

Online Home-Based Businesses

A Guide to
Internet Riches

by

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A Guide for Online Home-Based Businesses

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Introduction

A well-known speaker started off his seminar by holding up a \$20 bill and, with a smile, asked, "Who would like this \$20 bill?"

One by one, the hands went up.

Looking directly at a lady who did not have her hand up and was staring suspiciously at the \$20 bill in his hand, he said, "I guarantee you that this is a genuine, legal tender \$20 note. Are you sure you are not interested in getting this absolutely free, with no strings attached?"

The lady paused for a moment, and put her hand up - along with most of the rest of the audience who did not put up their hands.

He said, "I am going to give this \$20 to one of you but first let me do this." He proceeded to crumple the dollar bill up.

Holding up the crumpled bill, he then asked, "Who still wants this dollar bill?"

The hands remained up in the air.

"Well," he replied, "What if I do this?" And he dropped it on the ground and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe. For good measure, he even jumped on it a few times. He picked it up, now all crumpled and dirty. "Now who still wants it?"

Still the hands were up in the air.

Introduction

"My friends, you have all learned a very valuable lesson. No matter what I did to the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value. It is still worth \$20. Many times in our lives, we are dropped, crumpled, and ground into the dirt by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way. We feel as though we are worthless."

"But no matter what has happened or what will happen, you will never lose your value."

This anecdote is but all too relevant in the Internet marketing arena.

I have webmasters telling me about how good their site is, how they are going to be the best in what they are doing, etc, etc. Six months down the road when I went to check on their site, it's gone.

What happened?

A lot of them probably got busy, or got discouraged. For some, when it was clear that the money is not just going to drop from the sky, just move on to the next get-rich-quick scheme.

But I will bet that friends and family influenced a lot of them. There will be questions like: "Have you made money on the net YET?" or "When are you going to stop playing around on the Internet and get a real job?" or "You are trying to make money on the Internet??!?!?"

We have all been there.

It is up to us, as Internet entrepreneurs, to know our field and persevere. The Internet is a dynamic place, and setbacks and failures are the norm rather than the exception. Believe in what you are doing and don't give up.

Introduction

A failure is just a simple miscalculation, of being in the right place at the wrong time, or just a matter of bad luck. A failure must not diminish your determination and in no way reflects badly on you. Rather, a failure just takes you one step closer to success.

That said, we must also continually learn and upgrade ourselves. We must have confidence in ourselves but yet be open to new ideas and suggestions.

"I find the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving: To reach the port of heaven, we must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it, but we must sail, and not drift, nor lie at anchor."

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.
US Supreme Court Justice

Chapter 1

Why Should You Start a Business?

We have been told many times that the new economy is upon us, or to prepare ourselves for the new economy, or what new jobs will be created by the new economy, or what jobs will be lost. It has been given different names, such as knowledge economy, network economy and the information age.

Rather than quibble over names and definitions, we will all agree that changes are happening in the world and will continue on in an accelerating pace for the foreseeable future. These changes will profoundly affect the way we work, play and do business.

Let's spare a moment to look at the changes and how they affect us:

Flexible Work Arrangements

More and more companies are adopting work arrangements that are not strictly 9 to 5. It comes in many guises and is advantageous to both employees and employers.

For employees, it allows them time off to take a sick child to the doctor, or to avoid the morning rush hour.

For employers, it allows them to retain staff on a reduced

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workload, while they peruse other interests. They can also look at their employees as subcontractors, employing them to get a job done, rather than on a per hour basis.

In some cases, with a mobile phone, a notebook and an Internet connection, the employee can effectively be the office. The employee can work anywhere she wants and still be as effective as if she was right there in the office.

Technology

Vending machines are everywhere. From selling Coca-Cola to snacks, there are now some that will charge your mobile phones. If you think about it, those vending machines are doing what used to be somebody's job.

Make a call to your local government department. An answering machine picks up the call, right? An operator was put out of a job.

Take a look at yourself. You can probably handle a word processing program. If you need to write a report, you probably do it yourself, including the graphics. If you need to view a pdf document, I'll bet that you will install the reader yourself. And I'm guessing that your job has nothing to do with computers. With the help of a computer, you have taken a few jobs away yourself.

And it will get worse. Computers are getting cheaper, more powerful and smarter. Already upon us are computers better able to emulate human abilities. There are computers that can understand human speech, read printed text and even hold a simple conversation with you. And I'm sure that you have seen robots that can actually walk, on 2 legs.

Soon they will be on the streets and in your offices, and taking away even more jobs.

The Rise of India and China

"In the same way that commentators refer to the 1900s as the American Century, the early 21st century may be seen as the time when some in the developing world, led by India and China, come into their own," said a December 2004 study by the U.S. National Intelligence Council.

The study further noted that there could be a "definitive break with some of the post-World War II institutions and practices." The study also said that India "could emerge as the world's fastest-growing economy" by 2020, overtaking China.

With a combined total population of 2.4 billion people, more than one third of the world's population, they cannot be ignored.

The Internet

Although the Internet has its beginnings in the 1960s, it actually started to evolve into the net that we know in the early 1990s when the first properly developed web-browser, Mosaic, was introduced.

Since then, Internet usage has exploded, with an estimated 13.9% of the world's population connected as of 2005. That is a staggering 889 million people!

Today, the Internet has become an integral part of our lives. From emailing our colleagues and friends, to playing games, to setting up blogs telling the world about our personal lives, the Internet has truly become our constant companion.

All this has not escaped the attention of the big businesses and corporations. They have come online to reach markets they have never been able to reach before. With the Internet, marketing to Mr Gandhi and Ms Hiroko has become nearly as easy as marketing to

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Mr Smith in the next office.

With most of their customers online and easily accessible, some companies have decided to cut out the middleman. Instead of appointing a distributor in a foreign country to deal with foreign customers, they will take over or at least minimize the role of the distributor, preferring to deal directly with their customers.

Even the average Joes on the street have jumped onto the bandwagon. They have set up businesses on the web, hawking their wares on the global marketplace. And some have done pretty well for themselves.

Conclusion

So, what does all this mean to you?

To put it in a nutshell, the world is changing and it will continue to do so at a faster and faster rate. Your job, which you feel is secure, may not be in 5 years time. What is worse, it may be rendered obsolete by technology or changes in the economy.

To meet these challenges head on, you need to upgrade and diversify. Upgrade yourself so that you are the best that you can be in your chosen profession. And you can diversify by taking on more responsibilities at work, thus making yourself more indispensable.

If you are sharp enough, you would probably realize that upgrading yourself and taking on more responsibilities does not necessarily mean more pay. But it will most certainly mean more hours at work.

Which is why more and more people are looking to go into business for themselves. And that is why you are here now.

Starting a business 10 years ago would probably have meant

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spending a good part of your nest egg, or going into debt. But, with today's connected world, and the right choice of products and business, an online business can be started for a pittance.

There are no guarantees in life, just as there are no guarantees that you will be able to build a successful online business, but don't you owe it to yourself to at least look into it?

1.1 Advantages of Being the Boss

If you have been an employee all your life, then read on. The following is all that you have dreamt of and more.

Flexible Hours

What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you saw "Flexible Hours"? Visions of afternoons spent playing golf, or shopping at the mall? Maybe you were thinking of working 3 days a week and taking 2 days off and perhaps taking off on a holiday as and when you feel like it?

Sorry to burst your bubble, but "Flexible Hours" means that you have more control over when you work, and not how many hours you work.

As the boss of a business that is just starting up, there will be a lot of things that need your attention, so expect to work more than 8 hours a day, rather than less. But you will have the freedom to take a hour or two off for a dental appointment, or to take a day off when you really need a break, without having to ask for permission.

You are Working for Yourself

Ever really stopped to think where you are heading? I mean, really stop whatever it is that you are busy with and think about where you want to be financially in 10 years time? Are you going to be able to achieve that goal? And be brutally honest.

If you are holding down a job right now, I would be quite sure that your answer will be that you are not going to be able to achieve what you want in 10 years time. Although you are earning a monthly salary with yearly increments and good bonuses, that dream of a luxury yacht, or retiring early is just not going to happen.

You can work 12-hour days for the rest of your life, but those dreams will remain just that ... dreams.

The company can take off because of your hard work, and you can get nice fat bonuses, but the only person that will be getting that luxury yacht will be your boss. You are never going to get that yacht.

Things will be different when you are running your own online business.

If you work very hard, the sky's the limit. It will be a struggle in the beginning, but in 10 years time, that luxury yacht can actually be a no-brainer.

You Can Make a Lot of Money

I know, this ties in with the previous topic about working for yourself, in which I implied that if you work real hard, you can make a lot of money (luxury yacht). But I feel that the fact that you can really make a lot of money is so important that it deserves a topic of its own and it needs to be stated explicitly.

If you have the drive, ingenuity and resourcefulness, running a business of your own can really bring in the big bucks.

1.2 The Downside of Being the Boss

"You get to boss people around, you can choose when you work and you make a lot of money - there is a down side?", you ask. As with practically all things in life, the roses will always come with thorns.

The Buck Stops Here

Former U.S. president Harry Truman had a sign with "The Buck Stops Here" inscribed on it. In so doing, Truman was announcing that while those beneath him could duck responsibility, as the then president of the United States, he has to bear the ultimate responsibility.

As an employee of a company, you would encounter many problems which you can safely shirk responsibility. So long as it is not under your job scope, you can say, "That's not my problem." The problem will be solved by somebody who is paid and trained to solve it. But if nobody claims responsibility for the problem, the problem will ultimately have to be solved by the boss himself.

So, as the boss of your business, every problem that the business encounters is, directly or indirectly, your problem. So, if you don't have a sign with "The Buck Stops Here" inscribed, it's about time to get one.

It's Lonely at the Top

As the boss of the business, you have to expect a bit of isolation from your employees. Even if you have a consultative form of leadership, looking at your employees as partners and peers rather than subordinates, you will not be one of the boys. As the boss, your priorities and goals are different from theirs and that is what will set you apart.

In fact, to keep your business running smoothly, it may be best to maintain a little distance. There may be times in which you have to do the unpopular but necessary like firing somebody and you will definitely appreciate the distance then.

Financial Security

If you are used to getting a paycheck every month, this aspect of running a business may be pretty hard on you. Instead of enjoying a paycheck every month, you are going to have to hand out not one but many paychecks.

This is going to be extremely difficult and stressful at the beginning when your business is not profitable yet. Every month you will see your operating capital being depleted, with little prospect of a surplus the next month. But then, maybe this will spur you on to achieve heights even you didn't dream possible.

1.3 Types of Online Businesses

Although the Internet has been around for quite some years, it has evolved to the net as we know it less than 10 years ago. And in that short time, it has truly become indispensable, featuring

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prominently in our work and play.

And, as is inevitable in any medium in widespread use, the Internet has also become commercialized. And that is why you are here now, exploring the possibility of utilizing the net for your own monetary gain.

Before we look further into a business on the web, it will be good to know about the different types of online businesses found on the web:

Extension of an Offline Business. A large established company may find that it is necessary to have a web presence. In many cases, this online venture will not be a business in itself, but merely serves as an extension of its marketing department.

In some cases, this web presence may not be directly related to marketing or selling. The company may use its online presence for market research or information distribution. Online forums may be set up to gather feedback, or the company may make their catalogs and product specifications available online for their customers' convenience.

Large Online Business. This type of company will start with an entrepreneur with a brilliant idea. He will solicit funds from venture capitalists, or even start with his own funds. A company is born and it will start hiring MBAs, programmers, systems analysts, graphic designers - whatever it takes to be online in 6 months time.

I would not put my money in such a company. The professionals hired, while undoubtedly competent in their own line of work, may not do such a good job in the online environment.

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Take, as an example, the graphic designer. She would probably design a very impressive flash presentation for the home page of the site. It will tell of the merits of the company and it will no doubt be well received by all in the company.

But a web surfer (their customer) is not going to be at all happy with the presentation. Firstly, it takes forever to download even on broadband. Secondly, it takes over the computer's speakers, which will not be well received by those that are listening to music, or on the phone, or watching television. Thirdly, there will probably be no option to skip the presentation, if one so desires. And lastly, the presentation talks only about the company, not about how the company can benefit the surfer.

However, things are changing. Professionals hired during the dot com craze at the turn of the century have learnt that the net is a different kettle of fish altogether and they are adjusting.

Testament to this is the turnaround of Amazon.com. In 2001, they reported a loss of \$567 million. But 3 short years later, in 2004, they were in the black by \$588 million.

Small Online Business. A single individual typically starts this. This guy may already have a small part time business of his own and is looking to the net to expand his sales. Or, he may be attracted by spam he got in his email promising large sums of money for little or no work.

After a few months most would have given up in disgust. They would have tried out the so-called

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business opportunities offered, many of which are outright scams and all of which would have failed to live up to their claims.

A select few will remain. They would have developed a discerning eye and seen through the get-rich-quick schemes for what they really are - get-rich-quick schemes for the starters of the schemes. They will ferret out the more legitimate opportunities, or start one of their own, and go into business for themselves.

This ebook is about online businesses that can be started by a single person, with limited resources, working alone in his garage.

1.4 Online Vs Offline Businesses

At the most basic level, online and offline businesses are similar. Both types of businesses have products for sale, and sell their products for profit.

But when you start looking at the details of each type of business, like the type of products, the barrier to entry, the promotional methods, the main medium of operation, a world of difference emerges.

As a person looking to start a profitable business, there are advantages that an online business have over an offline one.

Extremely Low Start Up Cost

Perhaps one of the most attractive aspects of business on the web

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is the extremely low start up cost.

If you were to consider a normal offline business, we'd be talking about some sort of office space or shop space, one or two employees at the very least, some kind of inventory, maybe renovations, and lots of other smaller expenses.

Even if you were to work on a shoestring budget, you may need at least \$50,000 to run for a year.

And a lot of businesses do not show a profit in the first year.

Do you have \$50,000 to spare? And that's just for the first year!

The Internet, on the other hand, actually allows you to start a business at ZERO cost. There are lots of free stuff on the net. You can use those resources to start a business at no cost.

Of course, it is highly advisable for you to pay for certain things, like a domain name, web hosting and some services that will help in automating and promoting your business. Your business will run more smoothly and gain more credibility, and be more profitable in the long run.

Remember what they say about free things, "You get what you pay for."

For a start, let's talk about \$50 to \$100 a month. You can afford that, right? Bet that's less than your kid's allowance.

Global

In the offline business world, even if you have a product that appeals across borders, you are going to have a massive organizational nightmare in figuring out how to expand regionally, not to mention globally. And that's assuming you have the financial

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muscle to even consider it.

In an online business, a global reach is the norm rather the exception. Every online company is effectively a global company, with the potential to sell globally.

But if you want to sell to any Tom, Dick and Harry on the web, you must choose your products or services carefully. Granny's Heavenly Cookies will probably sell to almost anybody on the web but if you are selling real estate in Florida, you are going to have a very select and localized audience.

You Can Work Part Time

For most offline businesses, working part time is not an option - at least during the starting stages. Every day that your business is running is costing you money - money for the utilities, money for the rent, money to pay your employees, etc.

You are gonna have to quit your job and work on your business full time to make sure it turns a profit - before you run out of money.

For an online business, you can keep your day job. Your monthly expenses will be very low as compared to offline businesses and so there is no need to be profitable as soon as possible.

Only when you find that your business is starting to generate a serious income, and you are having problems coping with its demands, do you have to consider quitting your day job.

First Impressions Count

The street location of a business, or the building it is in, will give the visitor the first impression of the size of the business. In many cases, this first impression will be the determining factor as to

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whether the business makes a sale.

When you are online, however big or small your company is, you will still occupy one screen of your visitor's monitor. As a small business, with a well-designed site, you will have a much greater chance of impressing your customers and stealing them from your bigger competitors.

Chapter 2

How Do You Start an Online Home-Based Business?

Well, you start right at the beginning, of course.

But seriously,...

An online home-based business is not something you want to start on a whim. It takes a lot of work and planning to make it successful.

And even then, a lot don't make it.

Ask yourself honestly if you have what it takes.

Are you willing to risk your time, effort and money on a venture that may or may not succeed? Do you have the patience and skills needed to plan and execute an actual business? Can you stick it out when the going gets tough? Can you come up with a better product than your competitor?

And...if you fail despite all your efforts, can you pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and soldier on?

So, you ask, why am I trying to make it sound so difficult to start and run a successful online business?

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Because it is.

The chances that an offline business will fold within the first 5 years is normally put at 80% - 90%. That's quite slim. That works out to 1 to 2 guys out of every 10 guys.

And if we apply the 80/20 rule, of those still alive, only 20% would be doing well. In other words, out of every 100 companies that starts up, only 2 to 4 companies be profitable enough to make the effort worthwhile.

Now, take a look at an online business. The barrier to entry is very low. The online world is global in nature. With the changes in the world economy, more and more people are looking to start a business. And where do they look? The Internet.

So, you will have a lot more competitors in an online business, and the success rate will drop. In an online business, the success rate will probably be less than 1 guy out of every 10 guys. Pretty bad odds, if you ask me.

I hope you are convinced that it is going to be a struggle to start and run a successful online business. Not impossible, but hard work, perseverance and ingenuity are required.

But if you are prepared, let's continue.

2.1 What is an Online Home-Based Business?

A lot of you may want to start an online business without knowing what it really is. You may have heard of some guy starting a business online and making like a gazillion dollars. Or, perhaps a

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computer friend was telling you that he's dabbling in an online business. Or, maybe you really don't know and you're here to find out.

Well, let's define a business as an entity created with the objective of making a profit from the sale of goods or services.

Which makes an online home based business as a business that mainly conducts its activities online and operates from home.

Definition of an Online Home-Based Business

1. An online home-based business is a entity created with the objective of making a profit from the sale of goods or services that mainly conducts its activities online and operates from home.

There are many sites that advertises ad placing as an online business. Basically, in ad placing, you are paid to place ads for the site. The amount that you are paid depends on the number of ads that you place.

Is that really an online business?

I think that it depends on your attitude. Take an ad placer that looks at ad placing as a job. What do you think this ad placer will do during the course of his day? Place ads, of course. And that's about all that he will do.

Let's take another ad placer with a business attitude. During his day, he would probably place ads. But a significant part of his day will be spent in looking for ways to place ads faster, or to outsource his ad placement, or even investigating the feasibility of starting a similar business.

Many business owners will fall into the first category. Their businesses are making a good income, but they are not looking to

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improve their processes, or break into new markets. They are doing the same thing day in, day out, and earning the same amount every month. Their business has actually become a job.

In an online business, with the Internet in constant flux and getting more competitive by the day, if you are not moving forwards, you are moving backwards.

To hammer home this point, let's add a second clause to our definition of an online business:

Definition of an Online Home Based Business

1. An online home-based business is a entity created with the objective of making a profit from the sale of goods or services that mainly conducts its activities online and operates from home.
2. This entity must, over time, find ways and means to generate more profit from less effort and/or resources.

Pay close attention to the second clause. It is the difference between achieving success or merely making a living.

Remember that you are starting an online business to make a lot of money – you are not looking for another job to replace your present job.

2.2 Starting Up

I remember a time a few years ago when I was asked to design and build a project from scratch. The project was a simple distributed control system controlling multiple ceiling fans. And it

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has to be finished like, yesterday!

I rushed through the project like my life depended on it and a month and a half later, it was complete. Actually, I was quite proud of myself. It was finished in record time and I don't think anybody could finish a similar project that fast. I was wondering if it was a good time to ask for a raise, but.....

My boss took one look at it and asked, "Would it have been better if you had networked the modules together with a single cable?"

And he was right. If I had designed it the way he suggested, it would have been cheaper to produce, easier to design and faster to complete.

What happened?

In my blind rush to complete the project as fast as I could, I started designing with the first feasible concept I thought of, and just kept going. If I had just waited a day or two, considered alternatives, I would have come up with the better design that my boss suggested.

By rushing, I had actually wasted time, instead of saving it.

Needless to say, I decided it wasn't a good time to ask for a raise. But I had learnt the lesson well and in future projects, I made sure I spent enough time planning before starting.

I'm sure you are all raring to go. But before you go charging into the Internet selling anything that moves, spend a bit of time preparing. It will take longer but in the long run, you will be more profitable.

Believe me, I have been there. ;)

We shall continue with preparations that you should do as you plan

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your business.

Internet Access

Needless to say, you will be online a lot of the time. So, however you are connecting to the Internet, make sure that you have a reliable and fast connection. Also, try to get a connection with unlimited access.

Computer

A lot of your work will be done on your computer and it has to be in good working order. Good working order should be defined as follows:

- You can work on the computer for 8 hours continuously without it crashing. This includes being able to connect to the Internet continuously for 8 hours without getting disconnected.
- It doesn't take forever for an application to load. I would look at anything up to 10 seconds as typical while 15 - 30 seconds is a little too long.
- Maintain a good backup routine. There are many options available, but I would consider [Dropbox](#) to be one of the better options. It's free if you don't take up too much memory, and your files are automatically backed up to their server every time you change them. And if you have more than one computer, Dropbox can synchronize the files on all your computers.
- Backup at least once a week.
- Make sure the computer is available when you need it. Any

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kids chatting, or hubby checking up on the sports news must make themselves scarce, when you show up.

Software

Each and every business is different and so are their software requirements. I have compiled a short list to get you started. You will have to add to it as you move along in your business.

- Word Processor. If your computer doesn't already have one installed, you could try [OpenOffice](#). It is a full-featured office suite with word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, graphics, databases and more. It can read and write files from other common office software and is completely free for any purpose.
- HTML Editor. You are going to have to do some form of web page design or editing. Even if you were to start from a ready made template, you are still going to have to put in your content.
- Graphics Editor. At some point you are probably going to need a graphics editor. You can try the Paint program that comes with Windows.
- FTP Program. You will have to upload your site onto the web. You can probably use your host's control panel for that but it might be more convenient to do it through FTP.

Online Security or Viruses, Spy Ware and Other Nuisances

When I first sat down to write this section, I was thinking of a paragraph or two advising you not to be complacent. This will be followed by a short list of simple, commonsense advice on how not

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to get infected.

But as I was searching the Internet for some statistics on virus infection, I began to realize the actual scale of the problem.

Although viruses are still a big threat, a multitude of other threats like Trojan horses, DDOS attacks, phishing has emerged in recent years.

These threats are more sinister than the common virus infection.

In the old days, a lot of viruses are there just to cause mischief. You will get a message telling you that you have been infected, or the virus will automatically reboot your computer, or, my personal favorite, your screen will freeze and bits and pieces of it will drop to the bottom.

The main and only intent was to tell you that you have been infected. That was the end in itself. The virus writer has no other malicious intent.

Security threats these days are not so "benign".

If you are not careful, your user names and passwords can be compromised. Imagine what a hacker can do with the user name and password to your bank account! It is also possible for a hacker to gain control of your computer, copying or deleting files at will. Or, he can use your computer to launch an attack against another computer.

When nobody is at home, you lock your door, don't you?

What about your computer? What are you doing to make sure nobody breaks into your computer?

Don't be complacent about online security. Learn as much as you can and take the necessary steps to protect your computer.

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The following are some simple tips are start you off:

- Install anti-virus, spy ware and firewall protection for your computer.
- Stay up-to-date with software patches.
- Never open attachments of any emails from an unknown source.

Computer Literacy

You will spend a lot of your time on the web looking for information, emailing and chatting. The rest of your time may be spent in writing articles, designing web pages or maybe even writing programs.

Every single one of the above activities requires a computer. Most of those activities will require that you be logged on to the Internet. If you are not good in computers or the Internet, you have to do something about it.

It will be a lot to take in but just learn it one thing at a time, one day at a time. In a few months I guarantee that computers and the Internet will be like second nature to you. You will still have a lot of things to learn but you will have acquired the basics.

Finances

Running an online business is very cheap as compared to offline businesses. I would look at \$50 - \$100 per month (not inclusive of Internet access charges) as more than enough in most cases. Do note that more may be needed at the start for the purchase of software, computer hardware and ebooks.

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It is usually recommended that you work on your business on a part time basis until it starts to generate a significant income. Once that happens, you can then consider quitting your job to work on your business full time.

2.3 Deciding on a Product

You have decided to try starting an online home-based business - what you lack is a product.

Try to get ideas for a product by surfing the web and seeing what other people are selling. Go to eBay and see what's being auctioned. Try joining an online forum and asking.

Remember that you are selling the product online, so if possible, take advantage of it. The ideal online product should be downloadable or accessible online by your buyer. Payment should be online, although you may want to offer offline options. There should be no need for maintenance or servicing for the product.

Do bear in mind that you will be working long hours promoting and selling this product. Find something that you can be truly passionate about. You will definitely be able to sell it better.

Let's take a look at some of the products that can be sold online:

- **Physical Product.** Actually, anything that can be sold offline can be sold online. But, given the global nature of the Internet, it would be best that you choose a product that is small and can be sent to most parts of the world without too many customs restrictions. You might also like to consider a product that is consumable, to increase the chance of repeat business.

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If you are really considering a physical product, you may want to check if the product can be dropped shipped to your customer. Essentially, what the drop shipper does is take over the warehousing and shipping of the product for you. The drop shipper will ship the product direct to your customer, with your company's name and address as sender. To the customer, it will be as if your company shipped the product.

- **Downloadable Product.** This can be ebooks, articles, graphic templates, software files or software. Such products are ideal to sell online as you do not have to worry about inventory or shipping. Once your customer pays for the product, they will be directed to a site where they can download the product immediately.

You could develop the product yourself. However, there are many sites on the net where you can download for free, or for a small fee, products that are ready to be sold.

Many such products come with sales pages and presentations so that all you need to do is to change the pages and presentations to your name and your payment processor, and you are actually ready to sell.

If you are considering such products, you can try IDplr.com. They feature a mix of products with Private Label Rights, Master Resell Rights and Resell Rights, and their free membership gives you access to 500+ products.

- **Software.** If you are a programmer, and you have a great

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idea for a software application, you can go ahead and give it a try. However, like ebooks, there are also software applications which gives you the right to resell it for profit.

- **Advertising.** Your product does not have to be tangible. It can simply be advertising space on your websites, or your newsletter.

2.4 Your Income Stream

So, now we come to everybody's favorite topic, how to make money from an online business?

Unlike an offline business, where usually the only profits will come from the sale of your products, an online business offers you the possibility of multiple income streams.

The following lists the various ways you can earn from your online business:

- **Sales.** A pretty traditional way of making money is to sell your product. Works as well online as it does offline.
- **Affiliate Programs.** You can join affiliate programs to promote another company's product. When you make a sale, you will be entitled to a commission. This is a good way to start if you don't have your own product, or don't want to keep stock or receive payments.

Take your time and shop around for an affiliate program that pays well. It's not easy selling on the net and I would expect to be well compensated for my efforts. I would consider a 20% - 30% commission as

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fair compensation for my efforts.

- **Residual Income.** Residual income can be defined as income derived not as a direct result of your efforts. For example, you can sell web hosting at \$10/month and get a 20% commission, which works out to \$2/month. If your customer renews the next month, you will automatically get another \$2, without any additional effort on your part. In fact, you will get \$2 per month for as long as your customer renews.

Another way you can earn residual income is from the efforts of your referrals. Most affiliate programs have at least a 2-tier structure, allowing you to earn some commission from the sales of your referrals.

A word of advice if you are planning to build a business from the residual income from your referrals - hope for the best but prepare for the worst. A full 90% of your referrals will probably sit on their behind and do absolutely nothing while 9% may bring in a sale or two. Only 1%, if you are lucky, will perform well.

- **Advertising.** There are many ways you can earn advertising revenue from your site. You can enter into a private deal with another webmaster to display his banner on your site for x dollars per month. Or, you can join a banner exchange and display banners for cash.

You can maximize your advertising space by introducing pop-ups, pop-unders or slide-in ads, but the general rule of thumb is - one is more than enough. Many surfers find these irritating but will probably tolerate one, but not more.

However, with ad rates being rather low, advertising revenue will just supplement your income. Unless you have a very popular site, your fortune will not be made in advertising.

- **Subscription.** If you have data or information that surfers will pay to access, then you can consider a subscription-based site. Surfers will pay a one-time fee, or monthly fee, to have access to your site. Or you can have a free site, but a subscription-based newsletter.

2.5 Domain Name

You just have to register a domain name. A site without its own domain name looks unprofessional. It looks like you are a here-today-gone-tomorrow type of site.

I would really think twice before making a purchase or trusting such a site.

Besides, if your web host goes out of business, a lot of your promotion efforts will be wasted.

Before deciding on a name, use the following tips to give you an idea of how to choose a better name.

Your Domain Name Should be Catchy, Short and/or Easy to Remember

Take a name like "KeliBooks.com".

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Think you can remember it?

Maybe.

Now imagine that you have been surfing the web for the last hour looking for a certain book and have been encountering names like "Books-n-Such.com", "MyBooks.com" and "PrestigeBookshop.com".

Do you think "KeliBooks.com" will stand out?

I don't think so.

Now...how about a bookshop by the name of "Fatbrain.com"?

Bet you can remember it. It'll probably stick like a leech to your mind. I think you'd be hard pressed to forget it.

That's the kind of name you want for your site.

Make Sure it is Easy to Pronounce and Easy to Spell

Think of "QuittingYourJob.com". It's easy for you to tell your friend the name of this site over the phone, right? You'd just say, "Quitting your job dot com".

How about a site with a name like "GoodJobs4U.com"? Gonna be a bit of a problem, right? The best way to get it across would be to spell it out, which is rather inconvenient.

Also, try not to use words that are hard to pronounce, usually mispronounced, and words that are hard to spell.

Word of mouth can be a good way of promoting your site. Try to make it easier for your website visitors to spread the word about

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your site.

Try For a Generic Name

Generic names are names like:

www.business.com
www.lampshade.com
www.parrots.com

You get the idea.

Generic names are great because surfers might type it in without ever knowing about your site.

Say, you have a company that sells computer monitors at www.monitors.com. If a surfer wants to buy a computer monitor, he might just type in "monitors.com" into the address bar to see what comes up.

I'm quite sure that all the generic words would already have been taken up but you can try your luck with words that are not in common use but is very common in your specific field of business or expertise.

Try to Start the First Character of Your Domain Name With "A"

Not always possible but do it if you can. Or at least try to get the first character as close to "A" as possible. In fact, it would be even better if you can start with a digit.

Why the fuss with the letter "A"?

Many directories list sites sorted by their domain names. Sites

with "A" in their domain name will be very close to the top of the list. :)

2.6 Site Design

The design of your site depends on multiple factors, including your business, your product, marketing angle, etc. Probably what I can do here is outline in general what is important in most sites and you will have to fill in the blanks.

Don't Reinvent the Wheel

Probably the first thing you want to do is to visit some of your competitor's sites. It will give you an idea of what your site could look like, what features you want for your own site and serve as a starting point for the design of your site.

Ease of Navigation

In many cases, you don't read a web site like you would a novel. You don't start from page 1, continue to page 2, and so on.

You would probably "read" a site like you would a reference book. Maybe you will read the introduction to get an idea of what the book is about, and then you will skip to the table of contents to look for the location of the information that you need. In some cases, you may turn to the index at the back of the book to see what pages of the book the information you want is referred to.

Notice the navigation aids - the table of contents and the index. The first will be found at the beginning while the second, if available, at the end of the book. This is a standard observed by all

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books.

Your site should be as easy to navigate:

Main Menu. You should have a menu, located either at the top, left or right, that directs users to the various sections of your site. This menu should be available from every page of your site, and at the same location.

Site Map. If your site is relatively large, and you feel that users may have a problem locating the information they want even with a main menu, consider including a site map. Site maps give much more detail than the main menu and users will have an easier time locating the information they want.

Search Engine. If your site is a very large site, including a search engine is a good idea.

Fast Loading Pages

Many webmasters will have broadband, cable or fiber connections and they tend to forget about the poor souls still struggling with dialup.

It is best that you keep the size of your pages as small as possible to accommodate the users with slow connections. A general guideline is to keep the size of your pages below 100k.

Graphics

Pretty graphics are nice to look at. But unless your site is about graphics, it's probably best to keep it to a minimum. It distracts the users, and increases the load time for your pages.

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Don't forget to optimize the graphics that you use. The JPEG graphic format is a compressed format. You can choose to compress it as much or as little as you want. The more you compress it, the smaller it becomes, but the image is of a lower quality.

To optimize your JPEGs, start with a JPEG of acceptable quality. Save the JPEG with more compression and view it. If the quality is acceptable, save it again with even more compression. Do it until you get an image with unacceptable quality. The image before that will be your optimized image.

Note that you cannot go from a low quality image back to a high quality image. So remember to save your high quality images into a separate directory before trying any optimization.

Consistency

We discussed consistency regarding the location of your main menu. This consistency should extend to all areas of your site. In other words, your fonts, color scheme, buttons, etc, should be the same for all pages of your site.

Testing

The computer on your desk is called a PC, or personal computer. Whenever I am asked why a particular computer behaves in a strange way, I will remark that the computer is called a "personal computer", and thus will exhibit its own personality.

Similarly, surfers viewing your site will also have their own personal computer, with their own particular combination of software and hardware. Therefore, it is best to test your site under as many different types and versions of hardware and software as

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you possibly can:

Browsers. Different Internet browsers might display your site slightly differently so do view your site with the more popular browsers to make sure there are no major issues.

Screen Resolutions. Don't forget to test your site under different screen resolutions, including running your site in a window and varying the size of the window to see how it looks.

Java and ActiveX. Many sites depend on Java or ActiveX to display properly. If your site needs a Java enabled browser, try it with Java disabled and see how it looks. If possible, it is best that your site will function correctly even if the users have Java or ActiveX disabled.

Smartphones and Tablets. These days, your visitors can arrive at your site not only through a personal computer or a notebook, but via smartphones and tablets as well. So, do keep that in mind and, if you can, cater to these visitors as well.

2.7 Search Engine Optimization

Unlike what some search engine optimization companies would have you believe, optimizing your web site for the search engines is not that hard. The following guidelines may not get you the first position in the results for your keyword phrase, but it might put you within the first or second page.

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Keywords

Make a list of keywords that your customer will use to search for your site. For a site about online businesses, the list would look something like: online, Internet, business, home-based, opportunity, etc.

From the keywords, you can form keyword phrases like online business, or business opportunity. These phrases are what you expect your customer to type into the search engine, and what you are going to optimize your site for.

Meta Tags

The meta tags of interest here are the "title", "description" and "keyword" tags. For the "title" and "description" tag, make sure you include your key phrase. The "keyword" tag is not so useful and search engines largely ignore it, preferring to decide for themselves. Nevertheless, it doesn't hurt to include a "keyword" tag with all your keywords.

Domain Name

You can consider including your keywords into your domain name, like ExcellentOnlineBusiness.com. But such a name might make your domain name harder to remember, among all the other websites that are doing the same thing.

Web Page

Include your keyword phrase as close to the top of the page as possible. And don't forget to repeat it a couple of times.

Graphics

If you have any graphics on your page, include an "alt" tag and see if you can fit your keyword phrase as part of the text of the "alt" tag.

Directories and File Names

Don't just name your directories and HTML files with a, b, c, etc. Give them descriptive names like business, online, etc. Helps you in your search engine rankings, and makes your web site easier to maintain later.

2.8 Promoting Your Website

I was having a conversation with a so-called Internet marketer some time ago. I asked him about his Internet marketing techniques, hoping to pick his brain.

He looked at me and said: "Traffic exchanges."

Okay, although traffic exchanges are quite useless for some sites but since his site is about Internet businesses, I conceded that traffic exchanges is a viable marketing tool for his site.

"But, how about your better ideas? Maybe those that takes a bit of time that you haven't gotten round to implementing yet? Maybe we can work together."

He looked at me with a blank stare and I realized that he has been solely using traffic exchanges to promote his site.

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Unfortunately, a lot of marketers fall into his category. They will concentrate on one or two techniques, to the exclusion of all others. Don't be like them.

There are a thousand and one ways to get visitors and most of them are free. You will still need to do a lot of work to get the visitors, but this is the arena where your ingenuity really comes into play. Learn about the basic techniques and concepts, combine them if appropriate, add in some of your own ideas, and you will have a killer marketing plan.

Let me go through some of the more common marketing techniques.

Search Engines and Directories

These days, if you are actively promoting your site, it is not necessary to submit your site to the search engines. If you want to submit to the smaller engines, see if you can find an automatic submission service. The traffic you get from the smaller engines are minimal and it's just not worth the time to submit individually to each and every one of them.

Unlike search engines, which will crawl your site and index it automatically, directories are run by human editors. Again, just pick the top directories and submit manually to them. Do take the time to read their submission guidelines so that your submission will not end up in the trash. And don't forget to start the title of your site with an "A", if possible.

Spend a bit of time looking for directories that caters to your particular market. Such directories may receive a lot of targeted visitors and a listing could make a big difference to your bottom line.

Traffic Exchanges

As a member of a traffic exchange, you visit other members' sites, and earn credits. You assign the credits to your own site so that other members will visit your site.

Traffic from these exchanges are usually not of a high quality, as most are webmasters seeking to earn credits for visits to their own sites. However, if your website or business is about making money online or caters to webmasters, promoting on traffic exchanges might just be worth your while.

PTR Sites

PTR or paid-to-read-email sites are sites that pay their members to receive email from you, read a message from you or to visit your site. As with traffic exchanges, effectiveness is limited as the members are more interested in getting paid than in your site or your email.

Pay Per Click Search Engines

You pay a certain amount for each click from the search engine to your site. It can be pretty effective in some cases but try to go only for the bigger engines. There is a greater chance of fraudulent clicks from the smaller engines.

When you are writing your advertising copy for the PPC search engines and websites, be mindful that you are paying per click, so you want as highly targeted a visitor as possible. Word your copy in such a way so that only people who are interested in your product will click on the ad.

Link Exchanges

Many sites have a link exchange directory. The webmistress will link to your site in exchange for a link from your site to hers. This is a technique that was effective in the past. While it can still bring in some traffic, search engines may be penalizing sites using such techniques.

So, if your traffic strategy is to bring in large amounts of search engine traffic, exercise caution and make sure you do your homework if you want to use this technique.

Newsletter

Let's face it, most visitors to your site will never return. Either they don't like your site, or there are too many similar sites for yours to stand out, or they forgot your domain name, or one of hundreds of other reasons. A newsletter is a good way to remind them of who you are and what you stand for, and to get them to visit your site again.

Signature

You know the few lines found at the end of an email detailing the sender's web site, email address and maybe a short advertising message? That's the sender's signature.

A signature at the end of an email message or forum posting advertising your website or product, even if it has nothing to do with the subject of the message, is perfectly acceptable. But do limit the number of lines in your signature. My suggestion would be to keep it as brief as possible and keep it to one or two lines.

Participating in Forums

Find a forum or forums relevant to your site or business. Lurk for a while to be familiar with the rules of the forum. If you feel that the forum members are your target market, then start participating.

Remember that useful and constructive posts are going to win you more friends and fans than blatant advertising. By all means, include your web site in your signature, but in the forum posting, bring up your web site only if it is relevant to the discussion.

In time, you will become a respected member of the forum. That is the best advertisement of all.

Writing Articles

Writing articles is a great way to get traffic for your site. Post the articles on your site, and include a small resource box at the end of each article with your name, URL and a short description of your site. Allow other webmasters to reproduce it on their own sites provided the articles remain unchanged and your resource box is included.

You can also submit your articles to article directories. Each article should be about 500 words in length, and make sure it contains useful and relevant information. At the end of your article, you are usually allowed to include a short biography with a link to your website.

Conclusion

The techniques outlined are among the more commonly used. Most are effective to some extent, but they can be much more effective when adapted to your particular site.

Chapter 3

Examples of Online Home-Based Businesses

We are now close to the end - the end of the beginning. In the past couple of chapters I have given you a short overview of what it takes to set up an online business, from choosing a domain name, to getting a product, to setting up a site and actually making money.

Now is the time to put it all together. The following sections will introduce you to 3 different individuals, and the type of online business they plan to start. I have tried to make the examples as diverse as possible, so that you can see the many possibilities available to you.

The first person you're going to meet is Larry, a secondhand car salesman. He's pretty good at his job, but he doesn't see himself selling cars for the rest of his life. So, he has turned to the Internet for the Next Great Opportunity.

Next will be 2 good friends, Kit and Katie. Kit is an advertising copywriter for a large ad agency. She has always harbored ambitions of starting her own agency and since she has just quit her job, has decided that now is the time to strike out on her own.

The last person is Edward. He is a computer programmer with an avid interest in chaos theory. He has developed a computer model of the stock market, based on the premise that the market is a

chaotic system, which has an uncanny knack of predicting the direction of the market.

The narrative style is intentional. You will get a feel of the individuals, and how the business is merely an extension of who they are and what they know.

3.1 The Opportunist

Larry has been online for a year or so. He has made the rounds of the so-called "business opportunities" and have lost more money than he made. But despite those setbacks, he knows that there is money to be made - only that there is not going to be an easy way to do it. He has decided to abandon the get-rich-quick schemes and set up a proper online business.

He doesn't have a lot of money to spend, and he has a job, so he can't work on it full time - not at the start at least. It should be something he has some interest in so it won't be too boring. Should he sell a product? His own product or somebody else's product? Maybe he should just sell advertising. But with the rates so low, he will need a lot of traffic to get a decent income.

After thinking it through for a while, Joe decided that he wants a "clean-cut" business. He has thought through what he needs to sell his own product. He will have to handle customer inquiries, payments, shipping, refunds, and a whole lot of other stuff. That's pretty messy. If he were to sell other people's stuff, and just earn commission, that will be pretty clean-cut.

But again, what product?

He knows that products relating to Internet marketing sells pretty well if properly marketed. But it seems that everybody he knows is

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an Internet marketer, so the competition's going to be pretty intense. Something relating to finance like insurance, stocks or loans might be quite lucrative but he knows next to nothing about such stuff. He smiled when he thought about himself giving somebody else financial advice - "Gonna advise them to bankruptcy", he thought wryly.

And then it struck him. He will sell girls. Ahemm....not porn but dating services. There are tons of legitimate dating services on the web that pays you well when you refer a member, even if it is a free member. You get paid even better if that member upgrades to a paid member.

Being a bit of the ladies man himself, he knows about attracting the opposite sex. He can start a newsletter about dating. It can tell about how to dress, or speak, what to do on a first date, how not to appear too eager, and lots of other good stuff.

Most dating services offer a ready-made site for their affiliates so he does not have to worry about designing his own site. As for the site for his newsletter, he can probably get his computer friend to put together a simple one page site for him. But even without the newsletter, he can write articles to promote the dating services.

Summary of Larry's Plan

Aim

Start the business on a part time basis, while still holding on to his full time job. Learn the ropes of the business. As income from the business increases, quit the job and concentrate on the business full time.

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Product

Dating services, or to be more specific, memberships to online dating services.

Marketing

Write articles about dating, relationships and such stuff and submit them to relevant sites and newsletters for publication. In addition, he can put together a simple site to attract subscribers for his newsletter.

Expenses

\$100 - \$200 per month taken from his full time income.

\$50 per month will be spent on web hosting, domain name registration, autoresponders, ad tracking and Internet marketing products.

\$50 per month will be spent on registration fees for the services that he is promoting. He reckons that the best way to promote those services is to have a first hand experience of the services.

The rest of the money will be used in paid ads in related newsletters and web sites.

Income Stream

He will be paid when somebody signs up for a free or paid membership at an online dating service. He intends to concentrate on services that will pay him monthly as long as the paying member that he refers continues being a member. That way, he

can get a more regular income each month.

In addition, if he can manage to get enough subscribers for his newsletter, he intends to sell advertising space as well.

3.2 The Copywriter

Katie couldn't help smiling as Kit regaled her with choice details of what transpired on the day she walked out of the office. It seems that a client was unhappy over the results of an ad campaign and her manager had implied that Kit's copywriting skills needed a little brushing up. He actually had the audacity to suggest that she consider a refresher course at the local university!

One thing about Kit - you can tell her her hair's a mess or her shoes are the ugliest you have even seen, and she will just grin sheepishly at you and tell you that she's been working a little too hard. But you do not tell her that her copywriting skills are not up to par or anything less than fabulous Katie was glad she was not on the receiving end that day.

"He's already called to apologize and even offered me a small raise, and I know he just said it to appease the client, but I'm not going back. I thought it through and you ready for this? I am going to start my own ad agency."

It took a moment for Katie to realize that her best friend was not kidding. She has no doubts as to her friend's ability to run an ad agency, but she knows that Kit is passionate - very passionate - about copywriting. Katie knows that she will be roped in to "assist" in the running of the agency but in no time at all, she will be running the whole show while Kit will be sitting in her corner somewhere doing her copywriting.

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Not that Katie minds being the "boss" but it's going to be a big risk for Kit, financially. An ad agency needs a posh office, good location and talented people, all of which costs big bucks. Kit's gonna have to dig deep into her nest egg, and then some. And there is no guarantee of success.

Katie has been thinking of using Kit's copywriting skills to set up a small business online. The financial risk is much lower and they can reach a much wider range of customers. Katie decided that now would be the time to broach the subject.

"Actually, I've been thinking along the same lines. But instead of setting up the usual brick and mortar business, let's do it in cyberspace. All you have to do is to write the ads, and I will get the products, place your ads, talk to the customers and collect the money. Don't worry, I'll give you a small commission - if your ads are good."

"You wish! It's going to be fifty-fifty or you are walking home tonight."

"Oh yeah! I'll just call your brother, you know he's just dying to pick me up."

Over the next few hours, in between bouts of good-natured teasing and friendly rivalry, they managed to formulate a plan.

Kit will identify a market segment with good potential. Katie will search the net for products in that segment that offers affiliate programs. That way, they do not have to keep stocks or even purchase the product - they simply earn a commission when their leads purchase the product.

Kit will write advertising copy for the product while Katie will look for online ezines, forums and websites to post ads. For a start, they will refer customers directly to the product's web site, although they plan to design their own site and sell their own product at a

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later date.

Katie will also start to look into marketing on Facebook and other social media platforms. Advertising on Pay per click networks on Facebook and AdWords will also be on the cards as revenue starts coming in.

Katie intends to track the response to their ads, so that they can tell which websites or techniques give a better response and which one of Kit's ads perform better. They can then increase their ROI (return on investment) by focusing on those ads and techniques, and become even more profitable.

Summary of Kit and Katie's Plan

Aim

In general, Kit will take what she knows - writing ads - from an offline environment to an online one.

Product

No predetermined product. General guideline would be a product that's relatively easy to sell, and has merchants with affiliate programs with good commissions for the product.

Marketing

Katie will focus on placing paid ads in targeted ezines, forums and websites. She will also look into social media marketing.

Expenses

No fixed monthly expenses. Expenses per ad campaign will be determined on an ad hoc basis.

Income Stream

Income is based on the product they are currently promoting, and the commission it pays.

3.3 The Computer Programmer

It was just 6 months ago that Edward ran his first simulation with his newly completed Chaotic Stock Market Simulator. It is a relatively simple program based on basic trading rules but incorporates some elements of Chaos Theory. The results were quite impressive - with the system making money in 19 out of 20 trades.

He remembered blowing a cool \$500 that night taking his parents and 6 sisters out for dinner. All he told them was that he stumbled on something big and that there will be lots more dinners like that soon.

In the following days, as he ran further simulations with more data and more markets, Edward began to realize that he had jumped the gun. The system was actually winning trades in only about 75% of the time. And once you include real life trading factors like the bid-ask spread, slippage and the trading commission, the numbers looked worse.

Finally, after a further 6 months of testing, simulations and program

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refinements, the second version of his program is ready. It has managed to take everything that Edward can throw at it and still manage a relatively healthy profit of 5% per month.

Tonight, Edward will take his family out for the second time. They are going to try out the new Japanese restaurant across the street from where he is currently working.

Tomorrow, Edward will start looking for web designers and programmers for his website. He already knows what he wants for the site. It will be a subscription-based site with the subscription set at \$100 per month.

He intends to offer a trial subscription of \$10 for the first month so that his customers can be assured of the accuracy of his prediction. He is also considering giving some sort of guarantee but has not decided on the terms yet.

The site must be able to receive credit card payment and must be able to automatically bill the customer when his subscription is up. He must also be able to upload his daily analysis onto the site without too many hassles.

There will also be an affiliate program for his website. It will pay the referrer 25% of the revenue collected from the customer.

As for promotion, Edward knows exactly what he is going to do. He will go to the local stockbroking office - he's got some friends there - and offer every one of the brokers a special free trial membership to his site. Once they find out the value of his site and the accuracy of his predictions, they are definitely going to recommend his site to their clients.

The brokers will earn a commission when their clients trade, in addition their \$25 affiliate commission each month for each client. He will make money from the subscription fees and the broker's clients will make money from his trade recommendations. A win-

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win situation all round for everybody.

Summary of Edward's Plan

Product

Advice on trading the stock market.

Marketing

Edward will use his offline connections at the local stockbroking office to market his site to the brokers and their clients.

Expenses

Edward will have to pay a web designer or a web design company to design and program his site. A site like his could cost anywhere from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars.

\$50 or less per month will be spent on web hosting and domain name registration.

Income Stream

Each member of his site will pay him \$100 per month.

Chapter 4

Articles

Articles are a great way to present a bite-sized look into topics that are important but not quite substantive enough to merit a chapter by itself. They are also useful when you simply want to give an overview or summary but are not prepared to go into detail, or simply to introduce a related subject that, while important, is not relevant to the subject at hand.

In the following articles, the focus will be on subjects that are relevant to the starting and running of online home-based businesses.

4.1 Are You Living on an Island of Fear?

by Dave Cole

In the movie, "The Castaway", Tom Hanks played the role of a FedEx delivery man. His job was to fly all over the world making sure that the packages were delivered on time.

One fateful trip found his cargo plane flying through a nasty storm

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somewhere in the middle of the South Pacific Ocean. The plane crashed near a tiny, deserted island. The only survivor was Hanks.

Upon awakening the next day, Hanks found himself all alone. Alone with nothing except the clothes on his back.

So picture this: no matches, no tools, no food, no shelter, no communications, only 1 small flashlight along with a few packages containing some useless items that had washed up on shore.

He learned to survive a meager existence sleeping in a small dark cave. His food came from coconuts and the few fish he managed to catch.

Tom Hanks was captured and held prisoner on an island with seemingly no hope of ever escaping. Every day the island dictated to him how he was to live.

He was trapped on that island because he saw no way of escape.

His fears of losing what small sense of security the island provided, as despicable as it was, prevented him from trying to escape to a better life. A life he knew existed, but now only dreamed about.

Looking out over the vast expanse of the ocean, he constantly thought about that better life. But those thoughts soon returned to seeing the opposition and competition that prevented him from returning to what was rightfully his.

4 long years later, Tom Hanks made a decision. He had grown sick and tired of having a nothing life. It was either die a nobody, going no place, on a nowhere island, continuing to live a struggling and pitiful hand to mouth existence, or ... die trying to escape to a real life.

The Pacific Ocean was the obstacle. His opponent was his own fears of overcoming that obstacle.

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He made a plan to escape. The day arrived and Hanks set sail aboard a make shift, rinky dink raft of logs tied together with tree bark and video tape.

He met every adversity the South Pacific could throw at him. It wasn't easy, but finally, the rescue came.

The movie portrayed a very intense drama. An analogy of what life is like for many people. Thousands of folks every day feel trapped in a nowhere life. They feel like their life is being wasted, like they are going nowhere, on a nowhere island with little hope of escape.

Every day these people trudge off to a boring and hopeless job that offers only an existence but no real sense of satisfaction in life as accomplishing anything.

These people know there is a better life out there, a life they so desire, yet it seems so far away. They are trapped on their own island of despair.

Held there, not by the island itself, but by their own fears of not being able to overcome the adversity and opposition that lies between them and their dreams.

A few do escape from that island. They are the ones who finally become sick and tired of living a wasted life, they are the ones who overcome the fear inside.

They start out from their island, not really knowing if they will make it or not. But they look at that sea of difficulties square in the eye and say, in the unforgettable words of Admiral David Farragut, "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead."

Dave's E-zine provides you with valuable info on how

to market your online business and how to make money online. All subscribers get 1 Free ad every week. Get your FREE subscription today.

<http://choosetoproper.com>

4.2 FAQ - How Do I Make A Lot Of Money On The Internet?

by David Lim

Question: I need to make a lot of money really fast and I saw in a lot of advertisements that the Internet is a good place to do just that.

Answer: That's right, the Internet is the right place to make a lot of money.

Question: So, how do I start?

Answer: Just go to Google.com, type in "get rich quick" and visit the sites that come up and you are on your way.

Question: Okay, I found an interesting site that says I can be earning thousands a month within days of signing up with about 1 hour of work per week.

Answer: Hmm....only thousands a month and you still need to work an hour a week? That's a little conservative but quite all right for a start. Go ahead and sign up.

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Question: Are you sure? The money is great but I'm not sure if I'm qualified to do the work required.

Answer: Don't worry. The website is probably fully automated so it will do the selling for you. You do not need any experience or qualifications at all.

Question: I don't understand. If the website is fully automated and it does the selling all by itself, why am I needed?

Answer: Well, you are needed to do some administrative chores, and to log in to your account and check how much you have earned.

Question: The administrative chores should be quite simple since I do not need any experience or qualifications to do them. Won't it be better for the webmaster to contract out the work to freelance workers or automate the tasks? He can earn much more that way.

Answer: The webmasters of such sites have already earned many millions of dollars. Out of the goodness of their hearts, they want to give something back.

Question: If that's the case, why do I need to pay \$49.95 per month? Shouldn't he offer it for free?

Answer: Well, the money is needed to run the website.

Question: Isn't that a little expensive for a website? Normal hosting fees are way lower than that.

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Answer: That's to cater for the traffic your website is going to get.

Question: How is my website going to get traffic?

Answer: Just tell your friends, and ask them to tell their friends and so on.

Question: I thought you said I didn't need to do any selling.

Answer: You don't need to do any selling. Just get your friends to come to your website and it will do the selling for you.

Question: But I don't have a lot of friends.

Answer: You don't need a lot of friends. Just tell 3 of your friends, and make sure they tell 3 of their friends, and make sure your friends' friends tell another 3 of their friends. After 10 levels, you will have 88572 people in your downline.

Question: Wow! Okay, I just signed up.

Answer: Good for you!

Question: I got my friends to visit but they want to know what I'm selling. I was so caught up with all the money that I am going to make that I didn't think about that product that I am actually selling. I went back to my site, and browsed the whole site but it really doesn't say much about the product that I'm selling. It mainly talks about how to refer my friends to the website.

Answer: This is the Internet. You do not need a product to make money.

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Question: My friends really like my website but they are not going to part with their money without knowing the product they are purchasing. They are saying that any website that says you can make money without selling anything is probably a Ponzi scheme or a scam.

Answer: It seems that your friends are obviously not qualified to sign up.

Question: But the website said that no experience or qualifications is needed to sign up.

Answer: Yes, but the website probably meant that you **must** have no experience and no qualifications. Your friends are obviously experienced, qualified and savvy, and are probably not the kind of people that the website is looking for.

This FAQ is meant as a tongue-in-cheek look at scams on the Internet. The message here is that scams can be identified by their “too good to be true” nature, and all you need is good old common sense to see them for what they are.

David Lim is the webmaster of QuittingYourJob.com, a business resource for the entrepreneur looking to start, or grow an online home-based business.

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4.3 How to Effectively Manage Your Time When You Work From Home

by David Lim

Managing your time effectively is a very important skill when working in the office. But when you are working at home, with its varied distractions, entertainment and creature comforts, and without a boss looking over your shoulder, effective time management becomes even more important if you are going to get anything done at all.

The following tips should give you a heads up in the perpetual fight to get more things done in less time.

Create Work Hours

Although you are working at home without a boss looking over your shoulder, that does not mean that you can work as and when you feel like it. The good thing about working from home is that you can take a day off when you need to, and you can organize your workday around your other schedules and responsibilities when necessary.

But generally, it is best to have a fixed time each day during which you work. During your working hours, you should only do work related things and nothing else. If there are kids in the house, try to make them understand that you are not to be disturbed during your working hours. Or, better yet, see if you can schedule your working hours when they are not in the house.

Have a Fixed Time for Important Tasks

Schedule a fixed time during your working hours for your most important tasks and make sure that you are at your most effective at that time. If you are a night person and are not fully awake until the sun is high up in the sky, don't schedule the morning for your important tasks but the afternoon or the evening instead.

Try not to take any phone calls or make any appointments or allow any interruptions during the time that you have allocated. Also, let your family, clients, business associates or friends know that you are performing tasks vital to your business during this time so that will know to leave you alone.

Set Time Frames for Tasks

A friend told me about the time when she moved into a rental apartment with just 2 suitcases in each hand. One year later, when the lease expired and she had to move out, she had to rent a truck to move all her stuff to her new place. It is a well known law of nature...sorta...that things will expand to fill the space available for it.

Similarly, the time you take to complete a task will be about the same as the time available for the task. In other words, if you have 3 hours for a task that would normally take an hour to complete, I can practically guarantee you that you are going to take much more than an hour to complete the task.

So, set a time frame for each task that you want to complete. Make sure that it is a reasonable amount of time so that you don't have to rush through it and compromise on quality, but don't make it too long either.

Eliminate Distractions

That means no Oprah, no household chores and no chatting on MSN. Put that mobile phone on silent, and keep it in the drawer. Eliminate any time wasters on your desk, in your drawers and on the shelves around you. Have only the things you need for work. In case you are wondering, time wasters would include photo albums, Game Boys and novels. And don't forget to cleanup your computer of distractions as well.

Prioritize Your Tasks

At the start of each day, spend a few minutes at the beginning of the day to list down the tasks that you plan for the day. Arrange the tasks in the order of the most important to the least important.

Start on the most important task first and finish it before continuing with the next. This way, even if you can't manage complete all your tasks for the day, you would at least have the most important task done.

Remember, you are doing this to save you time. There's no need to be really precise about. If you really can't decide which task is more important than the other, just pick one of the tasks.

Track How You Spend Your Time

At the end of the day, you and your work or business is unique. And so is the way that you spend your time. Ultimately, the best person to figure out how to maximize your time is yourself.

A good way to keep track of how you spend your time would be to get a diary. Note down in the diary each activity of the day, and when you started and ended the activity.

After a week or so, look through the entries for ways that you can maximize your time. In particular, look out for tasks that you spend much more time than you should at the expense of more important tasks.

The 80/20 or Pareto Rule

This is probably the most important rule. Of all things that you do, or the clients that you service, or the advertisements that you run, 20% would probably bring in 80% of your income or results.

So, take the trouble to find that 20%. Spend a lot more time and effort on the 20% that is producing results, and try your best to cut down on the time spent on the 80%.

David Lim is the webmaster of QuittingYourJob.com, a business resource for the entrepreneur looking to start, or grow an online home-based business.

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4.4 "I am Never Losing Another Job!"

by Karen Goodale

I'd never forget the day that Kathy approached me on that rainy April morning. The office had been buzzing with rumors about the

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company closing down but nobody seems to know anything concrete. Kathy, with her penchant for cutting it short and sharp, simply said two words, "It's confirmed."

That was in April of 1998. It was my third job loss in 15 years. Needless to say, I was devastated. I knew I would need to find a new "job" to make ends meet. But I didn't want to lose yet another job.

I had also started thinking more about what my life would be like when I was ready to retire in the future, since I'd never had a job with a company that offered a pension plan, or retirement benefits.

It was then that I made a decision to start looking for a home business that would eventually give me more control over my income, and to make my "own" job security.

I had been a "hobby" candle maker for several years, and my first idea was to try expanding it into a small business.

I rented a space at a crafter's mall and had a fairly good eight months there until the crafter's mall suddenly went bankrupt, and I had to move out! I was discouraged, but still not ready to give up, so I designed a web site at www.heaven-scent.com to sell my candles online.

The online competition was tough, but I was able to build a small retail customer base, and several wholesale accounts. I made candles during the summer, even when it was 90 degrees, to be ready for the local fall/holiday craft shows, and did the Farmer's Market during the summer, even though very few people wanted to buy candles in hot weather. I had to add more and more "new" things to keep up with the competition, but all I really ended up doing was spending more... and making less!

It took me a while but I finally had to accept that my candle business was not ever going to "make" me any real money, and I

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would be lucky to just break even down the road.

I went online searching for a business opportunity I could work at part-time, while still making a valiant attempt to turn around my candle business.

From what seemed like "millions" of business opportunities, I happened upon a web site that belonged to an Independent Associate with the Watkins Company, and emailed him for more information. I had been using Watkins products for a number of years, and simply loved them!

What I learned about the Watkins business opportunity itself impressed me just as much as the products had, and I didn't even look at any other opportunities. I just knew that Watkins was the one for me! I learned that Watkins is ranked among the top ten home-based businesses in North America by Business Startups Magazine, Success Magazine, and Executive Female Magazine.

When I started my Watkins business I was mainly interested in doing online marketing, since I was working a full-time job, plus still struggling with my failing candle business.

It wasn't easy at the beginning. I spent many sleepless nights working online, doing advertising to build a customer base, answering emails, phone calls and helping other new Watkins Associates getting started with their own businesses.

I also started a Watkins Ezine newsletter including monthly recipes, product specials and monthly contest with now over 700 subscribers.

In less than 2 years I had reached Manager level with Watkins. Although I would like to take credit for my success, much of the credit must go to Watkins itself - a company with a 135-year history, and a solid reputation for quality.

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In January 2003 I earned an all-expense paid vacation to Ireland with Watkins, and in July 2003 reached Bronze Manager level with the company. I am finally making more with Watkins than I make at my job, and look forward to finally quitting my "day job" in 2004 to work Watkins full-time. After 5 1/2 years I love the products, and the business even more than when I started! I can't tell you how great it feels to have some "control" over my own future!

Though Watkins won't be the "right" business for everyone, I hope that my story will at least encourage others that are looking into starting an online, or home based business to know it is very possible to be successful at it!

My best advice on being successful in whatever business you choose is:

#1 -- If you have a craft hobby, and want to turn that craft/hobby into a business, I would do as much research and business planning as possible on how you will market your products, advertising costs, time required, etc. A hobby that has low cost supplies and is something that would be popular any time of year could make wonderful products for a business.

#2 -- If you decide to go with an established company, and market their products, choose a company that has a solid reputation by doing some research first. Choose a company whose products you will buy yourself. If you wouldn't buy the products you sell, you can't expect others to either! Besides, using the products you offer gives you the "first hand experience" with the products, and you will be much more comfortable in recommending them to your customers.

#3 -- Once you choose your business... just don't give up! Many people start a business, and expect to make a "complete living" at it in just a few months. This just isn't going to happen... but if you can learn to appreciate every little bit of extra income you earn in the early months. If you earn \$25 the first month... why not add this to a

mortgage payment, or pay an extra \$25 dollars on a credit card bill, or even save for your next vacation! As you continue to work on your business you will be amazed at how it will grow for you over several years!

Karen Goodale is a manager with Watkins. She is looking forward to quitting her day job and working with Watkins full time.

For more information on Watkins products, or the business opportunity, please visit her site at:

<http://www.homebusinesslife.com>

4.5 Physics Exam

The following concerns a question in a physics degree exam at the University of Copenhagen:

"Describe how to determine the height of a skyscraper with a barometer."

One student replied:

"You tie a long piece of string to the neck of the barometer, then lower the barometer from the roof of the skyscraper to the ground. The length of the string plus the length of the barometer will equal the height of the building."

This highly original answer so incensed the examiner that the

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student was failed. The student appealed on the grounds that his answer was indisputably correct, and the university appointed an independent arbiter to decide the case. The arbiter judged that the answer was indeed correct, but did not display any noticeable knowledge of physics. To resolve the problem it was decided to call the student in and allow him six minutes in which to provide a verbal answer which showed at least a minimal familiarity with the basic principles of physics.

For five minutes the student sat in silence, forehead creased in thought. The arbiter reminded him that time was running out, to which the student replied that he had several extremely relevant answers, but couldn't make up his mind which to use. On being advised to hurry up the student replied as follows:

"Firstly, you could take the barometer up to the roof of the skyscraper, drop it over the edge, and measure the time it takes to reach the ground. The height of the building can then be worked out from the formula $H = 0.5g \times t^2$. But bad luck on the barometer."

"Or if the sun is shining you could measure the height of the barometer, then set it on end and measure the length of its shadow. Then you measure the length of the skyscraper's shadow, and thereafter it is a simple matter of proportional arithmetic to work out the height of the skyscraper."

"But if you wanted to be highly scientific about it, you could tie a short piece of string to the barometer and swing it like a pendulum, first at ground level and then on the roof of the skyscraper. The height is worked out by the difference in the gravitational restoring force $T = 2\pi \sqrt{l/g}$."

"Or if the skyscraper has an outside emergency staircase, it would be easier to walk up the staircase and mark off the height of the skyscraper in barometer lengths, then add them up."

"If you merely wanted to be boring and orthodox about it, of course, you could use the barometer to measure the air pressure on the roof of the skyscraper and on the ground, and convert the difference in millibars into feet to give the height of the building."

"But since we are constantly being exhorted to exercise independence of mind, undoubtedly the best way would be to knock on the janitor's door and say to him, 'If you would like a nice new barometer, I will give you this one if you tell me the height of this skyscraper'."

The student was Niels Bohr, the only person from Denmark to win the Nobel prize for Physics.

4.6 Should You Use PLR Content?

by David Lim

Content released with Private Label Rights or PLR generally gives the buyer a license to almost treat the content as if he created it himself. Licenses will vary between different PLR products, but most PLR content will allow you, as the buyer, to do the following:

- . You are allowed to edit the product.
- . You can put your name as the author of the product.
- . You can split the product into separate items.
- . You can combine the product, or part of the product, with another product or products, into a new product.
- . You can sell the product.
- . You can add the product into paid membership sites.

There are usually some restrictions on the use of PLR content. The following are some of the restrictions usually imposed:

- You may not give away the product.
- You may not add the product into a free membership site.
- While you may sell the product, you may not confer PLR rights to your buyer.

The main restriction, common between all PLR products, is that you cannot claim copyright of the product unless substantial changes have been made.

PLR has probably been invented for the use of the Internet marketing community. However, many in the community are against PLR content, feeling that it diminishes the value of content, and going for the tried and tested way of creating their own original content.

If you are dead set against PLR content, or just sitting on the fence, I invite you to join me in an unbiased look at how you can use PLR content for your benefit, and the benefit of your visitors and readers. And also how not to use PLR content.

The Quality of PLR Content

Let's face it, much of the PLR content out there is pure junk. Some PLR articles are simply slapped together in 30 minutes or less, with the sole intention of promoting the author's website or affiliate link. There will be numerous spelling and grammar mistakes, and you probably have to struggle hard to understand the author's thought process and eventual conclusion.

There are also articles that are the product of article spinners, and articles that are probably the direct translation from a foreign language. I have even read articles that are grammatically correct,

have no spelling mistakes, have all the relevant keywords inserted, but makes absolutely no sense at all.

Needless to said, you should never use such articles or content as is. If the content is coherent and you can understand what the author is trying to get across, you can consider a light rewrite, correcting the spelling and grammar errors. Otherwise, it would be best to just delete the content and move on.

But not all PLR content is junk. Much of the content out there contains usable information and might be even be good enough to use as is.

The main question now is whether you should use such content and in what way you can use it.

The Distribution of PLR Content

When using PLR content, you have to always keep in mind that the same content have been sold or downloaded by many other buyers. What you have is not content that is unique or original.

My recommendation is to do a light rewrite of the article or ebook. You have to at least change the title and the cover graphic. Make sure to correct any spelling and grammar mistakes. If you can't do even a light rewrite, at least change the first paragraph.

Using PLR Content as a Starting Point

If you are really not comfortable using PLR content, you can consider using such content as a starting point. Read through the article or ebook, and gather the main points or ideas. You could even start with a few relevant articles or ebooks, instead of just one.

Then you simply edit each and every paragraph until it becomes

your own, adding or deleting paragraphs as needed. The good thing about doing this with PLR content is that if you should come across a good sentence or paragraph, you can use it as is without feeling guilty about it.

PLR Content and SEO

I don't know how Google's search algorithm works but I'm guessing that they will favor original content more. Besides, it would be difficult to rank for PLR content since there will be a lot of websites with the same content and Google will pick just one.

So, if you have a website or blog, and is particular about SEO, you should never use PLR content without a complete rewrite.

Conclusion

The decision whether or not to use PLR content is yours. As an Internet marketer, time is money. PLR content does save you time, and if used properly, can be a vehicle to handsome profits, while not adversely affecting your reputation.

[IDplr](http://wandererc.idplr.hop.clickbank.net) (<http://wandererc.idplr.hop.clickbank.net>) is a good site to try out PLR content. They are a membership site with free members having access to 500+ products and paid members having access to 8000+ products.

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4.7 To All the Dreamers Who Have Given Up on Their Dreams

by David Lim

Hi,

God here. Just thought I'd drop by and surprise you. Bet you never thought I'd write this letter, did u?

I could almost hear your racing heart and see the look of shock on your face, and if I were to read your thoughts, you would be thinking about all the naughty things you did and frantically trying to figure out whether to apologize profusely for them, or make up excuses and see if you can get away with it. And then, almost immediately, you will feel genuinely repentant, and think of whether a sinner such as you, who would even think of anything less than being 100% honest to God, deserves a place in heaven.

Don't look so surprised. I made you, remember? I know you better than you know yourself. I know how you feel, I know what you think about, and I know your deepest fears and desires. I know how bad you can be, and have been, but I also know the good in you and what you have done.

I know you have a ton of questions but now is not the time. But I will give you this little morsel: "All is not as it seems. And on your earthly plane, you can see and know just a tiny fraction of what really is."

And now, on to the real purpose of this letter.

Remember the dream you had when you were 9? You wanted to be a doctor so that you could discover a cure for aging and everybody could live forever. When you were 10, you wanted to write. At 12, you wanted to be a world class long distance runner. By the time you were in your early thirties, I counted a total of 14 dreams.

Not so long ago, you dreamt of one day standing at the top of the Matterhorn in the Alps. And you pursued that dream with a passion uncharacteristic of your other dreams. You started exercising seriously, you took up classes in mountaineering and you started going on expeditions to the nearby peaks.

But the training expeditions took up a lot of your time, and I know that the traveling expenses didn't help with your finances. Along with the kids, the wife, your job, your friends and family, your time and money are being stretched to the limit. I know that you were running yourself ragged and, deep in your heart, you knew that something's got to give.

I heard the silent whisper from you that night last week when things didn't go very well with your wife. It was then that you realized that you have got to give up on that dream. Of all the dreams you had, you really wanted this one. But some things are not meant to be...perhaps not yet.

You were at the end of your rope that night. You tried so hard, and you really thought you could juggle all your responsibilities and your dream. But you gave up on more than your dream of conquering a mountain that night. You gave up on dreams altogether.

I know life is not easy. And dreams bring with them added commitment and responsibilities. In many cases, it just becomes too much and the day to day living takes over, leaving dreams just a fond memory and not something a sensible and practical person indulges in.

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I created you special. In fact, I created each and every one of you special. I gave every one of you the ability to go beyond your limits, beyond what I envision you can. I gave you something that your intelligent and logical mind can never give, I gave you the ability to dream.

And it is through dreams that you can achieve the impossible. Over all of my creations, over all of the universes, and over all of the other realms that your science has yet to discover, it is those creatures with dreams that have achieved wonders that surprised even me.

So, I am doing what the Americans might call an intervention. Right now, you are just feeling really disappointed that you are not going to be able to climb the Matterhorn, and you don't yet realize that something bigger have died inside of you. I'm telling you that it has. And I'm telling you to let it live again and not to give up on your dreams.

I know you have one last question on your mind. Search your heart, you know it's me.

God

Dreams are what keeps us going, makes the unbearable a little more bearable, and makes life worth living. It literally gives us a reason to wake up in the morning and actually look forward to the day. Sometimes, in our daily lives, we get so stressed that we forget the real reason we do what we are doing. We get up, do our thing and then go to sleep. The next day, we do the same thing. Rinse and repeat.

Days can pass into weeks, and then into months and years. We do what we are doing because that's what we do. We become not too much different from a computer, running its programs and doing

what it is programmed to do. We simply exist.

Are you simply existing, living your dreams or working towards your dreams?

David Lim is the webmaster of QuittingYourJob.com, a business resource for the entrepreneur looking to start, or grow an online home-based business.

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4.8 Why do Most People Fail to Make Money on the Web?

by David Lim

Success in any venture, whether online or offline, big or small, can almost be 100% assured, given enough time, drive and capital.

But we live in an impatient society - people to meet, places to go, things to do. This Internet venture is just one of many things that you want to do.

You just want to "get it done", or succeed, and move on.

So, what is the quickest and best way for you to do it?

The first step would be to study those who have come before you, and failed. Failure, in itself, is not bad. There are many successful persons who have said that it is failure that have brought them to where they are now.

But failure is a waste of time.

So, take some time to look through the following examples of how people have failed. Study them and make sure you understand why they failed. You will save a lot of time and money, by not making the same mistakes.

MLM Programs

You may be lured by MLM programs promising easy money. The advertisements will typically have words like "prelaunch", "forced matrix", "spillover", "explode" and "get in early".

The advertisements will generally give you the impression that the programs are new, and that if you get as soon as possible, you can sit back while somebody else builds your downline, or does the work, for you.

I suppose there may have been some rare cases where you reap the rewards while somebody else does the work, but most of the time, those expecting easy money will be disappointed.

Unless you have some insider information, by the time you find out about a "launched just minutes ago" program, many thousands before you would have found out about the same program...and they will be sitting in the choice spots that you thought was yours.

There is good money to be made in legitimate MLM programs, but it still boils down to pure hard work.

Shopping Malls

Some have built shopping malls with a wide assortment of products. They have stocked the malls with everything from pencils and rulers to the kitchen sink, and more. The rationale is that with a wide selection, there will be something for everybody.

They will proceed to promote their malls in free classifieds, FFA links and banner exchanges. Some may even pay for advertising.

They will get a trickle of traffic from their advertising, but many of them will not even sell a single item!

Web surfers are generally more interested in looking for specific information rather than shopping. If you were to offer them what they need first, and then attempt the sale, you would probably do very much better.

That means building a site or mall with a narrow focus, catering to a specific audience. Make sure that the main purpose of the site is to inform and educate, and not to sell ... and you will sell.

Paid to Surf the Web

There are many sites that will pay you for practically anything that you do online, including reading email, visiting websites, searching, chatting, playing games and even listening to the radio.

I guess you can make a couple of bucks from such programs but I don't think anybody has managed to make serious income from such programs.

And you do have to take into account the time that you spend to make this type of money. If you had spent that time researching, setting up or growing your business, I'm quite sure that you would be making much more money in the long run.

Automated Marketing Systems

And then there are those marketing automated systems. Invariably they will start with what you already know - that Internet marketing is hard work, that it isn't easy to succeed, and that it takes a lot of perseverance.

And they will tell you that most will eventually fail.

They will continue by claiming that after years of experimenting, they have come up with an automated system that does the recruiting, selling, marketing or whatever else needed. A system that guarantees your success.

All you have to do is to follow their system to the letter, and you are on your way to riches.

There are many variations on the above theme, too many to go into here. Generally, you will be asked to pay a one-time fee, or a monthly fee, or do some grunt work and you will get a reward that is ridiculously disproportionate to the work, or intelligence, or money that you put in.

If you are tempted, as I have been, ask yourself this question:

"If I did develop such a system, would I sell it at such a low price?"

or

"If I did develop such a system, would I be selling it at all???"

I Built a Great Site But Nobody Came

There will be some that have done their homework.

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They will have decided on the theme for their site, registered their domain and built their site. They optimized their pages for the search engines. They worked hard at promoting their site.

And then they waited for the masses to come.

Three months passed and a little bit of traffic started to come the site. They waited another three months but the expected torrent of traffic just refused to materialize. And they gave up in disgust.

Actually, this group of people had it right. But they were too impatient.

The process of getting decent traffic to a site is like falling dominoes - the first falling domino will hit the second one, which will hit a third, which will hit a fourth, and so on. The dominoes fall one at a time, not all at the same time.

Similarly, it takes time for you to promote your site and get it listed in the search engines. This will bring in some traffic resulting in more people knowing about your site and more links to your site. Which leads to a better ranking in the engines and more traffic. Which leads to even more links leading back to your site and an even better ranking in the search engines. Leading to even more traffic and....I think you get the picture. ;)

But all this takes time. It may take many months before you can get any sort of decent traffic to a new site, and each and every site is different.

I'm sure that you can think of lots more ways that a person can fail on the Internet. On the whole, I think you will agree that failures can probably be traced back to one or more of the following factors:

- A lack of understanding of Internet marketing.

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- A lack of drive.
- A lack of patience.
- Greed.

We are all subject to the above "sins". Get it under control and you WILL start making money from the web.

David Lim is the webmaster of QuittingYourJob.com, a business resource for the entrepreneur looking to start, or grow an online home-based business.

This article may be reprinted freely, provided this resource box remains intact.

Appendix A

Resources

The following is a short list of resources that you should find useful as you go about starting and running your business. I use most of the sites myself so, while I can't guarantee that you won't face any problems with them, they have my vote of confidence.

A.1 Affiliate Marketing on the Web

Affiliate marketing can be looked at as selling somebody's else product. You, as an affiliate, recommends a customer to the merchant. If the customer buys, you make money. After the purchase is made, your responsibility ends. You pocket your cash and the merchant handles product delivery, support and after sales service.

Affiliate marketing is a great way to get started in online businesses as you can start with minimal effort. Some of the more popular websites for affiliate marketing include:

CJ Affiliate by Conversant. This is the website that is formerly known as Commission Junction or simply CJ. It was started back in 1998 and is probably one of the largest affiliate network on the web.

ClickBank. ClickBank is an online retailer of digital products such as ebooks, memberships and software. You can sign on as a merchant or an affiliate. When you sign on as an affiliate, you can browse the products of all the merchants, including the commission percentage, popularity and conversion ratios so that you can choose the product with the highest commission and the highest chance of a sale.

Tradebit. Tradebit deals in digital products like ebooks, templates and software just like ClickBank. But on Tradebit, every seller can also be a merchant. Each seller can sell his own products, and also offer a commission to anyone who can refer a customer to him. And since every seller can be merchant, as a seller, you have an amazing selection of products to choose from.

A.2 Freelance Websites

Want to have a logo or a ebook cover done? Perhaps you'd like a nice WordPress template for your blog or some articles for your website or ezine. And how about a promotional video for the launch of your new website?

You might be able to do a decent job yourself for some of the items above, but time is short for an entrepreneur, so you will probably have to outsource some of your tasks. You could hire a professional and literally pay hundreds of dollars to get a job done.

Or, you could try out a freelancer at one of the freelance websites online and get the job done for a fraction of what it would

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normally cost. Of course, these sites are not without their risks and headaches, but with a little trial and error, it is quite possible to get a quality job done for an extremely good price.

There are tons of websites for freelancers on the web. The following are among the more popular ones:

Freelancer.com. This is one of the oldest players in the game. Job categories include IT, software, writing and data entry all the way to product sourcing and accounting.

Upwork. Upwork is the result of the merging of oDesk and Elance. You can post a job, and have sellers bid on your job.

Fiverr. You can get things done for as low as \$5. On Fiverr, you don't post a job and have the sellers bid on it. Instead, the sellers will post what they will do for a certain price and if the buyers are happy with the price, they will buy the job, or gig as it is called on Fiverr.

A.3 PLR Content Websites

PLR content can be a great help to your promotional efforts. You can use the PLR products as a bonus to entice your customers to buy your product, or sign up for a newsletter. You can rebrand the products with your name, website and affiliate links, and give them away as your own. You can also repurpose a PLR ebook into separate articles for your own website, article directories, blog posts or an ecourse.

While there are some caveats when using PLR products, I believe

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the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. But, before deciding to use PLR content, I would suggest that you read up on their pros and cons.

The best way to get access to PLR content is through a PLR membership site where you will have hundreds of products available for download for the price of a membership. The following is one of the better PLR membership site which feature hundreds of products:

IDplr.com. A paid membership to this site gives you access to 8000+ PLR and resale rights products. If you just want to take PLR products out for a test drive, you can sign up for their free membership which gives you access to 500 or more products.

About the Author

I am the webmaster of QuittingYourJob.com, a site about starting and running an online home based business. Probably the best thing about this site is that it tells it like it is, without any of the hype that is so typical in other similar sites.

I also run another site at Wacky-Background.com, which features some rather amazing background textures.

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