

Forget The Hype!

The Beginners Guide to Real Life Marketing Online

By xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

The necessary legal bits and copyright info

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Welcome

Hi there! Welcome aboard the internet marketing ship to prosperity!!

You've decided to take the step, or rather the giant leap into the world of marketing online, huh? That's great! So where would be a good place to start? Well before we even start thinking about marketing online, we'll need to make sure your pc is as user-friendly as possible for you, so that's probably the best place to start. We'll look at some ways of keeping your pc up and running, avoiding viruses and spy ware and basically keeping your computer clean and hassle-free.

Once we've sorted that we'll move on and cover some basics of email and building your own opt in list to which you can send your offers. After that we'll take a look at the different types of programs you can join and we'll share some hints and tips on to how to avoid scams and shams.

Next, we'll look into getting you a website. We'll also cover some basics of website promotion.

Almost at the end, we'll see how we can build big, active downlines. Let's face it, if you don't have your own product, you're going to need downlines to help you build your income, right? Finally, we'll read some interviews with real life internet marketers of today so that you can see it CAN be done, with a bit of hard work and determination ;~)

The life of online marketers is filled with ups and downs. Some people seem to have it all, and others have nothing and get burnt badly. Which one do you want to be?

This book is not meant to scare anybody off, quite the opposite in fact. There's a lot of money to be made online, but it can also be a dangerous place for people just starting out.

Being an online marketer who has lost money in the past, I decided to put this book together in the hopes of helping **YOU** avoid all the scams and shams that are out there. If I can help just 1 person to "make it" without getting burnt too badly on the way, then I'll live the rest of my life as a very satisfied person!

Once you start your adventure, you'll notice that you spend a lot of time online trying to figure things out. You will get hit by a whole lot of viruses and spy ware, but no worries, I've got that covered in this e-book. You will, at some point, get yourself a website to promote from, whether it's for your own products or for affiliate programs and products, and you will need some ideas on how to make your website look good and make people want to stick around.

You'll be looking for places to go for answers when you're unsure of something. Being a new internet marketer you will most probably also collect a whole lot of free downloads and wonder where to put them all. There will be certain times of the year when you could really use a little extra cash, both from online and offline ventures. Don't worry; I've collected a whole bunch of information to help you keep things all ship-shape.

When you're online you will get lots of useful hints, tips and a whole ton of e-books and software downloads, most likely leading up to what is commonly known as "information overload". The aim of this book is to help you make informed decisions and make full use of everything that's presented to you on the net. So sit back, take a deep breath and have that pinch of salt ready, because it's true, not everything IS plain sailing, and it's not always easy to get started on the journey.

A lot of you will be asking how to get free traffic to your sites, and you'll be told a gazillion times that articles are most definitely the best way to get free, targeted traffic. I have to admit it, I tell people the same thing myself because it DOES work.

Before you start screaming:

"But I don't have a site of my own! I don't have any of my own products! Give me a break here, I'm just starting out as an affiliate of this or that type of program! I can't possibly write an article!"
Let me tell you a little secret. You CAN write an article and promote whatever it is you are a part of. You may not know much about internet marketing in itself yet, but if you dig deep inside yourself, you're sure to find something, even if it's only ONE thing that you know lots about and feel very passionate about.

When you're passionate about something, the writing comes real easy; you can worry about the editing later. Just pretend you're writing a mail to a friend about something really important to you. Try it sometime, you'll see what I mean ;~)

Throughout this book, you will notice that I've mentioned certain things multiple times. Don't worry, it just stresses how important these things are in the world of internet marketing ;~)

Please note: there are thousands of other books out there that promise to help give you ways to make money, some work and some don't, but you'll find that most of them come pre-loaded with tons of affiliate links in them...

You won't find a single affiliate link inside this book, and you won't find any promises of richness and wealth.

The aim of this book is to give you some ideas to work with that won't cost you an arm and a leg. A starting point, if you will.

I'm here to help you **SAVE** money, and to see through all the hype that's out there **BEFORE** you get burnt ;~)

Wishing you a fantastic and wonderful journey

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About your computer.

Got Spyware? Tips for detection, removal and prevention

Spyware, also known as adware or malware, is getting to be more and more of a problem to internet users. Spyware is usually a program or application that is installed onto your pc, often without your knowledge or permission. It may display ads, monitor your Web surfing patterns, steal your passwords or become responsible for a whole range of bad stuff.

Where does spyware come from? What does it do?

These programs/applications can come from Web sites that download music or offer free software, or even from certain popup ads if you click anywhere inside the ad instead of hitting the X button to get rid of it.

Cookies are almost inevitable (most websites use them, and some won't even work without them), and rarely a problem as they are very easy to clean up or even not accept, but the threat posed by key loggers, diallers and Trojans is much greater.

A key logger can record anything you type, including your passwords, e-mail messages, credit card numbers, and even your online chats. Diallers will secretly hang up your Internet connection and redial premium services that can run up your long-distance bill. Trojans can embed programs which will open "backdoors" into your computer to allow hackers to steal data or make your pc unusable.

These types of spyware can prove very costly to people unaware of them.

How do you know if your pc is infected with spyware?

Well, for definite, if you've never checked before, you can bet your bottom dollar that you WILL have some spyware on your computer.

Here are some common traits:

1. Changed IE favourites.
2. Homepage changes without you changing it.
3. Popup ads popping up even when you're offline.
4. New desktop icons appear for programs you did not knowingly install.
5. Some Trojans will cause changes to the icons of your normal programs.
6. Prolonged System start-up after a reboot (takes a long time to load user settings).
7. You have to refresh a webpage multiple times before you can see the content.
8. Your pc may seem uncommonly slow or sluggish.
9. A program may not operate correctly. Some examples of this are Windows Media Player will not work. Notepad will not work, Task Manager, MSConfig or Regedit may close immediately after opening.
10. Unexplained loss of internet access (worst case scenario).

To eliminate spyware you should keep it from being installed on your computer in the first place. You could always just never install anything and never visit websites, but then you might as well throw away your internet connection altogether, huh? A better option might be to turn OFF the install on demand option in windows. This can be done by following these steps:

1. Open a new browser window.
2. Click on tools.
3. Click on internet options.

4. Click on advanced.
5. Scroll down through the list of advanced options and UNCHECK "Enable install on demand".
6. Click OK.

You can also make sure you can still download things that you WANT to download by following these steps:

1. Open a new browser window.
2. Click on tools.
3. Click on internet options.
4. Click on security
5. Click on custom
6. Scroll down until you find "Installation of desktop items" and set to "prompt"
7. Click OK

Remember, if your Internet security controls aren't properly set, just visiting a Web site or clicking on a Web ad can install an application. Please note that if any of your programs are set to auto-update, you will need the install on demand option enabled.

How do you get rid of spyware?

Before running spyware removal tools, clean up your pc a little by hand first, that way the scan won't take as long.

1. Open a browser window.
2. Click on tools.
3. Click on internet options.
4. Choose delete cookies --> ok
5. Choose delete files --> delete all offline content --> ok

The 2 most commonly recommended spyware removers are Spybot Search & Destroy, available here: www.safer-networking.org/en/index.html and Ad-Aware SE Personal, which is available here: www.lavasoftusa.com/software/adaware

Both of these are free, and they don't pressure you into paying for a full version, although spybot also immunizes your computer from known spyware without purchasing a "paid version", unlike adaware.

Here's a great little step-by-step tutorial about how to use Ad Aware:
<http://spyware.pcrelief.org>

A great forum for getting answers about spyware and other related problems can be found here:
<http://forums.spywareinfo.com/index.php?b=1>

Another really good place to find help with computer problems is <http://forums.techguy.org>

HijackThis is a general homepage hijackers detector and remover. It does not target specific programs/URLs, just the methods used by hijackers to force you onto their sites. As a result, false positives are imminent and unless you are sure what you're doing, you should always consult with knowledgeable folks before deleting anything. The above-mentioned forums are good places to ask for help with this. You can get HijackThis for free here www.spychecker.com/program/hijackthis.html

Make it a part of your regular maintenance routine to scan your system for spyware, and remember that NO spyware blockers will be fully effective unless you keep them up to date, so check for updates often.

-----SMILE-----

A conclusion is the place
where you got tired of thinking.

How to avoid virus attachments in Outlook Express

I guess nobody is safe from worm viruses these days, at least not if we use Outlook Express and Windows. We don't even have to be infected ourselves to feel the pain of the really bad ones that auto send emails using various domain names, making them look like YOU sent them.

Worms like this are known as "spoofers", and are passed on via attachments in emails. A golden rule is: Be extremely cautious opening any attachments that you are not expecting.

Personally, I never open any attachments unless I'm either expecting them, or I confirm with the sender first that they actually did send one. In fact, I've gone so far as to set up my Outlook Express to never open attachments unless I want to.

To do the same, set up Outlook Express like this:

1. Open Outlook Express
2. Click on tools
3. Click on options
4. Click on security
5. Check the box that says "Do not allow attachments to be saved or opened that could potentially be a virus"
6. Click apply
7. Click ok

Then if and when you're expecting an attachment, go back in and uncheck it until you've opened the attachment. Afterwards immediately go back in and re-check the box. This will help curb the spreading of email viruses.

I myself fell victim to a "spoofer virus" last year, and even ended up having to get a new domain because of it. Thankfully, I have my firewall and antivirus program totally turned ON and up to date constantly, so the virus itself couldn't get to my computer, but it still managed to do a LOT of damage from being on somebody else's machine.

So please, I urge you ALL to keep your antivirus up to date, and get the patches and updates you need for Windows etc. I know it can be a pain in the butt to keep updating, but it IS worth it. It can save a lot of grief and there'd be a lot less chance of spreading nasty things like this.

Anti-virus programs:

I use the free version of AVG, which is pretty good, and available here:
http://www.grisoft.com/us/us_dwnl_free.php

Once you've downloaded and installed it, open the control center, go to task manager and set it to automatically update however often you like, also, set the task scheduler to allow scheduled scans every 24 hours.

Don't just count on one single anti-virus program though, as they don't all update their files at the same time. Remember, the SoBig virus from last year managed to disable various anti-virus software before they'd had the chance to update.

I recommend you also use HouseCall, Trend Micro's free online virus scanner <http://housecall.trendmicro.com> and MacAfee's free online scan (this one once caught something for me that HouseCall didn't)
<http://us.mcafee.com/root/mfs/default.asp?cid=9059>

-----SMILE-----
A boss with no humor is like
a job that is no fun.

If, after all this, you still end up getting a virus, worm or Trojan, here's 2 great links for you:

There's a great virus encyclopaedia search here:

<http://www.trendmicro.com/vinfo/virusencyclo>

A list of removal tools for various worms and viruses:

<http://securityresponse.symantec.com/avcenter/tools.list.html>

Of course, there's always the option of using various other email clients or even web mail, but that's food for a whole different e-book ;)

Clean up cookies and temporary internet files in Windows.

Have you ever searched through your cookies and temporary internet files only to find there are hundreds of sites, possibly mostly adult sites that you have never visited or typed into your browser? In Windows, there are lots of things that can cause this, but for now we'll concentrate on a couple of things that can cause it, and how to clean them up.

HTML emails can set cookies on your pc, but the temp files are things that your browser downloads from sites that you actually visit. Cookies can also be sent to your computer through sites that you visit independent of e-mail.

HTML emails are mostly used because of their ability to grab attention better than text emails. Unfortunately a lot of spam and undesirable stuff is being sent via HTML emails nowadays, resulting in lots of unwanted cookies on our computers.

The temp files are supposedly good for speeding up your browsing, but they can cause problems for visitors to sites that update often. You may get your cached version instead of the updated version of the site you're visiting.

All cookies and temp internet files are controlled in internet options. It makes no difference where they come from, be it HTML email or websites.

I'd recommend making it a habit to clean up your temp files and cookies almost on a daily basis if you use email and/or the net a lot.

Read on for information on how to do this.

- 1.) Open a new browser window
- 2.) Click on Tools
- 3.) Click on Internet Options
- 4.) Click on Delete cookies
- 5.) Click on OK in the little popup box
- 6.) Click on Delete files
- 7.) Check "delete all offline content" in the popup box
- 8.) Click OK in the popup box
- 9.) Click OK on the main Internet Options Box

Now, if you go back through steps 1, 2 and 3, then click on "Settings" you will also see that you can decide yourself how often you'd like your pc to check for newer versions of stored pages, and how much space to use for temporary internet files. Everybody has their own preferences in this case; personally I have mine set to "every visit to the page" for the newer versions and 500mb for the temp files.

-----SMILE-----
A good scapegoat is hard to find.

You can disable HTML emails in Outlook Express by following these steps:

- 1.) Open Outlook Express
- 2.) Click on Tools
- 3.) Click on Options
- 4.) Click on Read
- 5.) Check the box labelled "Read all messages in plain text"
- 6.) Click OK

Now you won't receive any "pretty" emails at all, it'll all be plain text. To undo this action, follow the same steps as above and uncheck the box you previously checked.

Whilst the above information will help you to clean up all of your cookies and most of your temporary internet files, there may actually be a few temp files that have gone astray in your computer. You can find and remove them by following these steps:

- 1.) Click on My Computer
- 2.) Click on the C: drive, and scroll down.
- 3.) If you see any files that end in .tmp, you can safely delete them by highlighting and pressing the Delete key

As I said, there are lots of other reasons why your pc can be full of cookies and temp internet files that will show as you visiting bad sites, or slowing down your computer. Now you know how to get rid of them whenever you need to. It's a quick little job once you get used to it, and you'll notice a marked improvement in your computers performance.

Keeping Outlook Express "clean"

When you're online, you'll eventually end up with lots of emails. Some you'll want to keep, others will be nothing but spam. A great way to clean out your Outlook Express folders is to first make a backup of the messages you want to save, and then delete them from Outlook. It's really easy to do, too. Just follow these steps:

1. Create a folder on desktop (rightclick desktop, choose new, folder)
2. Name folder whatever
3. Open Outlook Express
4. Click Create Mail
6. Put "mail archive" or some other name in subject line
7. Highlight all messages you want to save
8. Drag them into the new email message
9. Click file
- 10 Click Save As
11. Save to the folder you created
12. Check folder to make sure it's done right
13. Save the folder to cd as backup

Now you can safely delete all messages in your OE without losing the ones you want to keep, as they'll be in your folder instead ;~) Don't put too many email messages into the one mail though, as it'll be a bugger to open again if it's too big. Make sure you name them differently if you do this more than once though, so that you don't overwrite the first one.

Top 10 Tips for WinXP Users

Are you new to WinXp? Just upgraded, or gotten a new computer maybe? Or you might have friends and contacts who use it and you want to "show off" a little by teaching them a few tricks? I've collected 10 of my favourite WinXP tricks, each of them easy to use, and very helpful, and if you follow the instructions step-by-step, they work perfectly. So here goes:

Top Tip #1:

Having a problem making your desktop icons stay exactly where you put them?

When you temporarily change your desktop to a lower resolution—for example whilst using Safe mode, Windows can wreak havoc with your careful positioning of desktop icons.

Right click your desktop click arrange icons and uncheck auto arrange. You can now drag & drop them wherever you want them. Note that if you start your computer in SAFE mode you will have to rearrange them again.

Top Tip #2:

Accidentally moved your taskbar and want it back where it was?

Point your mouse to a 'blank' area inside the taskbar, THEN hold down your left mouse button, and DRAG it down where you want it to go. It may take a couple of tries to get it over.

Top Tip #3:

Feel like changing your Start Menu?

- (1) Right click a blank spot on the Start Menu.
- (2) Select Properties
- (3) Select Customize
- (4) Select the Advanced tab.

Most of those preset items which don't have the option to check or uncheck will be there. For each item listed you'll have the option to Display as link or Display as menu or Don't display this item. Make your selection as you desire. Note that you will have the option to display the Control Panel as a menu, which you might find very useful.

Top Tip #4:

Getting grey popup boxes with ads in? Stop the spam like this:

- (1) Select "Start"
 - (2) Select "Settings"
 - (3) Choose "Control Panel"
 - (4) Choose "Administrative Tools"
 - (5) Choose "Services"
 - (6) Right-click on "Messenger"
 - (7) Select "Stop"
- To permanently disable Messenger:
- (8) Right click "Messenger"
 - (9) Select "Properties"
 - (10) Change "Startup Type" to "Disabled" and click "OK"

Top Tip #5:

Having problems viewing sites cos your computer isn't accepting the cookies?

Open a New Browser window.

- (1) Click on Tools (in toolbar).
- (2) Click on Internet Options.
- (3) Click on Privacy.
- (4) Click on Advanced.
- (5) Click on Override Cookie Control.
- (6) Click on Enable First Party Cookies.
- (7) Click on Enable Session Cookies.
- (8) Click OK.

Top Tip #6:

Want to change how you see your emails? Try this:

Click on "view" at top. "Layout" will allow you to fix what you see. "Sort by" will let you arrange the order the messages appear in.

Top Tip #7:

Want to disable the Automatic Update reminders in Windows?

Open Internet Explorer/Tools/Internet Options/Advanced tab, under "Browsing" take the checkmark out of "Automatically check for Internet Explorer Updates", click Apply, click OK.

Another thing to try is to:

- (1) Click Start
- (2) Click Run
- (3) Type in: "MSCONFIG" (without the quotes)
- (4) Click OK.
- (5) Under the Startup tab take the checkmark out of "Critical Updates"
- (6) Click Apply
- (7) Click OK
- (8) Restart your computer.

Top Tip #8:

Got too many icons on your desktop?

Right click on an empty space on your desktop, highlight "Arrange Icons By", then click on Run Desktop Cleanup Wizard

Top Tip #9:

Tired of seeing your pointer as an arrow or an hourglass all the time?

Windows XP offers a number of alternative pointer schemes, such as Dinosaur, Ocean and Sports.

Open the Control Panel, double-click Mouse, and select the Pointers tab. (If you start in Category view, select Appearance and Themes, then click Mouse Pointers under "See Also.")

Next to Schemes, click the down arrow and select a scheme to preview its pointers. Click OK to apply the scheme to your desktop. Simple as that.

Top Tip #10:

Want to hear your computer talk?

Select Start, Programs, Accessories, Accessibility, Narrator. Or press the Windows key plus the letter "U" to open the Utility Manager. Microsoft Narrator, an accessibility option designed to assist readers who are blind or have impaired vision, starts automatically.

Once you've read through the intro screen (or let the Narrator do it), click OK and you'll see a dialog box of Narrator options. Assuming you want to leave Narrator running, select the desired options, then minimize its dialog box. And if you've opened the Utility Manager, feel free to close it.

To turn Narrator off, click the Exit button or right-click its taskbar item and select Close.

Hope this has helped you get your WinXP working the way you want it to, and given you a little fun too. For more information like this, I highly recommend that you visit, read through, bookmark and re-visit this site:

<http://www.winxpnews.com/issues.cfm>

How "Available" are YOU?

The internet can be pretty scary at times. Do you realise how easy it is to access your personal information? Your phone number, name, address? Even get driving instructions on how to get to your location (if you're in the USA)??

Did you know that www.google.com works as a telephone directory?? If you're in the USA, anybody can find you through their search engine. If you've got an unlisted number, this won't apply to you:

Go type your phone number into the search box in this format 555 444 1212 (no dashes or anything). It'll bring up your full name and address, and it'll give you 2 map links. The yahoo map will even give driving instructions on how to get to where you're at!!

There should be a telephone icon next to your listing. If you don't want to be listed, click on that and request to be removed from the service.

This one's for USA only, too: Free Internet Access to Public Records

Listed are over 800 state, county, city and federal (court) URL's where you can access public record information for free. CrimeScreen.com

Don't think you're outta the woods just because you don't live in the United States. There are worldwide lists too.

Here's an example: <http://www.hansaprint.fi>

This one's a combination of worldwide yellow and white pages. A lot of them will link you to maps, where anybody can see your location.

Ok, here's another one, this one is reliant on people giving accurate info though. Do you own your own registered domain? Go do a "Whois" here: <http://www.networksolutions.com/cgi-bin/whois/whois>
Brings up a lot of info, huh?

So how can you stop your personal information from getting broadcast on the web? Maybe you can't, totally, but there are a few guidelines, that if followed, will make you less "available"

Make sure your phone number is UNLISTED! A lot of online phonebooks are based on a database used by the telephone company. This in turn leads to your address.

Use a web based email program instead of the one provided by your ISP. Your ISP provided email address should only be given to your most trusted friends and family. This is because your ISP has your address, and possibly your banking information if you are allowing them to bill you automatically.

Get some software to make your websurfing anonymous:

<http://www.anonymizer.com>

<http://www.articsoft.com/>

<http://www.inetprivacy.com/>

http://anon.inf.tu-dresden.de/index_en.html

Use a firewall program if you aren't behind one already. That way the information on your computer can't be accessed by another online computer without you being prompted for permission. Here is an excellent list of many different personal firewall programs: <http://castor.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/pubs/security/firewalls.html>

So what if your information's already out there? What can you do about it? Well it's a long, hard job, but it CAN be done, by actually using search engines to find your personal information, and then using the remove features supplied by each particular website or writing the webmaster and requesting that he remove the info.

About Internet Marketing

Starting Out:

So you're new to the internet, and want to learn everything you can about internet marketing. Or at least the essential basics, and you want a place to go to find the answers to all of your questions?

I hate to tell you this, and I'm really sorry, but as far as I know, there IS no one-stop source to learning the essential marketing skills, apart from school maybe, but I will TRY to answer some questions you may have from my own experience:

Let's see, I started out with absolutely NO computer knowledge at all. Went to chat rooms, talked with people, got me some contacts, then one day I got a junk mail full of hype (that I believed...hehehe) and promptly started joining affiliate programs. I joined this one, that one and the other one, all full of promises that I'd be mega-rich within a few months. Being a newbie, I swallowed it all. Hook, line and sinker. None of it ever panned out right though.

I lost some money, not huge amounts, but more than I'd care to remember, so I started with the free stuff. I didn't have any knowledge on building downlines and stuff, so that didn't work either. Then I started helping people I referred to various things, and things looked slightly better. It was all free stuff that didn't make me any real money, but it gave me traffic to other free sites I was promoting, I got downlines, and I got contacts, so I knew it was working.

After that, I kinda concentrated on helping everybody I came across, to the point where that was ALL I was doing, and funnily enough, I loved it. Still didn't make me money, but it made me feel great.

That's how my ezine came about. I wanted to help people as much as possible, teach them to steer clear of hype, stick diligently to one thing, and build a good downline in it, whilst showing them how to help each other. You'll find that any articles I've written to date cover these things.

I will say that there are a couple of "skills" needed for anybody wanting to be an online marketer.

Firstly, you need a touch of "blindness" so you don't even LOOK at all the hype, because if it LOOKS too good to be true, then it more than likely is.

You need deep concentration, and dedication, to help you stick with one thing, and you need to be able to work really hard at getting that one thing to work.

You also need a lock and key on your wallet. It's real easy to buy into this, that and the other program, and before you know it, you've used a LOT more money than you can afford to lose. There's always a risk that any money you use could be lost forever, so always keep that in mind.

As for computer jargon, I've been online for 5 and a half years, and I'm STILL learning. Actually, I'm only just now starting to learn HTML and PHP so that I can publish my ezine without having to rely way too much on my programmer, who by the way, is the greatest teacher on earth.

There's a page here full of "jargon" and links to more info, I find it pretty useful:

<http://www.imagescape.com/helpweb/history/define.html>

When it comes to suggesting a starting point, that's a real hard one. I think I'd say chatrooms personally. Without my programmer, and my other friends that I've met in chatrooms, I wouldn't be where I am today. So I'd say THE most important thing when it comes to marketing is your contacts. Get as many contacts as you can, and learn from their mistakes.

Also, subscribe to a few ezines that really cover the "newbie" things. Read everything you can that's relative to what you want to do. You'll suffer from information overload, there's no doubt about that, but some of the stuff WILL stick in your head, and you can start learning from there.

If you find the ezine isn't giving you the information you need, un-subscribe and move on to the next one. There's hundreds of thousands of them out there to choose from, just don't subscribe to too many at once, or you'll be so inundated with mails that you will end up not reading any of them.

Read, read, read, and read some more. Take all promises of "instant wealth" with a pound of salt. (A pinch isn't enough). Question everything that seems to "over-promise". Learn as much as you can before starting out, be prepared, and remember: There are no stupid questions, just stupid answers.

-----SMILE-----
According to my calculations,
the problem doesn't exist

You WANT To Be An Online Marketer!

Where do you start if you want to be an online marketer? Tough question, huh? There are lots of ways to begin your way on the bumpy journey. Just make sure you are aware that it WILL be a bumpy ride.

First things first: do a lot of research. Find out what kind of thing appeals to you most. It could be affiliate programs, mlm's or maybe you like the idea of selling other peoples products for a commission etc.

There are a ton of options, and 1000 times more hype. This is why it's so important to do as much research as you can before starting out. Sure, you can go the long way round, which is how a lot of us start out, but that's even more of a bumpy ride...hehehe

Ok, so let's say you've decided on where you want to start. You don't have a product of your own, so you decide to sell other peoples information products, just as an example. Don't make the mistake that so many people do, by trying to sell something you haven't personally tested.

Put it this way: Who would YOU prefer to buy from? Someone who knows absolutely nothing about the product they're selling? Or someone who has had firsthand experience with the product they're selling? You know it's person number 2, right?

So test the product first. Learn everything there is to know about it. If people can trust you to give an honest opinion, they'll be back for more. Great way of getting contacts AND repeat customers.

About Email.

Email is great! Or IS it??

Isn't the power of email wonderful? It comes in all shapes and sizes, and it's virtually instant. There's plain text, there's HTML, there's even something called "rich media". Email can be used in many ways to market online. Frequent bursts of advertising, weekly newsletters or even just a mail to your biz contacts when something great comes along.

Unfortunately, where there's power, there's always a flip-side. In the case of email, the flip-side is abuse, also known as SPAM, that great big nasty word. Makes me shudder just to think of it these days.

Is spam email considered marketing? It probably is, if you want to get all technical about it, but it's most definitely not RESPONSIBLE email marketing. Although some marketers don't seem to be able to see the difference between permission marketing (where people have ASKED for the mail) and email spam. Spam is actually a major threat to legitimate email marketers.

People check their emails, see their inbox cluttered with all sorts of stuff they didn't ask for and they yell SPAM!!

Unfortunately, with so much stuff in their inbox on a daily basis, it can become really hard to recognise the mails they've asked for, they may even forget they asked for it in the first place, or they may just be sick and tired of receiving too many mails, and they yell spam about the wrong mail.

Everybody has their own definition of spam. As it currently stands, spam is in the eye of the beholder. Spam is usually unsolicited ads sent in bulk by people you don't know--although there are exceptions to this rule.

Some spammers will argue that email spam is no different to traditional junk mail, but there is one undeniable difference... cost. The cost of sending junk mail through conventional means is very real, including

postage costs paid by the sender. The cost of sending email spam is very small, and most of the costs are paid by people other than the sender.

The lack of cost for sending is often named as a key problem with email spamming. With traditional junk mail, a direct marketer has to make sure that the offer & targeting are good enough to more than make up for the costs of mailing. With email spam, anything goes, often in the form of shady deals and outright scams.

But besides the scams and other legal consequences of sending spam, one very important consequence is always overlooked: the credibility of the sender. Entire companies have had their credibility ruined for sending spam, faster than you can hit "Send". So think twice before you send unwanted email to that address on your computer - it might mean the end of your business.

Getting Back To Basics.

While we all agree that there's way too much spamming/junk-mailing going on in our email boxes, there are a couple of things we can do to reduce the amount of mails we actually have to sift through, without having to resort to paying for expensive software that can be a real pain to set up properly.

Firstly, and this is a great, little known tip. You can get yourself a free email account, which is a great thing to have if you use a lot of FFA's, Classified sites, Search Engine Submittals etc. When you create the junk mail account, be sure to save the information you've used to create it with into a WordPad/Notepad file.

When the account is full, flit through it quickly, just to make sure there's nothing of real importance there. If there is, copy and paste it to your favourite text document. Then just go ahead and delete the whole junk mail account. You've saved the info you used to create it with in the first place, so it'll only take a couple of minutes to re-create it.

Next, whenever you join a program or a site, have your email client open at the same time, so you get the welcome mails immediately. Confirm the welcome immediately, and then put the mail into a special folder, created for all emails from that particular address.

That way, different emails go to different folders, without getting too mixed up. If and when you decide to leave that program, delete all the mail you've saved from them, but please make sure that you DO actually opt-out before doing this.

Another thing to remember is if you're getting mails from someplace and you're pretty darned sure you have absolutely no reason to be getting them, DON'T click on the remove me link! What you're really doing, is letting the spammers know that they've mailed to a real, used address, and they'll mail more and more, and never stop. Some of the more unscrupulous ones will even sell your address to be used as part of a mailing list, which in turn will result in even MORE spam.

A lot of people seem to have forgotten where the delete button is, and scream the dreaded word "SPAM!!" as soon as an unfamiliar looking email drops into their inbox. This can be very damaging to legitimate business owners, so please, don't ever say spam, unless it well and truly is.

If you really don't have time or inclination to follow these tips, there IS software out there that can filter your mails for you. The biggest drawback with these is that they can actually stop you receiving mail that you WANT to get if you don't set it up properly. Setting up the software filters can also be very confusing and time consuming, so if that's the way you choose to go, make sure you set aside some time for it, and don't get distracted by anything else until it's done.

Email Marketing Tips

If you don't know it yet, you will probably learn over time, that email marketing is probably THE most effective way of marketing online. That is, IF you do it the right way.

Here's a couple of hints and tips that have worked for me:

I have a habit of signing up for safelists that offer free pro memberships to the first so-so many members. I find that smaller safelists are most responsive. Once they reach around 1000 members or so, the actual opening and reading of mails seems to die off.

Think about what would make YOU open an email. What would grab YOUR attention? Try to make the subject both interesting and captivating, with just a touch of urgency.

Make sure your subject line isn't misleading. That's such a huge turn-off to most marketers. They open a mail with a great subject line, and find that it bears absolutely NO relevance to the mail itself. Not only will they most likely delete the mail right away, but they'll probably remember who sent it, and never open mails from that person again.

Remember, if you're going to use safelists for your email marketing, get a separate email address for all the mail you'll get from other members. I probably have about 10 so-called "junkmail" accounts, where I get all my safelist mails. I go through my mails every day, and yes, I do delete a lot of them right away.

Sometimes though, something catches my eye, and I take a closer look. If the subject lines are interesting, I open them ALL. I find it's a GREAT way of keeping on top of what's happening in the world of internet marketing.

Personally, I find that safelists are much better for creating your own contact list through instead of promoting programs in them. I suggest that you send emails with something like "Can you contact me?" or similar as the subject line, offer the members a nice little freebie and your contact info, telling them that they can add you to THEIR contact list so long as THEY agree to be added to yours.

Of course, you'll get people trying to push their offers on you, but you'll be surprised at how many other people that are using the safelists will actually respond to you favourably. It's actually quite an easy way to build your list if you're willing to work at it.

Whether you want to publish an ezine, or just create a mailing list is up to you, but you WILL need to build up your "warm market", and you'll have to make sure you do it properly without spamming anybody by mistake...

I personally find my contacts through chat. I go to as many chatrooms as I can find, and make sure my profile is up-to-date and lets people know that I'm an online marketer. That way, if people are interested in learning more about me, they've at least got a starting point, and from there, it's pretty easy to get them to allow you to add them to your mailing list.

Spam? What's that??

Spam is basically unsolicited advertising online, sent in bulk to you by people you don't know. You know, the type of ads that you didn't ask for, but get thrown in your face anyway. It happens in your emails, it happens in forums you could otherwise enjoy, it happens in chatrooms etc. Most of us frown upon spam as not only is it a total waste of our bandwidth (which we happen to be paying for), but it's also a total waste of our time (as if we have enough of THAT...lol). **Don't Do It!!**

Don't harvest email addresses, it'll only end up in tears. Don't buy mailing lists, no matter how cheap you can get them. Most of the lists that are for sale are made up of harvested email addresses. Harvested emails are by no means "opt-in" and you can be pretty sure you'll end up getting a spam complaint. It's a sure-fire way of losing your isp, web host or even both. Pure SPAM is the biggest no-no out there.

No matter which way you decide to go, it's going to be hard, mostly because of all the spam filters that are now in place. ISP's are really cracking down on spammers. So much so, that even legitimate emails are getting filtered out.

I've gathered together a few sites that I find very helpful when I'm writing my ezine, and sending mails to safelists etc. It's quite amazing to see what actually sets spam filters off. Take some time to go through it all. Bookmark the sites. If you've ever wondered if your mail is getting through, you can easily check, just by looking for the trigger words.

Here are a few sites/articles that show you some of the words that are considered to be spam triggers: The 3 first ones are a year or 2 old, but I'm pretty sure they're still quite accurate:

<http://www.iprofitsystems.com/articles/spamfilters.html>

http://www.wilsonweb.com/wmt8/spamfilter_phrases.htm

http://www.internetbasedmoms.com/ezine_killer.htm

This one's for the Microsoft junk mail filter:

<http://office.microsoft.com/Assistance/9798/newfilters.aspx>

This one I absolutely love. It's real fast, gives you a quick review of your mail onsite, and sends you an email with more information. I use it every time I send out a "marketing" email of any kind. It's most definitely one of the best "spam" checkers I've found.

<http://www.lyris.com/contentchecker/>

Email marketing can be a lot of hard work, especially as, according to the averages, people need to see your offer AT LEAST 7 times before they "bite". Be consistent, get your mails out there, but also be responsible. The last thing on earth anybody wants is to be accused of spam. Spam accusations can hurt both you AND the website/product/program you're promoting.

Don't be afraid to add a little "personal" touch to your emails; just don't go totally overboard by telling people the ins and outs of your life...hehehe

Email Netiquette Using BCC in Outlook Express

How many times have you received an email with a whole bunch of other email addresses in the To: line? Or are you guilty of doing the same? The problem with adding lots of email addresses in the To: line of an email is that every single addressee also ends up with a copy of each email address.

This in itself isn't really bad if you're 100% positive that nobody will use the email addresses to send spam to, but face it, can you really be that sure? I, for one, find it really frustrating to know that all kinds of people have received my most personal email address just because somebody doesn't know how to BCC (or Blind Carbon Copy) an email.

The worst of it is, I've even seen big companies do this when I've received mails from them. If I were any less honest I could just pick up each and every one of the email addresses in the mail and create a huge mailing list for myself. Yuck!

There's a really easy way to blind carbon copy emails in Outlook Express which means that all of the addresses you send the email to will be hidden and you won't be classed as "one of those people who shares email addresses with the world and his uncle".

How to Blind Carbon Copy (bcc) emails:

1. Click Create Mail
2. Select "View" from the message menu
3. Make sure "All Headers" is checked
4. A Bcc: field will appear beneath the Cc: field
5. Put your own email address in the To: field
6. Add all recipients' addresses to the Bcc: field
7. Create the mail as you normally would and hit send

It's that simple. Practice a little email netiquette and you'll be sure your friends and contacts don't get mad at you. You will receive a copy of your own mail, and the people who receive the email won't even know you've sent it to multiple addressees.

Opt-In Email marketing

What does OPT stand for?

"Opt" is really a shortening of the word optional. Used in email marketing it works like this:

Opt in = choose to receive email **Opt out** = choose to not receive email

Use Outlook Express to mail your own list of opt-in contacts.

First we need to create the mailing list:

1. Open Outlook Express
2. Click on Tools
3. Click on Address Book
4. Click on File
5. Click on New Group
6. Choose a name for your mailing list and type it into the Group Name: field.
7. Click OK

Here's how to add members from your address book to your mailing list in Outlook Express:

1. In Outlook Express click on Tools
2. Click on Address Book
3. Highlight the mailing list you created
4. Click on Properties.
5. Type the email address of the subscriber/contact in the E-mail: entry field
6. Choose whether or not to add a name to the subscribed email address
7. Click on Add.
8. Follow steps 5, 6 and 7 to add multiple addresses to the list
9. Click on OK and close the address book.

To send a message to your new mailing list:

1. In Outlook Express, click on Create Mail
2. Click on the To: button
3. Highlight the mailing list you want to send an email to
4. Click on Bcc: ->.
5. Click on OK.
6. Put your name (or a descriptive name) in the To: field
7. Type your email address in the To: field and surround it with the < and > angle brackets.
8. Type in your Subject:
9. Create the mail as you normally would
10. Click on Send

The mail will go to everybody on the mailing list and as your email address is in the **To:** field, you will also get a copy. As mentioned above, using Bcc will hide all of the email addresses from the recipients.

Another option for sending out emails

I've used the free version of Group Mail software in the past and been very happy with it. It lets you send to 100 recipients at a time, but you can use it over and over again. I only had a small list, so it worked well for me.

<http://www.infacta.com/gm.asp?a=quicklinks>

I have friends/contacts that have paid for the software and they've told me they'd never consider using anything else. **There are 3 versions of Group Mail:**

Group Mail Free is completely free.

Group Mail Pro costs \$99.95 USD

Group Mail Plus costs \$179.95 USD

As far as I remember, Group Mail (or Infacta) also offer an affiliate program, offering around 30% or 40% on sales, but don't quote me on that :~)

Signature files, when used correctly, are like an electronic business card.

Signature files in emails are a great way to promote your online business. If you offer free information, tips or products etc on your web site, you can add a small sigfile to the end of your email messages, telling people about it. For example:

Lose weight Fast with our all-natural herbal system

http://www.i_m_losing_weight_fast.com

email@i_m_losing_weight_fast.com

phone: 1-800-555-5555

(URL in the above example is fake.)

Here's how to set up signature files in Outlook Express:

1. Open Outlook Express
2. Click on Tools
3. Click on Options
4. Click on Signatures
5. Click on New
6. Type the text of your signature into the Edit Signature box.
7. Decide if you'd like your signature attached to all outgoing messages or not and check the appropriate box.
8. Click OK

Remember, sig files can be used in moderation in various forums too, but always check their rules and regulations before adding one.

Your own ezine/newsletter

You may eventually decide that you want your own ezine or newsletter sent directly from your website via email to your subscribers. The reasons for this could be anything from using the list to sell your products, sending out helpful hints and tips, or just sending out updates.

Personally I used notepad to jot down the rough outline of how I wanted my ezine to look, and just filled in the blanks each week until my programmer put it all online for me.

If you don't want to do it that way, you can buy ready made newsletter templates at places like <http://www.templatezone.com> or <http://www.writeexpress.com>

This one gives you over 150 newsletter templates, and a 60 day free trial: <http://www.benchmarkemail.com>

You can also do a quick search on Google for "newsletter templates" and it'll bring up tons of free ones for you.

Make sure you make it extremely easy for people to sign up for your newsletter, and have the subscription form visible on every page of your site.

Publishing an ezine that gets read is no easy task. It takes a whole lot of time and commitment. Here are a couple of things you need to do consistently if you are going to make it work for you, bearing in mind that it can quite possibly take a good couple of years before you actually start seeing some real monetary returns from the ezine.

You will need to decide if you're going to be publishing only your own content, or if you'll be using other people's articles. Both options can take a lot of time. Writing your own articles takes the time of finding topics, and writing and editing the articles yourself. Using other people's articles takes the time of actually finding and reviewing articles for possible inclusion in your ezine. Either way, make sure the content is actually worth reading, or you'll just end up with a dead ezine.

How much time are you willing to spend on promoting the ezine to get subscribers? It's not like hundreds of people are just going to chance upon your subscription form. It needs to be "out there" and visible to as many people as possible, which means submitting it to all the ezine directories you can find, ad-swapping with other publishers, getting other people to link to your ezine etc.

Then there's the question of whether to allow ads in your ezine. Are they going to be free ads for subscribing? Or are they going to be strictly paid ads? How many ads are you willing to have in each issue? Whilst giving out free ads to people for subscribing might bring you lots of subscribers, it could also end up making your ezine look more like an ad-rag than a really helpful and useful ezine that people want to read. So if you're going to offer free ads, think long and hard about how you're going to work it to ensure maximum interest.

When you're looking to build a subscriber base all you really need is a webpage and a subscribe box, you can even do it without your own webpage by making use of list management services. A great way to get subscribers is to create, borrow, or barter something of value. Offer it for free on your site in return for name and email address.

Tell them up front that by requesting the freebie, they are also agreeing to receive mail from you in the future, but that there'll always be an opt-out link in every mail you ever send to them.

Here are a few ezine directories

<http://www.ezinelisting.com/>
<http://www.freezineweb.com/>
<http://www.jogena.com/>
<http://www.directoryofezines.com/>
<http://www.go-ezines.com/>

Ezine/Publisher Ad Swap sites

<http://www.swapezineads.com/>
<http://www.ezinead.net/adswap.php>
<http://solair.eunet.yu/~rottis/swap/>
<http://www.freezineweb.com/ad-swaps1.html>

Ezine "paid ad" co-ops

<http://www.mywizardads.com/publishersonly.html>
<http://ezineadhelper.com/join.htm>

Ezine "free ad" co-ops

There aren't many of these around nowadays, most likely due to the fact that they in reality only build subscriber numbers for you and not necessarily "reader" numbers. The ones I've found usually require you to have at least 2000 subscribers already to be able to join, this one doesn't ;~)

<http://www.subscribeme.net/publishers.html>

Email list management:

I did a quick search on Google for "free email list manager" and tons of stuff came up. You might want to try that out. You could create a group on yahoo, and send from there.

These ones are widely used:

<http://lists.topica.com/> (free and paid versions)
<http://www.constantcontact.com/home.jsp> (only free for 60 days as far as I can tell)
<http://www.zinester.com>
<http://www.ezezine.com>
<http://www.ymlp.com>

Or you could use this autoresponder. It's free, with unlimited follow-up mail and none of their ads attached.
<http://www.freeautobot.com/>

I haven't tried these myself, but I know people who like different ones for different reasons. I guess your best bet would be to check them out and see which suits your needs most.

Buying cd's with "millions" of email addresses:

There's really nothing much sleazier than buying email lists (apart from maybe selling them).

A lot of lists being sold are actually just a bunch of email addresses that have been harvested (usually illegally) from around the net, and using them could get you into serious trouble.

I mean, how would you know for definite that people have opted in to a list and agreed to have their email address sold on to hundreds, maybe even thousands of other people?

So yeah, take the long way round and build your own list if you want to steer clear of trouble.

Buying harvested email lists:

This kind of thing just really bugs me. People buying huge email lists without knowing the rules and regulations, or without any certainty of where the list has come from. It gives other legitimate email marketers a really bad name.

I really would like to suggest that before you do any kind of email marketing, you read up on all the laws and regulations first, otherwise you could end up unwittingly getting yourself into trouble, and we don't want that to happen, do we?

At the worst, any website you may be promoting could get shut down, you could lose your internet connection, and even your ISP could get shut down, all of which could cost you a whole lot of money in fines and fees. Unfortunately I've seen this happen to people way too many times to count.

Although email marketing can be great, there's always the chance that someone might find it irritates them a bit too much and they decide to lodge formal spam complaints...

You can read up on the can spam act here:

<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/buspubs/canspam.htm>

and also check here for any updates: <http://www.ftc.gov/spam/>

This one has the various laws for the different countries:

<http://www.spamlaws.com/index.html>

Getting past email filters:

The delivery of email depends on which anti-spam tools are installed on a mail server. I know that some marketers face some problems with delivery to AOL, Hotmail and Yahoo!. Bounced emails from Hotmail and Yahoo! Are usually due to full email inboxes. At worst, your mails won't even reach the inboxes due to inbuilt spam filters sending them directly to the junkmail folders of the recipients.

Spam filters, especially the ones pre-setup, are getting very hard to avoid. You could, plain and simple, refuse to accept subscribers using free email addresses such as Yahoo and Hotmail. I've been there, done that, and found it to be a rather extreme measure. (Although, at the time it WAS needed).

Adding this to a sendout has helped me lots in the past:

---start---

In an attempt to avoid you missing our mails, I've found some info on how to NOT have it filtered out.

To make sure that "newsletter name" e-mails aren't filtered into your "junk" or "bulk" folder, please add us to your list of trusted senders. Here's how:

Hotmail: Put our domain: "whatever.com" into your safe list. The safe list can be accessed via the "Options" link next to the main menu tabs.

Yahoo! Mail: If any of our emails get filtered to your 'bulk' folder, open the message and click on the "this is not Spam" link next to the "From" field.

Other providers: If your "newsletter name" mail is being filtered, try adding our domain from our emails 'From' or 'Reply-to' addresses to your address book or contact list. If this option is not available, try moving the message to your 'inbox' or forwarding the message to yourself.

If subsequent messages continue to be filtered, call or e-mail your ISP's tech support and specifically ask how you can be sure to receive all e-mail from us. Follow their instructions for white listing "newsletter name".

---end---

I also found this little snippet of (techie) info a while later which may help even more:

When delivering to AOL email addresses you need to make sure your SMTP service's domain can be verified using a reverse DNS lookup. For more information on this topic check out:

<http://www.dnsstuff.com/info/revdns.htm>

About Program Types

Affiliate programs

There are hundreds of variations of affiliate programs. Things ranging anywhere from "Paid To Read Emails" to selling e-books to traffic exchanges, and a whole lot of other things in between. As an affiliate, it is your "job" to advertise the program or offer you are affiliated with. Amazon.com, Commission Junction, Befree and Linkshare are probably the biggest of all affiliate programs on the net.

The aim of your advertising is to create sales and/or referrals which you can earn a percentage of the money from, or in the case of things like traffic exchanges, you would earn a certain percentage of traffic on your own, and another percentage from your referrals.

Affiliate programs use a multi level marketing concept and have various referral levels, anywhere from first hand affiliates, which would be you, all the way down to 20 referral levels or more, which would be the amount of people you sign up, and the amount of people they in turn sign up and so on throughout the levels.

Affiliate programs can be very lucrative if done correctly, and I know a lot of people who make a nice income purely from working them. You don't necessarily have to refer other people to be able to make money from affiliate programs, but it will usually help you to earn MORE cash/traffic than what you'd get by your own efforts.

Nowadays almost all large online business sites have some sort of affiliate program attached to them. If you run an online business of your own, think about adding an affiliate program to it as offering commissions and incentives for other people to promote your product/service is a fast and cheap way to grow an online business.

MLM, Pyramid Schemes, and Matrices

Have you ever wondered what the difference is? MLM operators claim they're not operating a pyramid scheme. Matrix and "forced matrix" operators claim that what they have is better than MLM. So what are the differences?

Pyramid Schemes are illegal in the USA, and probably abroad. We all know how these schemes work, or at least get the gist of the idea. A person (the originator) starts by sending a message to several people. Usually people he/she knows. The message in some round about way, will tell everyone to send him \$5 or so...and then send the message to someone else. All the while adding names to the list, and each new recipient must send money to the first person, second person...etc

There are a million variations of the Pyramid Scheme, but the main attribute that defines a pyramid scheme (also known as chain letter) is that there is no product, it's just people sending money. The term "Pyramid Scheme" is derived from the fact that it starts with one and the size of those involved increases as you move towards the bottom. On paper, it looks like the shape of a triangle, or pyramid.

How is MLM different from a pyramid scheme? After all, on paper any MLM looks like a pyramid in reality right? The differences are very simple. In MLM there is a product being sold. Income is generated from "commissions". It's actually a pyramid scheme, except that the participants get something back...regardless of whether the people they refer actually pay for something...

In MLM, the participant always gains from their investment. The catch is in the value of the product that the participant receives. This is the reason that MLM is so big on the internet. Because, information can have a monetary value, and it costs the distributor nothing e-books, software, newsletters etc are the most common products used in MLM. MLM'ers have added tangible products as well, and home products were the first to use MLM as a primary marketing strategy.

With so many MLM programs on the market these days, originators have tried to make their programs more desirable than others. Hence the forced matrix idea. In a regular MLM program, your monetary gains are based entirely on how good you are at marketing the program. However, most people aren't very good. So it would benefit the less talented if they had help from the talented.

Basically, if the number of people who can join under you is limited in any way...then it's a forced matrix. The idea being, anyone else you refer extra will go under someone else. The best implementations put the extra person under one of the people YOU have under YOU. Hence it helps the person under you, which helps you too.

The term is tossed around a bit, and sometimes not used at all. However, that is what defines a forced matrix. Sometimes numbers are used to describe a forced matrix more thoroughly....like "4 X 4 forced matrix" for instance. This could mean that you can only have 4 people directly under you and only 4 people under those 4 who you receive commissions from.

There is a hybrid idea that has become common now, where by a person can deliberately place a referral in another line of their choice. A sort of traffic control attribute that helps originators get their referrals interested. This has been an attempt to make regular MLM more appealing, and it has worked. In fact, forced matrix MLM'ers have even implemented the option in their own programs.

The benefits of either are about equal. With a forced matrix, you stand to earn an income faster, but increases in income are slower because your referrals get forced further down the line from you. With regular MLM you have a stronger base, and sustaining it is generally easier...but first profits can be slow. If you want a little income faster, go with a forced matrix. If you want BIG profits and are willing to work a long time for it, go with regular MLM programs.

About Scams

Tips on Avoiding Scams

One thing I think we ALL agree on: There are way too many scams out there. Both online and off. Things like:

Email from a "millionaire" who needs help transferring large sums of money" This is one of the most popular scams online today.

How about the "You've won the lottery!!" mails? You know that unless you've bought a ticket, or registered for the lottery in question, you haven't really won a thing. Prepare to be scammed!

Oh, and the "Free Credit Report" mails, did you know that they're usually just someone looking to get your ssn number, or some of them even bill you for using their "free" service later?

Watch out for the E-gold and Paypal scams, where someone sends you a mail telling you that you HAVE to login, or risk losing everything. Both E-gold and Paypal have strict email policies, and neither of them would EVER ask for your login info with an email.

Then there's "You've won a free gift". How many of those do you get per week? All you have to do is pay s&h, right? Well, that means it isn't really free, doesn't it? You know what they get when you claim that free gift? Usually your credit card number or even your email address/phone number which can then be sold on as "leads".

I've put together a bunch of links that can hopefully help you with safely marketing online, without getting scammed.

Minimize Credit Card Fraud

<http://www.scambusters.org/CreditCardFraud.html>

Museum of Scams and Frauds (I really love this one)

<http://www.quatloos.com/>

Great list of online and offline scams

<http://www.crimes-of-persuasion.com/index.htm>

A forum for discussing get paid programs. Good, Bad and Scams

<http://www.isaaf.com/>

List of scams with a touch of humour

<http://www.worldwidescam.com/>

What if you've already been scammed? Complain! Don't just leave it. You won't help yourself, nor others if you just leave it. Even if you don't get your money back, you'll be doing your bit to stop these scams and fraudsters, ultimately helping others to avoid them.

Been scammed? File a report!

<http://www.econsumer.gov/english/>

How to complain (UK)

http://www.consumer.gov.uk/consumer_web/complain.htm

Where to complain (USA)

<http://www.consumeraffairs.com>

There's just so much hype out there, and it's easy to get "sucked in". We all want to believe that we can actually make the promised 10's of thousands of dollars within just a couple of weeks.

In reality, things like that just don't happen. The only person, who can possibly, if at all, make that amount of money, is the program owner. At YOUR cost. Always remember, if it looks unbelievable, it probably is.

No matter what you market online, always do your homework before signing up for anything. It's REALLY important to do a lot of research before you decide to pay out any money.

Don't rely on just a couple of sources for information, find as many as you can. Check out lists and forums, see if they've got anything to say about the program/product you're considering.

Ask all your friends and contacts if they've heard anything, good or bad. Go to marketing chatrooms, see what people there have to say about it. Ask about everything you need answers to regarding the product/program. You'll be surprised at the amount of information you can get.

Get in touch with the owners, ask questions. If they're elusive, or don't answer you at all, then my advice would be to steer clear.

Identifying Scams That Look Like Legitimate Businesses

As I've mentioned before, there are a whole lot of various business opportunities for you, as a marketer, to get involved with. Before you do though, you need to be aware of the fact that there are also thousands of scams out there, posing as legitimate businesses. While a lot of these types of programs are totally on the up-and-up, some unscrupulous people will almost re-create the different types of program and scam you for all you've got.

No matter which road you decide to take in your pursuit of becoming an online marketer, always do your due diligence and check up on whatever program you are thinking of becoming part of.

Here's a list of some legitimate type programs that can actually be easily re-created by fraudsters:

- Web Cramming -

Promise: You get a free custom-designed website for a 30-day trial period, with no obligation to continue.

Fact: Sometimes, people have been charged on their telephone bills or received a separate invoice, even if they never agreed to continue using the service after the trial period.

Be Aware: Check your phone bills and challenge any charges you don't recognize.

- Internet Access Services -

Promise: "You'll get Free money, all you have to do is cash this check"

Fact: You are at risk of being "trapped" into long-term contracts for Internet access or another web service. There's usually huge penalty fees if you cancel, or terminate the service before the "agreed" period is up.

Be Aware: If you receive a check, read both sides and look inside the envelope for any hidden conditions that you're "agreeing" to if you cash the check. Also read your phone bill carefully for any unexpected or unauthorized charges that may be there.

-----SMILE-----
Note: Flatbed scanners
are NOT chairs

- Business Opportunities -

Promise: "You can kiss your 9-5 job goodbye, be your own boss and rake in the cash."

Fact: There's a lot of hype out there. Unfortunately, people believe all the wild promises about potential earnings, and end up investing big bucks into a program/opportunity that turns out to be a total flop.

Be Aware: Always look for evidence to back up the earnings claims. Talk to others who've started businesses through the same company. Get all the promises, claims and conditions in writing.

- Investments -

Promise: Just make one investment in a day trading system or service and you'll get huge returns.

Fact: Any promised profits come with a risk. The bigger the profits, the bigger the risks.

Be Aware: Talk to other people who invested through the program to find out what level of risk you're assuming. Do a check on the promoter through state and federal securities and commodities regulators.

- Internet Auctions -

Promise: You can shop for a huge selection of products at great deals, from the comfort of your own home.

Fact: A lot of people have received an item that is less valuable than promised or at the very worst, nothing at all. Of course this is AFTER they've parted with their cash.

Be Aware: When you're bidding through an Internet auction, especially if it's for a large quantity, or a valuable item, check out the seller first. Also, insist on paying with a credit card or using an escrow service. An "escrow service" will act as a "paid middle-man". They will hold your cash until you get the merchandise, then they will pay the vendor, for a fee.

As you can see, there are lots of ways to get scammed, so always make sure you ask a lot of questions, do background checks and scrutinize ALL contracts and papers before you sign anything at all. Remember, it may be easy just to sign up and wait for good things to happen, but it's just as easy, if not easier, to lose your shirt.

Identifying 6 Common Internet Scams

If you've been online for more than a week, you've probably already seen them. Ads that promise great wealth, in little or no time, for little or no work on your behalf. They then go on to tell you how simple and easy it is to work from home, being your own boss and setting your own hours.

Sounds great, doesn't it? But is it actually true? Ok, so you get to decide your work hours, but let me tell you, there's a LOT of hours involved here, and a LOT of hard work, and even then, you may not succeed in making enough money to quit your day job (IF any at all...)

There are tons of business opportunities out there to get involved with. Here's a list of some of them, with their "TRUE" colours. I'm NOT saying every individual opportunity IS a scam, but a lot of them are, and you need to do your homework before you embark on the journey as an "internet marketer".

MLM, Pyramid Schemes etc:

Promise: You make money from sales, be it services or products. You recruit other sales people, and earn from their sales.

Fact: Most of the time, you'll find that the people you're trying to sell to are other distributors, and you're all trying to sell to each other, which ultimately means no sales.

Holidays and Travels:

Promise: You get dirt-cheap or even free tickets, with tons of extras.

Fact: You could end up with no trip, or with a trip of a much lesser quality of services and accommodation than promised. Sometimes there are hidden charges and costs that you don't find out about until you've paid.

Credit Cards:

Promise: Give us your credit card number, we need it to verify that you are over 18, then we can give you X, Y, and Z for free.

Fact: There are a lot of these that will run up charges on your credit cards

Health Care:

Promise: Our products can cure serious, or even fatal, health problems.

Fact: A lot of people will believe this one, without checking it out thoroughly. This can result in people not getting the necessary treatment they really need for their illness.

Investments:

Promise: Make a huge return on your investments with us, and make it FAST!

Fact: A big profit always carries a big risk, which mostly means you stand to lose your investment.

Chain Letters:

Promise: Pass this on and you'll earn a truckload of money.

Fact: Chain letters involving money and/or valuables are illegal! Even the ones that tell you they're legal and endorsed by the government. By starting, or passing these on, you are, in effect, breaking the law.

Please Note:

While a lot of programs truly ARE legitimate, there's thousands more that aren't. There are certain questions you need to ask the promoter of any program/opportunity/offer before you make your decisions:

1. What is the FULL outlay expected of me for membership fees, equipment and supplies?
2. What will I get for my money?
3. What exactly do I have to do (step by step)?
4. Will I be paid a regular wage, or will my pay be based on commission?
5. Who will be paying me?

Take your time. People promoting scams will likely use high-pressure sales tactics to get you to buy in to them. If the business opportunity is legitimate, it'll still be around when you're ready to decide.

Your Web Site

Building your first Web Site

Now you need a website. Sure, get a free site in the beginning. People might not take you real serious, but at least you get to test and play around with your site until you're ready to pay for one. Owning your own domain name adds credibility to your site, and there are plenty cheap hosts out there, so do that as soon as you feel ready.

Make a really fast-loading splash page from which to sell the product. You don't have long to catch a potential customers interest, so make it fast and interesting.

Don't fill the page with a ton of waffle. Give the most important information. What can the person get from using the product? Why is the product exactly what the person needs? What is the price etc? Give people a way to pay immediately, in case they REALLY like what they see, there and then.

If you have a LOT of information, give them a link to a "more info" page, maybe with pics and payment options. Get a small popup where people can sign up for your contact list for notices on future products. Give them a freebie in exchange for their name and email address.

Oh look, you've suddenly built yourself a contact list! No "leads" to buy from uncertain sources, no "harvesting" email addresses, no bugging friends and family. You did it! Now you need to keep in touch with your contacts.

Why not send them a mail asking for a little more info? Maybe a poll on what type of things they're most interested in? If you know what your contacts are looking for, then you have something to work with. You can find whatever they need, test it out, and when you're happy with it, say "Hey, I found something I think you may like!"

Narrow your focus. Don't try to be "everything" to "everyone", you'll just end up spreading yourself out way too thin. Find what works for you, what excites you, and work from there. Yes, I said "excites". We all need a bit of excitement in life, right? So why not work with something you're excited about? If and when it stops working for you, drop it and move on.

Remember, you can do this with all kinds of programs, not just information products. It all depends on what appeals to you most. Just give it a reasonable amount of time, and stick with it. If it DOESN'T work, then hey, you'll have learnt some things on the way, and you'll be more ready to carry on to the next thing. Don't give up, be determined and disciplined, and you will find the way.

The ease with which visitors are able to use a Web site is very important, especially if you're trying to market something from the site. Usability is very much about how quickly and easily visitors are able to move around the site and not just about making sure everything on the site works.

The need for your website to be easily navigated is enormous. Messy, disruptive and confusing sites are a huge turn off to potential customers. In other words: if you're looking to make sales, make sure your website is easy to navigate so as not to chase off visitors at first sight.

Navigation (links for moving around the site) is extremely important if you want your visitors to look at more than just your main page. If navigation choices are unclear, most visitors will just hit the "Close" button, never to be seen again.

As a rule of thumb, the main navigation is usually placed in the top 1/3 of the web page or on the left hand column, and the secondary navigation tends to be placed within the bottom 2/3 of the page, or on the right hand column. Of course, this is entirely your choice, because, as with all rules, there ARE exceptions ;~)

If you want to build your website on your own from scratch, I highly recommend getting some free web space to practice on, especially if you're new to site-building. Try a few different ones and see which one is best for you, but keep in mind that to be taken seriously, you really will need to get your own domain and proper hosting for your site at some point in time.

Some free web space hosts:

<http://www.freesevers.com>
<http://www.50megs.com>
<http://www.20m.com/>
<http://www.tripod.lycos.com/>

Of course, not everybody is an expert in html, perl, php and things like that, so I've listed a few resources that you may find helpful in designing your first website.

Free website templates:

<http://freesitetemplates.com>
<http://www.freewebtemplates.com>
<http://www.templatesbox.com/>
<http://www.freelayouts.com/>

Free banner templates:

http://www.animationonline.com/S/banner_templates.html
http://www.pysoft.com/GIF_Designer_Banners1.html
<http://www.clickfire.com/content/graphics/banners>

Free scripts, tools etc:

Free Scripts offers html guide, email checker, chat, and many other things:

<http://www.free-scripts.net>

Free Webmaster Tools has over 1400 Directory resources for web development:

<http://www.free-webmaster-tools.com>

Bravenet offers free clocks, colours, images, menus, mouse effects and more:

http://resources.bravenet.com/scripts_archive/javascript_dhtml

And finally, some free HTML help and tutorials:

Some simple HTML codes to spice up your web site:

http://www.web-source.net/html_tips.htm

HTML articles and tutorials:

<http://www.iboost.com/build/programming/html>

Simple HTML tags:

http://htmlgoodies.earthweb.com/primers/primer_2.html

Just what it says: How to build HTML:

<http://www.howtobuildhtml.com>

Should you decide you want a "real" website from the start, with your own domain name and paid hosting and you still have problems designing one yourself, there's plenty of places where you can find web designers at affordable prices, or maybe even free. Talk with friends, see if they have any knowledge on the subject, ask if they'd be willing to help you. Do a search on Google or Yahoo for forums, chatrooms and such-like pertaining to website design, try bartering something in return for web design services. You'll be amazed at what a little bartering can bring you ;~)

What is a blog?

A weblog, or blog, is an online diary of sorts, pretty much like an easy to use mini website that comments on a certain subject.

One of my subscribers has been kind enough to give me some hints and tips about using blogs. I really appreciate the fact that he's taken the time out to help me with this stuff. (Thanks Ron, you're a star!)

A few blog tips from my friend Ron.

Ways to get people to read blogs

- comment
 - join communities of likeminded bloggers
 - organize blogmeets
 - offer prizes (such as they are) for milestone comments
- (One blogger gave a #2 pencil, by mail, to a beloved reader :-))

- If you want more visitors and comments, you will have to beat the bushes to get them. Visit (and comment on) other blogs, always leaving the address of yours behind. Visit the most popular ones possible, consistent with your purpose.

- Be visual. If you are going to blog,
- get some graphical content in there.

Here are Ron's bloglinks in case you'd like to check them out

"start me up!"

"learners' permits!"

Get your own free blog:

<http://www.blogger.com>

<http://www.blog-city.com>

<http://www.tblog.com>

You Want Your Own Domain

Choosing domain names, or web addresses is a major thing when you want to do business online. Whilst a great, or even halfway decent domain name may not guarantee success, it can most definitely have an impact on just about all aspects of your online biz.

When choosing a domain name, your best bet is to get one that is short, concise and easy to remember, as this will minimise confusion. If you are going for a domain that could possibly cause a bit of confusion, then it's generally recommended that it falls into one of these categories: words that sound similar, common misspellings, hyphenated or non-hyphenated variations.

On the other hand, long domain names offer more flexibility in choosing a domain name, allowing you to be more descriptive about what your site is about or what it does.

Don't choose things like stuff4free.com or free-stuff-online though, as it makes it hard for the domain to be passed on to others through word of mouth. People can't actually "hear" whether it's 4 or four, and they can't "hear" the hyphens. Again, joe_bloggs.com looks ok, but try telling someone to go there, joe underscore bloggs dot com is just hard to say.

Personally I'm not a fan of dots, dashes and numbers in a domain name, I think I prefer them as letters all in a row, like stuffforfree.com, freestuffonline.com and joebloggs.com (or whatever else the extension may be).

Try testing out names on family and friends, together you could come up with a really great name, one you wouldn't have thought up on your own, and with a bit of luck it may not have been taken already.

Here are some various links that can be helpful to check out before trying to buy the domain name you want.

Domain naming idea generators:

<http://www.nameboy.com/>
<http://www.webmaster-toolkit.com/domain-name-generator.shtml>

Domain name exchanges:

<http://www.afternic.com/>
<http://www.websitenames.com/>
<http://www.thedomainexchange.com/>

Domain registration services:

http://www.networksolutions.com/en_US/name-it
<http://www.easyspace.com/domains/domains.html>
<http://www.register.com/register.cgi>
<http://www.MarketFrontDomains.com/>
<http://www.godaddy.com>

You can use a whois search to look up domains that are already in use. This can be particularly useful if you're looking for information such as the name and address of the registrant, creation date, expiration date, billing contact, technical contact, administrative contact, and domain servers.

Domain search tools:

<http://www.whois.sc/>
<http://www.domainsearch.com/>
<http://www.domainit.com/domain-search-engine.htm>

Even if a domain name that you really want is taken, if no one actually has a site there they may just let the name lapse. So check the expiry on the domain name, and within a few months of it expiring you might just be able to grab it for yourself.

-----SMILE-----
All great discoveries are
made by mistake.

Choosing colours for your business website.

When running a business online, one of the first things you'll be wanting to test out for your new website is which colour combinations look best together. To make it easier for you, I've collected a couple of cool links to help you choose a colour scheme for your website.

Try this free colour scheme generator:

<http://wellstyled.com/tools/colorscheme2/index-en.html>

Color Wheel Pro shows colour schemes on real examples. When you rotate the colour wheel, colours in the preview image change immediately.

Free download: <http://www.color-wheel-pro.com>

This one gives you a colour chart WITH their codes, both hex and rgb. Can be pretty useful at times, also good for testing combined colours.

<http://www.colorcombo.com>

Headlines, logos and banners.

If you market anything online, you'll definitely get to a stage where logos, headlines and banners come into play. There are tons of places where you can create these things for free, here's a small list of them.

For Logos & Buttons, try CoolText at: <http://www.cooltext.com>

Or here:

<http://www.coder.com/creations/banner/>

Gif Banner Creator (free) at

<http://www.quickbanner.com/>

3dTextMaker

<http://www.3dtextmaker.com/>

I had a lot of fun playing with this free 3d headline creator. Although I only tried the online sample, there's also a free download available: http://www.thepcmanwebsite.com/logo_creator.shtml

Samples from the 3d headline creator:

Not Just Another Ezine

You Are My Hero!!

-----SMILE-----
Speak softly and own a
big, mean doberman

Elizabeth Is Mega Cool!!

You can also try these two:

<http://www.animationonline.com>

<http://www.addesigner.com/>

Using Flash on Websites

If you are interested in learning flash then there are many online tutorials, which can help you. A good friend of mine recommended this page <http://www.swish-tutorials.com/> as it has a ton of free tutorials for flash.

There's also <http://websmartz.com>,

<http://www.swishzone.com> and

<http://www.flashkit.com> to name a few.

Websmartz is a product by which you can get readymade HTML websites and flash intros, which can be customized.

You could also try looking around here: <http://www.w3schools.com>

How to find a trustworthy online payment system.

Let's face it. You're online to make money, which ultimately means selling from your website. There are a lot of options for accepting online payments, but how do you know which is trustworthy and which isn't?

The first stop should be using the whois directory to see which country they're based in. If it says Panama, Cayman Islands or anywhere in Africa, it's probably not a good sign.

Network Solutions WHOIS Lookup allows WHOIS queries to find out who owns and administers an Internet domain.

<http://www.networksolutions.com/cgi-bin/whois/whois>

All The Whois is a directory of whois search engines, software, lookups, and registries for different countries and domain name companies.

<http://www.allthewhois.com/>

Next, check that the contact information is legitimate. Use the online phone books to see if their name is there.

Yellow and White Pages of the world:

<http://www.hansaprint.fi/eypeng.html>

If it looks like a legitimate business name then check the states business registry to see if it's really registered, and to make sure that the contact details match up. If names, contact info and addresses aren't available, then you've got to ask yourself the question "If this is a legitimate company, why isn't there more information available?"

Some widely used payment processors

<http://www.paypal.com>
<http://www.2checkout.com>
<http://www.ibill.com>
<http://www.clickbank.com>

Steer Clear of Boredom

Every now and again, marketing online can get a bit tedious, dare I say even boring?? When times like that hit me, I go visit <http://www.rinkworks.com> and have myself a good old chuckle at anecdotes like this one:

Tech Support: "Ok, ma'am, I need you to do a ctrl-alt-del."

Customer: "How do I do that?"

Tech Support: "Push and hold 'ctrl' and 'alt' at the same time, and then hit 'delete'."

Customer: "Where are those?"

Tech Support: (explains the location of the keys)

Customer: "Nothing happened."

Tech Support: "Try again."

Customer: "Still nothing."

A minute or two later....

Customer: "Should I turn my computer on? Would that help?"

Tech Support: "Yeah, it might."

Find tons more brilliant nuggets like this here: <http://www.rinkworks.com/stupid/>

Looking for free articles and content for your website or blog?

Here's a way I've found to be invaluable when I've been looking for certain types of articles. Go to a search engine, say www.google.com, or www.yahoo.com and type in: free content business articles

(Of course, change it where necessary. If you want articles about say, dogs, then business won't exactly be the right category to search, right?). Once you get to that initial list, dig deeper by going to "advanced search" and typing in things like "internet" or "internet marketing" (which again needs to be changed to YOUR category).

This should bring up a whole lot more of the kind of thing you're looking for, and it actually works for any types of articles. The deeper you dig, the more targeted stuff you'll find ;~)

<http://www.freesticky.com> is one of my favourite content websites. They have absolutely masses of different things to add "stickiness" to your website. Some of the things on offer are articles, quotes, insults, jokes, history and a whole lot more.

-----SMILE-----
Work fascinates me. I could
sit and watch it for hours

You Need Traffic.

Website Promotion

So you've got your website all set up. You know what you're promoting and it's looking good. You know you need to advertise and promote as much as possible to actually get your website seen. You've tried the normal avenues such as classified ads, safelists, ffa's. etc, but now you're ready to try something else, right?

There IS another way of getting free advertising. It's called Bartering. It basically means to exchange goods and/or services without using money. Bartering, also known as Trading, Exchange or Ad Swapping comes in all shapes and sizes. Many small sites use banner exchanges as a way to reach more people. Ezines often swap sponsorships in an effort to gain more subscribers etc.

The terms of a trade are usually only limited by the creativity of those taking part. The main consideration is to make sure it ties in with the goals of the site. Also, making sure that everybody involved has a clear understanding of the agreement details.

Here's a list of 5 different ways to "ad-swap" for free.

Reciprocal Links:

Basically, this is where 2 sites agree to show a link to each other. This can work wonders for search engine ranking, so long as the site you swap links with is relevant to your site. To find potential link swap partners for free, do a search on say www.google.com for sites similar to yours. Mail the webmaster a nice friendly mail, telling them what you like about their site, and asking if they might be interested in exchanging links with you. Don't worry if some of them say no, keep trying, and you'll be surprised at how many will actually say yes.

Banner Exchange:

In layman's terms, the concept behind a banner exchange is "I'll put your ads on my site, if you'll put my ads on yours". Banner exchanges are different to simple link swaps in terms of how many potential site visitors can be reached. Members of large banner exchanges have the potential for their ads to be shown on thousands of other sites. Also, unlike simple link swaps, banner exchanges result in your ads rotating through many different sites, sometimes with the benefit of sophisticated targeting.

Here are some free banner exchanges for you to check out:

www.1for1exchange.com/

www.bxmegalist.com/

www.bcentral.com/products/bn/default.asp

www.bannerswap.com/

Button Exchanges:

Button exchanges are similar to banner exchanges in all ways apart from the size of the graphic displayed. Button exchanges usually have smaller membership numbers than banner exchanges. As a result, they tend to come and go, with very few of them lasting and/or become much used. Some niche exchanges, particularly webmaster related, have used the micro-button (88x31) effectively.

While small in size, the micro-buttons allow a site to earn more views (and credits) per page.

www.adbility.com/

-----SMILE-----
Everyone hits a brick wall
now and then; the trick is not
to do it with your head.

Text Link Exchange

This is pretty much the same as reciprocal link swapping, apart from here there's a whole Network of sites, where all participants display text ads in exchange for credits which are converted into ads to be displayed on other sites.

www.txtswap.com/

Web Ring:

Web Rings are basically a group of like-minded sites all linking to each other. Web rings are usually made up of small/midsize sites. The number of web rings and member sites runs into the millions. A web ring can be created on just about any topic, by just about anybody.

After creating a ring, the ring owner is responsible for attracting and approving applicants. Approved sites become part of the web ring.

Navigating through webrings is normally done by using the "next", "previous" "random site" and "complete list" links. The first original web ring system, which is now part of Yahoo! is still the most popular and can be found here: www.webring.org/

Web Site Award:

A Web Site Award is basically an award given from one Web site to another, as a means of creating link swaps. They range from great big events like the Webby Awards: www.webbyawards.com/ to thousands of smaller sized link exchanges from small sites.

A lot of the Web site awards are really more about attracting site visitors than they are about competition. Sites that GET awards hope to attract visitors from the award sites, and sites that GIVE awards hope to attract visitors from the recipient sites.

www.webbyawards.com/

www.awardsites.com/

www.awardsscoop.org/background/history.html

Word of mouth:

This is another extremely valuable advertising medium. Having someone recommend your website to their friends and contacts because they find the content interesting, useful, fun, helpful or whatever usually leads to more subscribers/sales/visitors and so on.

Add a Tell-A-Friend option to every page of your website. There's lots of free ones out there. The one I use is free and available at <http://tellafriendgenerator.com>

Classified ads

Writing ads can be tedious and stressful if you're not a mega-gifted writer, but here are a few guidelines.

Basically, you want your headline to grab the readers' attention, so try to incorporate "power words" such as **simple, limited, you, fast, easy, system, learn** and suchlike.

Next, you need to show the benefits of what you're advertising, pointing out a need within the reader. An example could be something like this:

“This e-book will teach you how to easily bake perfect cakes for any occasion. Every time!”

You want the rest of your ad to be a call to action, where the reader feels compelled to click through to the page you’re advertising: for example, things like **“Time Sensitive”**, **“Limited Offer”**, and **“Deadline”** etc will make them feel a sense of urgency.

Here are a few other words worth trying to incorporate into your ads:

new, discount, sale, important, bonus, your, free, guarantee, secret, power, improved, extra, money saving, because.

Try them out, see which ones work best for whatever you're promoting.

Placing ads in ezines

Now that you’ve got your ad all written up, you need to start placing it various places, and where better to start than ezines and newsletters connecting with YOUR target market?

A lot of ezines will offer free ads in exchange for you subscribing to the publication. Search for a few related to your target market, subscribe and check them out.

READ the ezines, there’s usually quite a lot of good info to be found in them. Take the time to post your ads according to their guidelines. They say that people need to see your ad on average 7-9 times before you may even get a bite, so be consistent.

Make sure you really think the subscribers will read the publication, as a lot of them are pure ad-sheets that nobody really reads anyway. You want ezines that have limited ad space and lots of great content for best exposure. If you feel the ezine isn’t what you’re looking for, unsubscribe and find a few more. There are literally hundreds of thousands of ezines and newsletters out there, and most definitely some that will suit your needs.

Free classifieds in ezines rarely produce great results, so if you’re serious about advertising in them, check out some paid options. A lot of the paid options are very reasonable, and well worth the few dollars you pay for them. Bear in mind that paying for your advertising will make you look more professional to the reader. It’s almost like saying "Look at me, I believe in what I’m promoting so much, I’m even willing to pay for advertising".

Ezines usually have multiple advertising options, such as Top Sponsor Ads, Middle Ads, Classified Ads and Solo Ads. The general consensus is that solo ads, where your ad is sent out as a stand-alone mailing, are the best ways to advertise and yield best results. Be aware that solo advertising is usually a lot more expensive than ordinary classifieds. Check out the options and prices and see which suits you best.

Always remember that no ezine publishers can guarantee results, so the best thing you can do is work on how your ad looks, make it interesting, create a great subject line etc. Most of all, make sure your ad complies with the FTC guidelines, or it may not get published whether it’s a free ad or a paid ad.

Ad Tracking

Ad tracking is very important to internet marketing. You need to find out which ads are pulling people to your site, and which ones aren't working at all. Here's a list of some free ad trackers worth taking a look at.

Add2it Go-To Free:

The free version displays a small banner ad at bottom of the screen and has less features than the paid version.

<http://www.add2it.com/scripts/go-to-free.shtml>

Free Ad rotator with link/ad tracker:

You have to refer 2 other members before they will activate your rotator/tracker here.

<http://www.bestfreewebtools.com>

TD-Linc:

This one requires that you link back to them from your website.

<http://www.td-soft.com/linc/description.php>

Free traffic sources

My personal favourites are:

1. Articles promoting me/my website.

Mostly because articles have a tendency to get passed around time after time, constantly creating new traffic surges. Of course, this only applies if the articles are of good and worthy content ;~)

Writing articles and using the resource box to promote yourself or your products is a perfect form of viral marketing. Most of the places asking for "a bit about you" are looking for a short blurb about you written in 3rd person style, as if somebody other than yourself is telling them about you and your best/most important features and accomplishments. This is what is commonly known as the "resource box".

As for getting your articles published, my personal opinion is the more places you can get it posted the better for you.

I recently found this new directory which I've used quite a lot:

<http://www.arcanaweb.com/resources/article-directories.html>

There's 2 types of directories listed in it, "e-commerce" and "multiple", so there should be a place for everybody to submit an article or 50 to ;~)

This is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to getting your articles out to the world, there are literally TONS of directories where you can add them. Search Google or Yahoo! for: submit article or article directory, when the list comes up; click advanced search, and deep search for your target market.

The Complete Beginner's Guide to Writing Articles.

Writing your own articles is a highly overlooked source of free "lifetime" advertising, although more and more people are now starting to realise this fact. Why not join in? It really can lead to great exposure and recognition ;~)

So how do you get started? What do you write about? What do you actually DO with your articles once you've written them? It seems daunting, I know. I was petrified myself when I first started writing articles, I still get nervous every time I start submitting a new article all over the net.

Getting Started:

Do you have a passion? Are you particularly well-versed in a certain topic? Are you willing to invest time in doing research? Either one of these are all you really need, but if you've got all 3, then you're definitely on the right track.

Grab a cuppa, a smoke, whatever you need to relax with, open up notepad/WordPad or even grab a pen and paper. Write down a 5-6 line bio about yourself and/or the product/program you're promoting, this is known as your "Resource Box", and should be at the bottom of each and every article you write. The "Resource Box" is THE only place you should promote ANYTHING at all in the article.

Next you need to focus on a topic. Start jotting down thoughts, and don't worry about how mixed up they may seem to be at first, just keep going. If you can't think of many things at first, save your work, and look it over another day, more ideas will pop into your head.

Once you feel you have enough, start moving things around until they really begin to make sense to you. Keep going until you're happy with what you've got. Remember, articles don't need to be mega-long, so long as they are helpful and informative. Write as you would speak, and make it personal, as if you are talking to a good friend. Let your personality shine through.

What to write about:

As I mentioned above, anything you are passionate about, or are well-versed on is a great start. You're not passionate about anything? Not an "expert" in any subject at all? Well do some research. Start by thinking about what YOU would like to read about, what kind of information would YOU find helpful? Thought about it? Go to www.google.com and type it in, see what comes up, start looking into the various things you find. You could even ask friends and colleagues what THEY would be interested in reading articles about.

What, still can't come up with anything? It gets like that sometimes, so relax, take a deep breath, and start visiting forums/message boards. What questions are being asked? What do people need help with? Hang out in chat rooms, ask the same questions there, get as much feedback as you can, then start working from there. Eventually, you'll find you've managed to write a GREAT article, in plain English, offering helpful/useful information.

Let a couple of your closest, most honest friends read through your articles for you. Don't get offended if they make suggestions, some of them might even be good ones...hehehe, but make sure you stick with how it feels best for you.

So now what:

This is where the REAL hard work comes into play, because now you're ready to start submitting your articles to the world :~) Ok, if you want to go the easy way about it, stop reading now, go buy yourself some automatic submission software and get stuck into submitting your articles with it.

Personally, I prefer hard graft, and sometimes a bit of the personal touch. So for starters, I subscribe to a LOT of ezines that cover the topics I write about, and then I offer the publishers my articles. Most of them are just like me, and LOVE being first to publish well written articles. A nice personal mail usually gets that wheel turning ;~)

Then there's all the article directories, and there's TONS of them. It's hard work submitting manually to them all, but then at least you know for definite that they WERE actually submitted. Don't worry, I'm not going to make you search for them, I'll list all my favourites here for you, and that's gonna at least cut down a little on your work-load...hehehe

So here goes:

The first one is my personal favourite, as they make a webpage for your article and submit it to search engines for free. The rest are in no particular order. They're all active and correct at the time of writing, but as always in the online world, sites DO disappear, so some of these links may change, die, expire or plain old give up the ghost and stop existing.

<http://freezinesite.com/articles.cgi?action=add>
<http://www.ideamarketers.com/writers.cfm>
<http://www.marketing-seek.com/articles/submit.shtml>
<http://www.ezinearticles.com/>
<http://www.netterweb.com/articles>
<http://www.allnetarticles.com/>
<http://www.web-source.net/articlesub.htm>
<http://www.articlecentral.com/>
<http://www.certificate.net/wwio>
<http://www.connectionteam.com/art.html>
<http://writerexchange.about.com/arts/writerexchange>
<http://www.content-exchange.com/>
<http://www.dime-co.com/>
<http://www.ebooksnbytes.com/articles/submit.shtml>
http://www.web-source.net/syndicator_submit.htm
<http://www.womans-net.com/>
<http://www.writers-free-reference.com/>
<http://jogena.com/>
<http://businessknowhow.com/>
<http://www.selfgrowth.com/submit-article.html>
<http://www.ezadsuccess.com/>
<http://www.opportunityupdate.com/doorwaytosubmit.html>
<http://www.ezine-writer.com.au/>
<http://www.clickforcontent.com/>
<http://www.family-content.com/>

Use these ideas and resources to promote yourself with, and even though it's scary at first, it DOES get better with practice, take it from a gal who's been there. Always add your "Resource Box" and copyright information with EVERY article and EVERY submission, it's free advertising for you, and if your articles are good enough, they will be used over and over again.

If you decide that you absolutely, positively don't want to write your own articles, you can pay somebody else to write them and put your name to them. There are tons of places to find ghost-writers and freelance writers online.

Here are a couple of them:

Ghost Writers:

<http://www.guru.com/emp/search.cfm>
<http://www.hellskitchen.com/ghost.htm>

Freelance Writers:

<http://www.freelancewriters.com>
<http://www.worldwidefreelance.com/writers.htm>

Forum Netiquette

Forums can be a useful tool if you're doing business online. You can learn a lot by reading the content and actively taking part in the discussions. Reading a forum's archives can be a great way to get a basic knowledge about a topic, and it can also give you pointers about the changes in trends and opinions through time.

It is always very important to read the terms and conditions of each particular forum for a basic guideline as to what is acceptable. It's also a good idea to read archived posts in order to see the guidelines in action. If you don't, you could end up doing something wrong, like spamming the forum, and that could seriously hurt both your name and your business.

Taking an active part in forums can help you gain recognition in topics you show some knowledge of, and may even result in some great business leads and contacts. Read through posts, and answer any questions you are able to in a polite, friendly and helpful manner. It's a brilliant way to get your name and services known, but you have to be aware that different forums have different rules in regards to self-promotion.

Some won't allow any hint of self-promotion, some are specifically aimed at self-promotion, and a lot of them fall somewhere in between, allowing either signature files or URL's to an off-the-page member profile. The in-between ones are the best ones to use for marketing yourself, especially as the ones aimed at promoting usually end up more like "spam boards" than anything else.

See if you can choose forums that allow a sig file, which is basically a short block of text about you and/or your services which can be automatically attached to the end of every post you make. No matter what you do, never EVER post a reply to a 'legitimate' topic with nothing but spam in the body of your post. This will annoy forum members who are seeking valid answers, and kill your credibility as an online marketer almost instantly.

"Netiquette" is a must-have if you're planning to use forums. What is netiquette, you ask? Basically the same as offline etiquette. It is essential to have a good understanding of acceptable ways to communicate with other forum members. That's why it's so important to do a LOT of reading in the forums before you start posting messages yourself.

This is where good moderators come into play. They check the forums for inappropriate posts and spam, they keep the boards clean, and make sure everybody plays by the rules. Forums without moderators tend to turn into ghost-towns, with nothing but spam bots visiting them. A nice clean board needs good moderators to keep it that way.

In the worst-case scenario, if you break the rules in a forum, by maybe spamming, or using inappropriate language or behaviour, either the administrators or moderators may well end up banning you from that particular forum. If that happens, they will most likely delete each and every post you've made, whether it's good or bad.

More Free Advertising Ideas

Traffic Exchanges. What are they? How do they work? What do they do?

First of all, a "Traffic Exchange" is exactly that, a way to exchange traffic, a way to get visitors to your site. This happens by you visiting sites, in exchange for pageviews to your site.

There are LOTS of Traffic Exchanges out there. Some good, some bad, but most of them work in basically the same ways. You join, visit sites, refer others and build up credits.

There are 2 main types of Traffic Exchanges (there's actually a few more types of exchanges, but these are the ones we'll concentrate on here): **Manual Surf and Auto Surf.**

With manual surf, you have to click on a button to get to the next site, with auto surf, you can sit back and watch the pages change automatically, without having to lift a finger. Nowadays, the trend seems to be that the exchanges offer multiple choices for surfing: manual, auto, different timers (15, 20 or 30 seconds before next site). A lot of them now offer games while surfing, as a chance to earn extra credits.

Traffic Exchanges give out credits and bonuses in a multitude of ways. Some give bonus credits for signing up, or for referring others, or even while you're surfing the exchange, after you've visited a certain amount of sites.

Almost ALL Traffic Exchanges give you a percentage of the credits your referrals build up, so it's always a good idea to build a good downline in them. Some exchanges let you use your credits in different ways too: buying banner impressions, lottery tickets, referrals, scratchcards, just to name a few.

One thing to take serious note of is the timers, and how long it actually takes your page to load, If you're using a 15 second timer, and your page takes 20 seconds to load, people won't see it before it's time to click on to the next site. The best pages to use in Traffic Exchanges are small, fast loading, attention grabbing so-called "splash pages".

You can link to the page you want people to see from the splashpage, or add a box where people can request more information via email. If you can make your splash page interesting enough, then getting people to click a link on it shouldn't be too hard.

If what you need is a ton of quick hits to your sites, use autosurfers with 15 second timers. You can still get signups/requests for more info IF your site loads fast enough, and really yells out to the viewer. If you want your site to actually be seen, with maybe better signup rates, opt for the manual exchanges and 30 second timers. This forces people to stay at your site longer, which in turn could make them pay more attention to your site.

Be aware that a lot of Traffic Exchanges don't allow the use of popups, rotators or re-directors on whichever site you're promoting, as they are very hard to keep track of and can include very unsavoury stuff such as a virus or even porn. It's ALWAYS a good idea to use a popup killer when you're surfing the traffic exchanges. I personally use a program called KillAd, which is brilliant in terminator mode....hehehe. Apart from the risk of reaching "nasty" sites, popups can really drain your computers resources, making it sluggish and slow.

Most Traffic Exchanges these days have both free and paid options, where the paid option is basically just an enhancement of free, making it easier to gain credits and referrals, although some of them DO allow you to earn a commission on referral upgrades.

You will most likely come across "cheat" programs/software made specifically to cheat the traffic exchanges. They work by racking up credits for you, without you having to actually USE the exchange. Whatever you do, DON'T use them! Apart from the fact that you'll most likely lose your accounts in the traffic exchanges, can you

imagine if everybody was using them? Nobody would see any sites, and nobody would get any results.

I've had people come to me and say "Traffic Exchanges are useless, and I don't have time to click anyway", or they'll say "There are too many of them, and I find it all overwhelming".

Here's my standard reply: Ok, the traffic may not be 100% targeted visitors, but somebody, somewhere just MIGHT like your product, affiliate program, salespage etc.

The more traffic you get, the more likely you are to actually find those people. First of all, whatever you do, don't just jump onto any old traffic exchange, read it thoroughly, make sure you get at LEAST a 2:1 credit ratio, which basically means: you visit 2 websites, in exchange for one visitor to YOUR chosen website.

Next, join 4 or 5 good traffic exchanges,. Read everything you can about using the program, so you know you won't be breaking the rules. Now on to the hard work bit: Lets call the chosen exchanges A, B, C, D and E. Pull up notepad, copy/paste your referral links to the 5 programs into it (ctrl+c to copy, ctrl+v to paste). Do the same with your surfing links, (sometimes known as startpage links), and make sure you DON'T confuse the two.

You need to plug each Traffic Exchange into the other to create a circle. (example: where it asks for website put program A into program B, B into C, C into D, D into E, and finally E into A)

So now, each traffic exchange is promoting one of the others. The reason for this is to build your downlines in the various exchanges. Why work hard for traffic if you can get others to work for you?

Ok, next step can be tedious, but if you've chosen the right traffic exchanges, it can be kinda fun too. Open the 5 programs, using your Surf/Startpage link. Click away at all 5 of them vigorously, say at least 30 minutes per day, for maybe 3 weeks. This SHOULD start building your downlines in the various exchanges. If it doesn't work at first, keep trying until it does. The key here is to never give up.

Once you have a good enough downline (in YOUR opinion), and your downlines are creating traffic for you, log back into the programs, change the website link to whichever program it is you REALLY want to promote. Don't expect your downline to build ALL of your traffic, you may still have to "click" yourself for a while, but with time, that will change. In my favourite programs, my downlines are getting me 1000 pageviews per day.

That's 5000 pageviews, on average, per day for free, and I rarely click at all any more. Maybe every once in a while just to keep my accounts active, depending on the programs rules.

Ever wonder how surf for cash programs work?

Pretty much in the same way as ordinary traffic exchanges. The one main difference is that whilst a plain old TE offers you visitors in return for surfing, a lot of the newer ones offer you a tiny amount of cash. Most of the surf for cash sites offer to buy your traffic credits from you.

Don't expect to get rich, or even make much pocket money without a lot of surfing and a huge downline though ;~)

Search Engine Marketing

At some point in time you're going to want to try to optimize your website for the search engines. Some people rely solely on search engine marketing as a means to get traffic to their websites, whilst others will use any means they can find. Personally I prefer the articles and classified ads in ezines options, but I'll touch on a few small things about search engines here.

Optimizing your web site for the search engines:

-----SMILE-----
Teamwork is essential; it allows
you to blame someone else.

I won't go into this in great detail, but Meta tags, keywords and header tags are probably the first main things you need to know about.

Meta tags consist of the title, description, and keywords, although there are other tags possible. META tags always go in the <HEAD> section of the document. META NAME tags include descriptions and keywords. This HTML code helps some search engines classify and rank a web page.

Try to pick keywords and key phrases that a surfer would use to find your product or service. Say you sell houses, then "house" wouldn't be a great keyword, but "houses in Tampa" would work a whole lot better as it would bring people who are searching for that in particular.

Only choose a few keywords/keyword phrases for each page of your site, and then use them at least 5-7 times throughout the text on the relevant page. Don't put too much emphasis on doing this if it makes your page too difficult to read for the visitor.

The search engines will use their own method and put keyword phrase combinations for your page that you didn't even think of, so feel free to put in a few unlikely ones, as they may just get your website seen. Do be careful how you word them though, as some spiders will black-list your site if they think it's a URL farm or the keywords don't match the content.

Search engines look for heading tags that match metatags, and title tags. Headings go before a paragraph like this <h1>this is a title</h1> and this <h2>this is a title that will show up using smaller font</h2>.

The header sizes go up to 6, 1 being the largest font size and 6 the smallest. Use them as much as possible where it doesn't mess up the appearance of the page. Try to use words in your heading tags that match your keywords and description.

So, say if someone searches for "chocolate" and that word shows up 5 times in the content, once in the keywords metatag, once in the title tag, and once in the description tag then you're in good shape

Just remember the word "density", meaning that you make the same words appear frequently to gain placement in the search engine for that word. Don't use the words too often though, or the engines might ban you for keyword spamming.

You need to think about what kind of things you put in the search engine when **YOU** search for something, and that's pretty close to what anyone else will try, then just focus on those words, and create density in your document using all your tags and content. Again, you don't want it to be so often that it looks deliberate because if the search engine people see your webpage, and it has 100 heading tags that are all the same, then they will ban you for it.

Make the metatags match the content. If it's an article about search engines then use metatags about search engines, always matching the content of your webpage. For example, if this was your heading/title <h2>Search Engine Placement</h2> then the words in that heading should be duplicated in the content and in the metatags to maximize the effects.

Some cool links to help with SE marketing:

10 Steps to search engine placement:

<http://www.search-engine-secrets.net/>

Free Meta tag generator

<http://www.scrubtheweb.com/abs/builder.html>

-----SMILE-----
The dictionary is the only place
where success comes before work

You can get a free keyword extractor here:

<http://www.analogx.com/contents/download/network/keyex.htm>

Just load the file or the URL into it, and it counts how many times each word is in the text, it also has different options for generating reports of what it finds. Pretty nifty really.

As of this writing, the search engines seem to like sites with a lot of incoming links from related websites. Link exchanges work well, but pure links back to your site because someone likes it are the best links to have pointing to your website. When you run across a website that you like ... and one that's a good match for yours try sending the owner an email telling them what you like about their site. If the site owner finds your comments beneficial, he/she may add your testimonial to their home page, with a link back to you. Powerful stuff!

Linkswaps

Don't rely on software that creates a standard email for everybody. Write the mail yourself, making it more personal, explaining how and why it could be beneficial to trade links. Check the site thoroughly first, and give the owner some honest feedback, let them know you're not just harvesting their addresses in order to get more linkbacks.

Don't include the link to your site in the first mail, just feel the waters and ask if they may be interested, and if so, could they please get in touch.

I get tons of "standardised" emails every single day, and most times I don't even bother looking at them before deleting them. After all, if people can't be bothered to take the time to be personal, why would I want to do business with them?

There are multiple places that will help you gain link exchanges with other people looking for sites like yours to linkswap with, here are a couple of them:

<http://www.linkpartners.com>

<http://www.linkbuddies.com>

Another fast way is to look for sites with "add your link" forms. These are usually much faster than sites where you have to email to ask for a link, since they are using software to maintain the links.

Search on terms like this where "keyword" is a general one for your site.

"add url" + keyword

"add your url" + keyword

"add site" + keyword

When looking for sites to exchange links with, always make sure they compliment your own site in some way, but also make sure they're not in direct competition with you.

Another great way to get links coming in to your site is to join a topsite. Topsites are available for just about every type of website online. A topsite is a directory site, where the prominence of your link is determined by how much traffic your site sends to the topsite.

As a rule topsites will send you anywhere from 2x to 5x the amount of traffic. In other words for every person that visits the topsite from your link, you will receive 2 to 5 new visitors! All for adding a link on your pages.

Topsites only work if your site fits the theme of the topsite. If you have a shopping site, join a shopping topsite. If you have a joke site, look for humour topsites. To find one that fits your site, do a Google search for top "whatever your site is about".

Networking

Business networking

To do business successfully, you need to learn to network well with others. There's lots of great info to be had for both online and offline networking, and there's quite a few useful networking sites.

A few good places to go for networking and contacts are:

<http://www.ryze.com>

<http://www.ecademy.com>

<http://www.linkedin.com>

Where Do You FIND Your Contacts?

This is a question I have been asked over and over again. It's quite simple to answer, too. I chat! That is basically all I do in my pursuit for getting contacts. I find people via chats, be it chat downloads, yahoo, get paid chats, msn messenger, any of them.

It's personal, it's friendly, and people get to know each other so much better than through emails. I love to chat with other online marketers. It's great for sharing hints, tips, ideas and information. Some of the people you meet seem to know so much more than you, and if you take the time, you can really learn a lot just by listening.

You can turn your contacts into joint venture partners, downline members, prospects etc. and it's all mutual. My ezine came about through chat, just by listening to the wants and needs of other entrepreneurs like myself. I listened, and worked from what I heard. I've seen people start joint ventures, programs of their own and all sorts of good stuff, just through making chat friends. It is REALLY worth trying for yourself.

Sure, carry on with whatever promotional methods you are using right now, but try chatting with others on a personal level, find out what's working for them and what's not. You'll be surprised by the results. I, personally, have found that I get much better results via chats than any other form of free advertising I've tried apart from article writing, and believe me, I've tried tons in my time online.

Profiles

Put all of your relevant information such as your name and website into your messenger and chat profiles, this gives people the option of asking for more information if and when they're ready to. Just as it works in forums, it works for chats, give people enough help and tips and they WILL check your profile and website.

Just remember to always be polite, never hype. Be honest, and most of all: Be Yourself. But anyway, in case you DO want to try your hand at chat, here's a quick crash-course in chat terminology:

Abbreviation	-----	Meaning
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AFK	----	Away from keyboard
ASAP	----	As soon as possible
A/S/L?	----	Age/sex/location?
BBIAB	----	Be back in a bit

BBL	----	Be back later
BBN	----	Bye bye now
BBS	----	Be back soon
B/F	----	Boy friend
BRB	----	Be right back
BTW	----	By the way
CU	----	See you
C U L8ER	----	See you later
CYA	----	See ya
FAQ	----	Frequently-ask question(s)
FYI	----	For your information
G/F	----	Girlfriend
GGP	----	Gotta go pee
GL	----	Good luck
GMTA	----	Great minds think alike
H&K	----	Hug and kiss
IC	----	I see
IM	----	Immediate message
IMHO	----	In my humble opinion
IMO	----	In my opinion
JK	----	Just kidding
JTLYK	----	Just to let you know
KISS	----	Keep it simple stupid
L8R	----	Later
L8R G8R	----	Later gator
LMAO	----	Laughing my a** off
LOL	----	Laughing out loud
MorF	----	Male or female
NP or N/P	----	No problem
OIC	----	Oh, I see
OMG	----	Oh my God
PM	----	Private message
PMSL	----	Peeing myself laughing
::POOF::	----	Goodbye (leaving the room)
QT	----	Cutie
ROFL	----	Rolling on floor laughing
ROFLMAO	----	Rolling on the floor laughing my a** off
ROFLMBO	----	Rolling on floor laughing my butt off
RPG	----	Role-playing games
S^ S'up	----	What's up
SUP	----	What's up
TANSTAAFL	----	There ain't no such thing as a free lunch
TGIF	----	Thank God it's Friday
THX	----	Thanks
TTFN	----	Ta-Ta for now
TTYL	----	Talk to you later
TY	----	Thank you
WB	----	Welcome back
WTG	----	Way to go!
YW	----	You're welcome

Please don't ever go into chatrooms just to post your links. It's classed as spam and definitely frowned upon. The worst thing you'll find in chatrooms are the spammers and flooders that incessantly post their links and ads in the room. The best way to avoid that is to quickly use the ignore feature.

Build Downlines, Make Money.

How many affiliate programs have you joined and promoted, only to end up with next to no referrals? Why does this happen? Let's take a look at some of the choices you have when a referral signs up under you.

Do you:

- contact that person, offering your help?
- not bother to email them, and assume they know what to do?
- email them immediately with your latest program offer?

I've found that with multi-level referral programs, no matter which one it may be, it's always better to start out by trying to get your first 3 referrals, then working with THEM to get THEIR first 3, and also teaching them to do the same. This is known in some circles as duplication. It's always hard to start building downlines, but go for it - be helpful. Helping your referrals means that you are also ultimately helping yourself.

Depth vs. Width

What does that mean? Most programs have multiple referral levels, building your first level only, means you're building wide, building down through the levels means your building deep

Work on the depth, rather than the width of your downline to begin with. After that "leg" of your downline is working merrily away without too much intervention from you, start on another leg, doing the exact same thing.

Golden Rules

Never ever use hype when you're promoting any programs. Believe me, it doesn't work in reality. People get disappointed if they don't get what they've been promised within the timeframe it's been promised.

Be honest in your promotional efforts. Tell people what's worked, and what hasn't worked for you. If people ask how much you've made over how long a period of time, tell them. Let them know that online marketing is NOT the easiest thing on earth.

Let's face it, if you want to make good money with online marketing, you HAVE to treat it as a business, not as a hobby, and yes, it DOES demand a lot of hard work and self-discipline. But taking all these things into consideration, you'll be able to work your butt off and have something to show for it :)

So, how do you KEEP your downline happy and active? You know the scenario: You join some program, work your butt off to promote it, to get signups, and you feel like you're hitting a brick wall. After a few months, you give up, and try something else, or give up completely.

Know what's missing? Active, helpful sponsors/uplines. Have you ever tried mailing your upline, only to get NO response? It's a horrible feeling. Makes you think "Why should I bother trying to help this guy make some money??"

Been in this situation? Or maybe you're guilty of being this type of sponsor? Either way, you need to read this:

I try to actively help anybody who signs up under me, no matter what. I always have done, and in 5 and a half years of marketing, I still have mostly the same loyal people following me into any program I show them.

Doesn't matter if the program turns out to be a flop, or the best thing on earth. Those people are with me all the way, and they are fantastic!

I try to promote their pages/programs, pass on signups to them etc. and at the risk of sounding big-headed: They love me for it! This is why, even if a program flops, they follow me on to the next one, because they KNOW I'll help as much as I can.

Mail your upline if you need help with anything, let them know you're struggling. Ask for what you want. Believe me, it works wonders, and people aren't mind readers. If you don't ASK for help, most will assume that you're doing just fine. If you don't get any support from your sponsor, go higher, even as high as the program owner if you have to.

I am pseudo-blondie with techie stuff, asked a friend to help with building my ezine (he's a programmer) and VOILA! Website all built. So I am living proof: It DOES help to ask.

Do NOT be a "dead" sponsor. Keep in touch with your signups regularly. Offer your help in any way you can, offer to exchange hints, tips and info with them.

Search the net for some good e-books that may be helpful to them, and pass them on. Free ones are best for this purpose. (Just make sure you read the books yourself first, so you know they're not rubbish) Got some software you use, that you find helpful? Pass it on to those below you. Anything that you've ever found helpful, pass on. Just remember to never, ever, ever spam your downlines with other stuff.

Send a mail maybe twice per month, offering your help. Make sure you give them multiple ways of contacting you, email, msn, yahoo messenger just to name a few, and ALWAYS make time for them. If somebody asks you a question you can't answer, you know what to do, right? Ask YOUR upline, don't allow them to be slackers. After all, they want YOU to help THEM make some money too, so ask them to help you if you need it!

Bottom line: Never be afraid to ask for, or offer to, help. Works for me, and most of the people in my downlines now practice the same. Now get out there and help each other, it WILL pay off :)

Bonus Reading

This is the part of the book where I just add stuff that I think you may find interesting, titbits and articles written by me and other people, and hopefully a few more hints and tips that can be useful to you.

What time is it?

Whenever I need to know the time in different places around the world I tend to use these two websites:

<http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/>

<http://www.worldtimeserver.com/>

Six ways to make extra money for the holidays

Holiday times can be stressful and hard if you're running low on cash. Here are 6 tips for making some extra money so you too can have a happy holiday.

1. Root around your house, from attic to basement. Find EVERYTHING that you don't need and don't use, then list them on Ebay.com It's amazing what people actually buy. Remember, one mans junk is another mans treasure.
2. If you find EBay too confusing, or you feel the need to get out more, take all your new-found items along to the nearest flea market or car boot sale. If you don't want to travel to find customers, throw up a big old "Yard Sale" sign outside your house.
3. If you haven't got your own stuff, or want to sell more, ask your friends for THEIR junk. Tell them you'll sell it for them if you get a percentage of what you make. That way, both you AND your friends make money for the holidays.
4. If you've got a website and digital products such as software and e-books that you have full resale rights to, see if you can bundle up lots of goodies together for an unbelievably low price. Make sure you let people know it's a one-off Christmas Special that will end soon. Be aware of copywrite and license agreements that may prohibit bundling of certain software products.
5. If you've got a website and you sell physical products, bundle a few together, make up a good price and offer free shipping. Or offer free shipping for purchasing a certain amount. Offering free products such as "buy 3 get 1 free" also works well.
6. Try to get a "stand-in" job in a busy restaurant, pub or club. Maybe even a pizza delivery job. There's big tips to be had at holiday times, and never enough staff.

Try out one, two, or even all of these ideas NOW and you'll have that little bit of extra cash in your pocket in time for ANY holiday. Feel free to let me know how it works for you, I'd love to hear it!

Christmas is an extremely important time of year when it comes to promotion and sales, so I thought I'd best add this article too.

How to make more sales before Christmas

Wow, life just keeps getting busier and busier at this time of year, have you noticed? Kids are back in school, the lazy days of the summer holidays are over and everybody's starting to think about Christmas. The shops are full of Christmas stuff, ads on TV are showing pressies for the kids, and even the World Wide Web is overflowing with Christmas.

Do you realise there's only about 14 weeks between mid-September and mid-December? When you think of it that way, it's understandable that everybody's really starting to promote their stuff hard. Especially on the web, because things tend to happen so fast online compared to in real life.

If you don't get going there in time, you risk missing out. So whatever it is you're marketing: Go for gold, pull out all the stops, and get the best copy you possibly can, and promote, promote, promote!

We all want to make sales at this time of year, so that we've got money in our own pockets for Christmas. So how do you go about getting as many sales as possible?

First of all, take a good, long hard look at yourself. What IS it that makes you want to buy something? What makes you say "I've just got to have that!" Why do you want it? Is it the price? Is it because it's simple and easy to use? Does it solve a problem for you? Maybe it's just because it's outright fun?

Guess what you've just done? You've looked at yourself as your own prospective customer! You KNOW what draws you, and you KNOW you can't possibly be the only person on earth that gets drawn by those things, so you now KNOW what buyers want.

There are a few proven methods to getting your customers to buy more from you once they've made that first purchase, such as offering a freebie with it. Giving them that little bit more than what they bought can really work wonders. Of course, something worthwhile and preferably related to what they ordered from you usually works best.

After-sales follow-up is also extremely important. Write them an email asking if they're happy with their purchase, or ask if there's anything they need explaining about the product etc. Make sure you're available to answer any questions they might have about the products they've bought.

If you sell actual hands-on products that you have to send through the post, then drop a business card with all your contact info into the parcel. Or add a little extra something to the package, trust me, they'll remember you. How do I know this?

At times, I buy small wholesale lots on EBay. One of my favourite items to buy happens to be belly bars (they're actually good sellers for me). So anyway, I've been happy with most of my purchases, but this one time I'd bought some belly bars and waited for them to come to my door. Impatiently, as always..

When they arrived, I opened up the package, and inside was a small polythene bag, with 3 small candies in it and a "Thanks for your purchase" note. Just a tiny gesture, but guess what? It made me remember the seller, and I've bought from her time and time again.

I read somewhere that if you under-promise, and over-deliver, then you're onto a winner. I think whoever wrote that may just have known what they were talking about.

So get going. Christmas is close, and time is running out. If you're useless at ad copy, then PAY someone to write your ads for you. It IS worth it, and there are a lot of extremely reasonably priced copywriters out there. My personal favourite is <http://www.strategyadservice.com>

Give your website a holiday feel, full of red and green, just don't overdo it. Make people feel comfortable, give them a reason to trust you, and you WILL make those Christmas sales!

For more great information like this, please click below to subscribe free to:

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A motto to live by, in ALL aspects of life, quoted from Napoleon Hill's book "Think rich, grow rich".

About the Author

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I was just lucky enough to find them all on websites and in emails, unfortunately none of them came with author names.