

In this online marketing and e-commerce guide: Introduction to the strategy, selecting your market, why should anyone do business with you?, optimizing your site, attracting people online, selling versus lead generation - pros and cons, to test or not to test, graphics and copy, closing the sale, keeping customers coming back for more...

Selling Online

Strategies and Planning



EntrepreneurWeb.com

An Entrepreneur Web Technologies Company

Introduction - The Strategy!

Selling online is a lot more than putting up a website, presenting your product and asking for the sale. That's the easy part. The difficult part is when you keep trying what ten different "experts" tell you will work and get overwhelmed with a lot of work and little results. Success online is learning how to work smart.

However, you won't get anywhere if you don't know where you're going. A failure to plan is a sure plan for failure. So analyzing your own strengths and areas of improvement is essential to know what you should be working on and what to delegate. That's the difference between working hard and working smart. Smart business people work on what they enjoy doing and what they do best and delegate the rest.

Many entrepreneurs give up their internet businesses because they can never seem to understand the simple formula for success.

Attract Visitors + Convert them into prospects or sales = Profit.

They fall for the hype that you put up a website and the world will beat a path to your door. That may have worked 100 years ago when innovation and invention were the mantra of the day. Today, you have to know what you're doing if you're going to succeed online. Yet only 5% ever make it because they have no plan, no budget and no marketing **strategy** in place.

Your entire business needs a business plan and a strategic marketing plan. If your business is entirely on the internet, you'll also need an online marketing plan.

- What is the purpose of the website?
- Who is your target market?
- What sets you apart from your competitors?
- Why should someone do business with you instead of the next guy?

Without a clear, written business and strategic marketing plan, with a realistic budget, you're wasting your time and effort.

Selecting Your Market

By now, most of the popular products and services have extremely high competition, both from major corporations and entrepreneurs. Unless you have big pockets full of cash and are a savvy online marketer, you'll find it difficult to be profitable online today in this crowded business atmosphere.

Today the formula for success is to have an...

Active Market + Little Competition = Online Success

This **niche strategy** is simply a group of people with common habits and interests; in other words, a target market. Many marketing novices think that the entire world population is their market; everyone will want one of their widgets. But the truth is, even if everyone was your market, in order to succeed you have to fine tune your offer to the MOST LIKELY prospects. Still, there is a lot of competition for today's popular products and services.

To master your own niche you must have a **unique selling proposition** which sets you apart from the competition so people will want to do business with you. Being the expert in a certain product brand or unique market is one way to set you apart. Another is your offer, guarantee, delivery policy, hours of operation, customer service, online chat, etc.

How to find your audience

There are two ways to find an audience for your product or service. One is when you already have a product or service available and you can tailor the sales message to fit a niche market.

The second way to find an audience is to research the market for a niche where there is a huge demand and little competition. Once you find this market you then find a product to fill their need. This involves researching what people are actually searching for online, how many are searching for which specific terms and what is the competitive climate. When you find this niche through your research you then find a product to solve their problem.

Here are some additional factors you should keep in mind when selecting the right audience of prospects.

- **Do they have money to spend?**
- **Can you find these prospects online?**
- **What is your audience looking for?** People buy on emotion and justify their purchase with logic. Here are the top emotional appeals and what motivates people to buy.
 - To avoid feelings of fear or worry
 - To gain pleasure
 - To make money or avoid losing money
 - To save time
 - Status
 - To avoid change or effort
 - To avoid embarrassment
 - To avoid pain or sickness
 - To gain praise and recognition... to be popular
 - To attract the opposite sex

- To have bold, beautiful, coveted possessions
 - To avoid stress
 - To be accepted by others and avoid criticism
 - To protect their reputation
 - Safety
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- **Can you solve this audience's problem with a product?**
 - **Are there products available I can promote to them?**
 - **Or can I create good products to sell them?**
 - **Are there related subjects that interest this market?**
 - **Are there advertisers and affiliates in this market that pay?**
 - **How much competition is there?**
 - **Life changing events are HOT!** (birth, death, graduation, new job, fired from job, illness, etc.)
1. Stay away from creating niche websites around holidays. You can't build a yearlong business around one event per year.
 2. There are great opportunities in deadline topics like traffic tickets, baby showers, weddings, pregnancy.
 3. Things that affect everyday life are great opportunities: beauty tips, dog training tips, horse training tips, tips on finding a new job. Any niche where you can provide "tips" is a good market.

4. Learn your market. What do they read, watch, like? Where do they travel? How will they find your website?

Why Should Anyone Do Business With You?

Now that you have a market in mind, here's how to begin building your reputation online. The way you position yourself and your product online will determine the type of customer you will be catering to. It will also determine what type of information you need to know about your customers to build a loyal relationship with. Here is a list of questions to answers that will help you determine "who" you really are!

1. What are the characteristics that make you stand out over your competition?
2. Are you selling this locally, nationally or internationally? Any language barriers?
3. Demographics which affect my market are: (age, sex, income, ethnicity, homeowner, families with children or pets, etc.
4. Describe the lifestyles of your market.
5. Describe in your own words the typical person that would purchase your product or service?
6. What are their shopping habits? Do they typically shop online or offline.
7. Think about the following market categories that would affect your business and circle the ones you could micro-target: Geography, Industry, Demographics, Pricing, Special interests, Hobbies, Life Events, Problems (social, medical, personal, or financial).

Describing your uniqueness

A. **Proposition** – Focus on your customer's benefits only, not on the product itself. E.g.: "it's not about a tanning cream, it's about looking vibrant & healthy."

B. **Unique** – Something your competitors do not, cannot or will not do. Become the ONLY VIABLE OPTION in this niche.

C. **Sell** – It must be something prospects really want that pulls them to you. In a few words, how your offer will solve the customer's pain/problem/necessity/pleasure/ego.

Optimizing Your Site

When people want to find something on the internet they turn to the search engines like Google, Bing, Yahoo and others. These search engines send “robots” across millions of online sites to figure out the key words about your site. Is it relevant to the subject being searched for? One of the first things the search engine looks for is the **name of the website**. Then it looks at the description, keywords and relevancy to make sure when people search they get what they are looking for. Tricking Google and Bing with popular keywords doesn't work if they are not relevant to your subject matter.

- Whatever you do, **make sure your e-commerce website is SEO ready!** The first mistake novice web designers make is using too many pictures and fancy flash automation to impress your audience. Search engines can't read pictures, so when the robot searches your site, it won't find anything to judge you by and you'll be left out in the cold.
- On the other hand a text based website gives you the opportunity to write copy which not only attracts your reader but also attracts the search engines and ranks you higher according to how relevant your site to your keywords.
- Also the way you construct your pages should reflect the uniqueness of that page. Your web page name should mention the **keyword** that is most appropriate for that page. Otherwise the robots see that same thing on every page and give you a lower quality score... which leads to a lower search engine ranking.

- Consult with an SEO expert. You may not have time to learn all the complicated nuances of search engine optimization techniques like on page copy, off page links, html tags, keywords, competition and link structure; all of which affect your rankings in the search engines.
- Another way to optimize your site is to have more popular sites link back to your site and vice versa. The search engines are looking for valuable information relevant to what customers are looking for. When popular sites link to you, it means you must have something of value to share. When you link popular sites on your website it conveys that you are more than just an individual selling something, but a resource for others as well.

Attracting People Online

- **Using Google Search Engine Optimization and AdWords™ to attract quality traffic.** Google AdWords™ are the classified type ads on the right side of the Google Search Engine. Companies bid on their keywords to appear on the search engine's first page. However the bid is not the only determining factor for placement at the top of the list. Google's algorithm is very complex and they frequently change it. Besides your bid, they consider a series of elements in order to rank your ad in a certain place: These elements include: your ad copy, keyword relevancy and your website (landing page) copy.
- **Write Articles relevant to your site that link back to your site**
- **Link to and from other websites**
- **Public relations releases**
- **Blogs**
- **Social Networking**

Selling Versus Lead Generation - Pros and Cons

People are looking for information to solve their problems or better their life. They are either running toward something positive for themselves or running away from something negative in their life.

It's very difficult, not impossible, to sell someone directly from your website, the first time they arrive at your site. The more specific your product and your offer, the more likely a person looking for exactly this type of solution is to buy it that day. The other 95% of the people are merely looking, and the way to move them up into your sales funnel is to begin a relationship with them. Here are a few ways to generate leads online:

- **Newsletter Subscription** – An e-mail newsletter is a critical element to your online marketing success. E-mail marketing builds relationships, positions you as the expert and is a great selling tool.
- **Offer a Free Trial Product, Software or Review** – Notice what's happening on television and radio today. These mass media giants are turning to direct response advertising and giving away free samples and products.
- **Offer a Free EBook, Webinar or Interview with Experts** – Every industry has its experts and when you can tap into a relationship with that expert, people will eventually consider you an expert.
- **Offer a Case Study or Report** about a new, fancy or popular product in your niche.

To Test or Not To Test

Testing is the key to any successful online selling program. Here you will be able to determine the cost per lead, cost per conversion and eventually average lifetime value of a customer. To test accurately, you must test one element at a time.

- **Dramatize your offer:** Use guarantees to instill confidence and trust. Use premiums to boost response and make your package irresistible not to open. Even an inexpensive premium can boost response rates 10%-50%.
- **Constantly work on beating the control test page.** Test and tweak until you find the best combination of elements that generates the highest response.
- **Test results are not forever** – markets change, competition changes, the economy shifts. All these elements can affect your response. Keep testing in different business climates and environments.

Product: Don't fall into the trap of assuming your product will sell. Test different products and services online using different price points.

Web Pages & Email: There are some very sophisticated tests online today. Taguchi testing measures specific elements on your web page and determines where people are visiting and in what order. A/B split tests can be performed within Google AdWords using Google Analytics or many other tools like Split Tester. This measures the difference in response between 2 different ads, landing pages or even headlines. Many auto responder software programs have split testing built in.

Graphics and Copy

A website is the ultimate direct marketing medium. And direct marketing is not like mass advertising where you're only trying to build your image. If that's all you're doing, you might as well put up a billboard in your back yard.

Remember, the sole purpose of your e-commerce website should be to capture the names of interested prospects, build a relationship with them and eventually sell them your product or service.

Just like a retailer's display, your website should showcase your goods. But the real selling is done by persuasive sell copy. Words must motivate and move your reader to stay longer, return and eventually to buy. No one today wants to buy from a company that simply has a glorified shopping cart as their website, a list of products with a small picture, a price and a button to buy. With poor copy and no color scheme to compliment your image and logo, you won't attract customers or convert anyone to do business with you.

Here are some of the professional guidelines we follow....

- Make sure the "voice" of your copy is consistent with your brand and image.
- Know what your audience is looking for. What pains them that you can solve for them?
- Focus on benefits, not features.
- Add a P.S. 30% of your readers read this first!
- Vary your benefits to mean different things for different types of prospects.
- Make your copy "you" oriented. What's in it for your prospect? Don't make it all about how wonderful you are.
- Pace your sentences with long and short copy lengths.
- Paragraphs should be short and not variable, not one big block of text.
- Most people read on an elementary school level. Write like you're writing to an 8 year old.
- Be specific in your testimonials, product descriptions, terms and benefits. 12,784 is much more believable than "around 13,000."
- Links in emails and online should support the purpose of your site. Don't steer people away from your call to action.

- Tell your prospect what you want them to do. What's the next step in your process?
- Don't use reverse type. White on a black background. It's too hard to read.

Closing the Sale

A squeeze page is where you send your visitors with the intention of capturing their information and then selling them. You first must get their attention and entice them to sign in at your lead capture box. They must perceive your offer as adding value and must be unique.

It can be a very appealing extra bonus, an aggressive discount or something only you can provide and is time-sensitive (now or never).

However, before that you need to make sure you have the interest of the leads, and you get it by showing them some information about the product or service they are interested in... and you know it because they have clicked on your ads persuaded by your proposition. So once again, give them what they came for... if it was about a product where you are an affiliate, you can give them good insights about what they will get with that product... from an analysis perspective... an unbiased review and no hype.

Keeping Customers Coming Back for More!

As we've said throughout this report, **the purpose of your online selling machine is to begin an interaction with customers.** Find out your customers preferences, needs, lifestyles and demographics by polling them; asking for this information so you can personalize their online experience and build loyalty.

Keeping customers coming back is all about keeping in touch on a regular basis and making your website enticing enough, ever changing so that customers will return and continue to buy from you. Continuous e-mail marketing plays a vital role along with

reward programs, specials for preferred customers only, private website access areas, social networking links, blogs with current information. All of these elements work together to keep customers focused on your brand, your unique personality and your customer service.

Conclusion

Entrepreneur Web Technologies Inc. has developed a “30 Minute Website Tune-Up” which we conduct over the telephone with you and your top staff members. Here is what we’ll accomplish together in this fast-paced, straightforward session:

- **A Tune Up Of Your Existing Site:** Often web design firms are approached by would-be clients that want a site and are eager to begin. Yet they don’t know what they really want or how to begin.

We’ll walk you through our two-step process (which literally takes five minutes) and show you exactly how to improve your site in no more than 1-2 weeks. This will immediately boost your conversions and visitors to your site.

- **Who Is Responsible For Marketing?** We’ve worked with hundreds of companies, designing and developing websites and helping them market successfully online. We’ll show you an easier way to turn average marketing into an organized plan you can implement within 2-3 weeks. This will give you the encouragement and tools you’ll need to make your internet business more successful.

This *30 Minute Website Tune-Up* is conducted by a senior certified executive business analyst of our company, who have worked with hundreds of companies to improve their online selling results: Please be assured that this consultation will not be a thinly disguised sales presentation; it will consist of the best wisdom an executive business analyst can supply in a thirty minute time span. **There is no charge for the call**, but please be advised that the call must be limited to 30 minutes.

This consult will typically take place within 1-2 weeks of your call. To **secure a time** for this consultation please **call our office at 1-877-900-7077** or email us at **marketing@entrepreneurweb.com**. One of our agents will advise you regarding available time slots. We will also provide you with a pre-consultation questionnaire that will prepare both of us to get maximum value in the shortest amount of time.