)

Be creative! It helps to offer something different than what everyone else is offering in your niche.

### Tell them the Benefits

You should tell them how they will benefit from receiving your newsletter. What will you include in it? How will it benefit them? You want to state this so that people know what they are getting in exchange for their information.

What can they count on receiving each time they receive your newsletter? Once you give them information they benefit from, they will begin to look forward to your emails and will actually open them and read them!

### Privacy Issue

Put a link to your privacy policy on your newsletter sign up page, so people can be assured their information will not be shared with anyone else. This is a definite concern today, so make sure you have it stated plainly.

### Get the Word Out

Once you have your newsletter set up, be sure to submit your information to ezine (newsletter) directories. Just do a search on Google for them.

You can also do an exchange with other newsletter publishers in your niche. You can include a link to their newsletter sign up page and they can include one to yours. This can be done either in the newsletter itself or on the thank you page, which is the page someone is taken to after they sign up for your list.

To make this a fairly easy process, you will want to use an autoresponder. I have tried it both ways – manually and automated and I **highly recommend** automating it. Let's talk about autoresponders.

## Auto Responders

### What is an autoresponder?

Quite simply, it's a piece of software that enables you to send emails to people automatically. This doesn't mean that it writes the emails for you and it doesn't involve spam or sending unsolicited email. What it means is that you set up a sequence of prewritten emails that are sent out to prospects on your database at regular intervals. (definition according to <http://magnet4web.com/articles/marketing/what-is-an-autoresponder.php>)

Auto responders give you the capability of setting up emails one time and have them continue to go out to your subscribers as they sign up.

There are different uses of autoresponders. Let's go over a few.

- Having a thank you or introductory email go out to someone after they sign up for your list
- You can set up a whole sequence of emails to go out to a new subscriber
- You can set up a mini course through an autoresponder, whether it is paid or free
- You can set up a sequence of timed emails to go out to your customers – they start after someone makes a purchase
- You can use it to send out a "broadcast" email (a one-time email) such as a newsletter

An autoresponder can really simplify things for your business. In the beginning of my business, I wanted to save money, so I did everything manually. When someone signed up for my newsletter, I manually sent them one and added them to a list I kept in my email account. As I got more and more subscribers, it got to be very time consuming so I decided to automate it. It was a great decision. I would advise you to do it right from the beginning for a couple of reasons.

1. It leaves you free to build and promote your business.
2. If you wait to automate the process, most autoresponder services will require that you get everyone to sign up again when you make the switch. This means possibly losing a lot of subscribers that don't want to go through the extra step of verifying their subscription.
3. There is less chance of your emails being looked at as "spam" if they come from a respected service.

\*See my recommended autoresponder at the end of this lesson.

## This Week's Assignment

1. Put a sign up form (also called an opt-in box) on your homepage and on each page of your website. Find (or create) a product of value that can be given away for free when someone signs up for your list. Your form can look something like this:

- **Title** (a creative way to invite people to sign up.) Include the name of your business in the title.

Ex. "Sign up for the \_\_\_\_\_Newsletter and learn how to turn your love of scrapbooking into a profit."

"Sign up for the \_\_\_\_\_Newsletter and learn how to lose ten pounds in the next two weeks and keep it off!"

- **Benefits** – list the benefits they will receive from signing up for your list
- **Free offer** – tell them what they will receive for free when they sign up for your list.
- **Opt-in box** – a form that asks for their name and email.

2. Sign up for an autoresponder service. There are many to choose from. The one I personally use and recommend (they're great!) is [Aweber](#). They cost about \$20 per month. If you pay for a year, it brings it down to about \$15 per month. You need to decide if this is the right time for you to do this, but I recommend doing it as soon as possible.

### \*Resources\*

[Aweber](#) – this is the autoresponder I use and highly recommend. They have a very good delivery rate and good phone support. They are also reasonably priced.

## Chapter 11

### Start an Affiliate Program

If you have your own product (either digital or physical), starting an affiliate program is a great way to market it. This invites others to promote and sell your product (s) for you. You are creating your own sales force. This will multiply your efforts without you doing very much of the work. Sound good?

The way it works is that others will sign up to promote your product as an affiliate. You will provide them with an affiliate link. They put the link on their website, blog, or use it in their newsletters/emails. Whenever someone buys your product through their affiliate link, you will owe them a commission.

There is software you can purchase to manage your own affiliate program, but I am not familiar with them. The following are resources you can use if running your own is a little too technical for you (as it is for me☺.)

Sign up with [Clickbank.com](http://Clickbank.com) and list your product there. Please note that Clickbank is only for digital products. I think it is about \$50 to initially join, then you pay them a small percentage out of each sale you make. Clickbank is good because there are a LOT of people who come there looking for good products to promote, so you may not even have to do a lot of marketing of your program. It also keeps track of your affiliate's sales and pays them for you. There is no monthly fee involved; you only pay something when you make a sale.

Another option is to sign up with a service such as [WAHMCart](http://WAHMCart). They manage your affiliate program for you, but you need to take care of paying your affiliates once a month (or whatever time frame you set up in your program.) There is a monthly fee of about \$30 (less if you pay for a year at a time.)

Those are the two programs I am familiar with and have personal experience with. There are others you can check out such as:

[shareasale.com](http://shareasale.com)  
[linkshare.com](http://linkshare.com)  
[commissionjunction.com](http://commissionjunction.com)

Some of these may have rather high startup costs, so be sure to inquire about all the fees before joining.

When running an affiliate program, you will want to provide your affiliates with the tools they need to promote your product. These can include articles, blog posts, emails, text ads, testimonials of others who have used your product (and liked it!), banners, etc. Give detailed information about your product, including its selling points, what makes it different from other products, and its value. Anything that would be helpful to them in promotion.

Be accessible to your affiliates. Always answer any questions in a timely manner. Let them know you appreciate their help in getting the word out for you. You can do this in any number of ways, but let me mention a few.

- Run a contest – offer a prize of value to the affiliate who sells the most products during a specified time period (some business owners offer cash as a prize, others do other type of prizes.) Mention their name in your next newsletter and give them a link to their website.
- Send them a “thank you” card – either digitally or in the mail.
- Offer your top affiliates a higher commission

Be sure, if you are responsible for paying your affiliates, that you pay them on time. Keep track of the time you have specified as the pay out time and stick to it. In other words, apply the “golden rule.” Treat your affiliates the way you would want to be treated as someone else’s affiliate.

Most affiliate managers pay their affiliates either by check or through paypal. You will need to determine if you will offer both, or one or the other. Paypal is a quick and easy way to pay, whereas, sending a check takes a little more effort. Again, if you go with a service like Clickbank, they send a check out to your affiliates for you. The downside is that affiliates have to earn a minimum amount before they are paid. I think this can be set down to \$25, so it is reachable.



### Where to Find Affiliates

1. If you are looking to recruit affiliates, **look at the people you know in your niche**. You want people who reach the same target market as you do, so this is a good place to start. You can email them and invite them to be an affiliate. Make it an attractive offer.

- You can offer them a copy or sample of your product so that they know firsthand what they are promoting.
- Make sure your commission percentage rate is competitive with others in your same niche.
- Tell them why you want them as an affiliate. It is always good to compliment them (sincerely) on an aspect of their business or on a product of theirs.
- Tell them how being an affiliate for your product will benefit them.

2. Another good place to find potential affiliates is to go to google.com and put in your keywords for your business. **Approach the owners of the websites that come up on the first page of your search**. These sites are most likely getting a good amount of traffic and reaching many in your target market.

3. You can approach **website owners who are linking to you**. They already feel your site offers some value or they wouldn't link to you. They may be happy to offer your product and earn some money at the same time.

4. Also approach **website owners who are linking to your competition** – the sites on the first page of Google when you do a search for your keywords. Go to Google, put in your keywords, then click on a site that comes up. Using the Google toolbar (if you don't have it, you can install it for free), click on the arrow next to "page rank." Then click on "backlinks." That shows the sites that are linking to the site you selected.

5. **Forums** – get to know people that are in forums in your niche. You can find good potential affiliates here.

You will need to determine if you think having an affiliate program is right for you. It can definitely bring you more traffic and sales, but it does take some time and effort to manage it.

### **This Week's Assignment**

Do some research on affiliate programs. Look at [clickbank.com](http://clickbank.com). Look at the marketplace and see what type of products are being offered in your niche, and notice the commission percentage that is offered.

Check out [wahmcart.com](http://wahmcart.com) and some of the others mentioned previously (Linkshare, Share a Sale, Commission Junction). Become knowledgeable on what is out there.

Determine if this is a marketing strategy you would like to implement at this time. If so, get signed up at the place of your choice and start your own sales force!

Next week is our last lesson. It has gone by fast, hasn't it? How have you done? I hope you have benefited from the course and have a business up and going. If not, you have access to the lessons, so go back through the ones where you stopped.

### **\*\*\* Resources for Affiliate Manager Programs \*\*\***

[www.clickbank.com](http://www.clickbank.com) – for digital products only

[wahmcart.com](http://wahmcart.com)

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

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

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

## Chapter 12

### Additional Income Streams



So your business is up and running, and hopefully, you are seeing some growth and profit. Now, you should think about adding some additional streams of income.

Your product or service will most likely be your main source of income. However, it is always a good idea to supplement with other sources of income.

#### AdSense

Google AdSense is a program that allows web publishers to partner with Google and earn additional income. When someone joins the program, they allow Google to place ads on their website or blog, and based upon the ad that is shown, they will either be paid for a certain number of ad impressions or when one of their visitors clicks on these ads.

Google uses their technology to “read” the content on the pages the web publisher is allowing them to place ads on. This increases the chances of the ad being relevant to the topic of that particular web page or blog entry, which also increases the chance of a reader clicking on that ad.

You can do some customizing to the ads. You can decide which style of ad to use, what color (it is best to have it blend in with the color of your website), and where to place the ads.

In addition to choosing which type of ad, a user can choose from many sizes and shapes of ad boxes, also known as ad units. In the final step, the user gets to fully customize the color of the ad units, including the borders, links and text.

The actual amount of income a person earns through AdSense has many variables. Since a person generates income through the amount of clicks they are receiving or the amount of people who are viewing the ad, a website owner with a large amount of traffic has the potential to earn a considerably greater amount of money.

There are some people who are earning large sums of money with the AdSense program, but most website owners use it mainly as additional income. Simply joining the AdSense program is not a guarantee of future income, it is only a possibility of future income.

AdSense does provide tools for their users to help them maximize their earning potential. One of these is called a channel. This allows the user to create different styles of ad units and place them on different pages of their site in order to track the

results. This can tell the user which shapes and sizes of ads, as well as what type of content, induces the highest amount of earnings.

### **Should Every Site Use AdSense?**

The short answer is no. This is something you will need to determine for your own website.

While AdSense can bring in some additional income, some website owners do not like to use it because it encourages visitors to leave their site. It may be best used on an article page or other page where you are not asking someone to purchase something from you. AdSense should not be used on sales pages, as your main purpose with a page like that is to get your visitor to buy your product.

For people who participate in a lot of affiliate marketing or sell many of their own products and do not want to distract their readers' attention, putting up AdSense may not be the best idea.

Various internet marketing gurus will have different opinions on whether a person should put up AdSense. While each side has their own strong points, the ultimate decision is a very personal choice.

Think about the main purpose of each page, and determine whether AdSense would be a benefit or not on it.

### **Tips for Improving Your AdSense Income**

Payment with AdSense is made either per click or per thousand impressions. Ads that are displayed on the site are selected based on their relevance to the site, and this is determined by the frequency of keywords.

Volume of traffic on the site and click-thru rate both affect the amount of income that can be generated through AdSense. To improve income generated through AdSense, a number of steps may be beneficial:

- **Focus on the quality of the website** as a first step to increasing traffic. Adding solid content and keeping it fresh will give visitors a reason to keep coming back. Paying attention to content is very important. **Text should be of high quality, and should be rich in relevant keywords.** Content drives ad placement as well as traffic to the website, and both are necessary elements in healthy CTRs.
- **Implement traffic-generating activities.** Webmasters have found that activities such as emailing a weekly newsletter or offering a free item bring new and repeat visitors to the site.
- **Optimize the website** to ensure relevant keywords appear frequently on the pages of the site.
- **Test the website to determine which keywords are used most often and how these keywords rank in Google.** One free tool for doing this can be found at

tools.seobook.com/general/best-keywords. The site also offers a free keyword suggestion tool.

- **Blend the appearance of ads with the website.** Make sure that the colors of the ad text and background match those of the website so that regular content and ad links flow together smoothly. Ads that attract the highest number of clicks-thrus seem to blend in flawlessly with the content.
- **Pay attention to where AdSense ads are placed.** Research indicates that more click-thrus are received by ads near the top of the page and by those to the left of the page. White space surrounding the ad also improves its appeal.
  - **Limit the number of actions a viewer can take on each page.** Many links provide many distractions – which are all reasons the viewer may do something other than click the ad. Consider limiting content to a single item per page, a navigation bar, and the ad. Viewers are more likely to take a desired action when they are not presented with too many options.

Other factors that will affect AdSense income include the bid prices on the ads being displayed on the site and the amount of competition. Google's Traffic Estimator Tool can help determine bid prices and AdWords click volume. The Keyword Tool shows how much competition exists for a given keyword. A website can improve its AdSense income by using different keywords, either to attract better-paying ads or to achieve a higher ranking with the search engines.

## Offer Advertising

Many people allow others to advertise on their website for a fee. To qualify to do this, your site should be up for a while and getting a good number of visitors per day. Otherwise, no one will be interested in advertising with you, nor will they benefit from it.

You can set this up any way you want. You can accept ads for your homepage or any other well visited page of your site. You can have button ads (125 x 125 square ads), banner ads, or text ads. It is your choice.

One thing you will want to consider when allowing advertising is if it will detract from the main purpose of the page. If you are trying to sell a product on the page and you allow others to advertise on that page, it will encourage your visitors to actually click on the ads and leave your site (most likely before they make a purchase.)

You have to weigh the advantages/disadvantages of the income vs. ads being a distraction and proceed the way you feel is best.

## **Affiliate Marketing**

If you are selling your own products, you can supplement your income from these products by affiliate marketing. In other words, you can offer other people's products and earn a commission on each sale.

This is a way to offer a wider variety of products (all related) to your target market without having to create them all yourself.

There are some very good products/services already being offered out there, so you can take advantage of these by becoming an affiliate. You still need to promote affiliate products aggressively just as you would your own products.

There are people who make their living just by offering affiliate products. You can do that or offer a combination of your own products and affiliate products to make some good extra income.

## **Offer Coaching/Consulting**

Once you have acquired enough knowledge in your field to be able to help others, you can add coaching/consulting services to your selection of offerings. This can be a very natural offshoot after you have been in the field for a while and gotten to know your target market (and they have gotten to know you.)

You can charge an hourly fee or a monthly fee. You can do individual or group coaching. You can coach/consult by email or by phone. Eventually, you could even hold seminars as a way to share your knowledge with others.

## **This Week's Assignment**

This assignment will be somewhat of an ongoing one. It may be too soon for you to offer advertising or offer consulting.

You can implement adsense, however, you do need to be getting a good amount of visitors to make this worthwhile.

Affiliate marketing is something you can right away if it would be beneficial to you business.

Decide on what other income streams you can implement now and take action to do it in the coming week.

Keep these additional streams of income in mind as you continue on running your business and add them as it seems appropriate.



## Congratulations!!!

You have completed the ebook– great job! I am so glad you have followed your desire to start a home based business and taken steps to move forward with it.

One thing that I want to leave you with is to persevere. If you have followed the steps of choosing a niche and doing the research on its profit potential and have found it to be a worthwhile niche, keep going! You may have a slow start or may go through dry periods where your business is just not what you want it to be. Don't give up – try something new to move it forward.

We have discussed many marketing methods in this course. Try all the ones that seem appropriate for your business. Advertise in different places. Write new articles and submit them to appropriate places to publish. Visit new active forums. Get a mentor who can walk with you through ways to improve your business. There is always something else you can do to move your business out of a slump, so keep trying.

Remember in the very first introductory lesson, your assignment was to write down the REAL reason you wanted to start a home based business? Keep that where you can see it and when discouragement sets in, read it again and again. Remember that there is a bigger reason that you are doing this business. Let that be your motivation during the harder times.

Remember – anything worthwhile will take hard work and perseverance. This is not any different.

I truly hope you have benefited from this course.

To Your Success,  
*Laurie*