

21 Immediate Ways to *Boost Your Business* Using the Internet





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Introduction

- Fast Action Checklist
- A Few Questions to Think About
- Frequently Asked Questions
- 10 Common Online Marketing Mistakes to Avoid
- How This Guide Is Set Up

Phase I Forming Your Foundation

#1 What's Your Message? - Outlining Your Online Marketing Game Plan

#2 What's The Market Doing? - Analyzing Your Competition

#3 Who's Your Tribe? - Identifying Your Target Audience

#4 Your Business in 140 Characters or Less - Establishing Your Brand

#5 Master Of Your Domain - How to Secure Your Online Presence

#6 Get a Host - Choose a Hosting Company

#7 Create Your Online Home - Plan & Build Your Website

#8 Get Found - Basic SEO and Search Engine Submissions

Phase II Creating Your Content

#9 Choose Your Medium - Written, Audio, or Video

#10 Content Is King - Plan and Create Your Content

#11 The Money Is In The List - Email Management Service

#12 Demonstrate Your Expertise - Create a Give-Away and Ezine

#13 Become a Publisher - Start Blogging, Podcasting, or Vlogging

#14 Give Your Knowledge Away - Information Marketing

Phase III Cultivating Your Community

#15 Time To Connect - Social Networking

- #16 Bite Size Information - Microblogging
- #17 It's Sharing Time - Social Bookmarking
- #18 What Are People Saying About You? - Review and Opinion Sites
- #19 Announce To the World - Online Public Relations
- #20 Take Your Ad Money Online - Internet Advertising
- #21 Is It All Worth It? - Measuring Online Marketing ROI

Conclusion

Thank You

About Nick

Glossary

Introduction

By the end of this book, you'll know the exact steps to take your business online. As a result, you'll increase your brand awareness, your phone will ring more, and you'll just plain make more money.

It's a big claim, I know. But, these are proven methods that have worked with clients big and small.

By working with every single client, we've been able to implement the techniques of internet marketing to grow their business.

Internet marketing works.

This guide will be your source to get you kick-started and on your way.

Before you start reading, please either print out this guide or get a notepad and a pen. I've included a lot of questions that you'll need to answer to help you develop your online marketing plan. If you do print it out, I've left some space in the margin to jot down notes.

Throughout this little guide, you're going to learn exactly what I do to help clients market their businesses online. I'm in the business of helping other businesses implement sound online marketing strategies that actually work to bring in more money.

I feel strongly that every business needs to be marketing online.

Why? For the simple reason that the Internet is where the people are. If you're not there, how can they find you? You really can't afford NOT to be online.

Having a solid online marketing strategy as part of your overall business plan is going to catapult you over all the other businesses still reluctant to get online.

I'm absolutely passionate about online marketing because I've seen it work for so many small businesses. It works. It's real.

Now it's your turn to put the Internet to work for you.

In this guide, you're going to learn what tools online marketing managers like myself, and thousands of others are using, and why they're so effective.

Fast Action Checklist

In an effort to get you moving fast, I've created this "Executive Summary" in the form of a checklist. It's made up of the 21 ways to boost your business using the Internet that are discussed in further detail later on. Use this to get moving fast but please continue on with the rest of this guide to get a more detailed explanation.

- Outline your online marketing game plan - before you spend any time online, be sure to have your messaging and plan crystal clear.
- Analyze your competition online and identify the key words people are searching for in your industry.
- Identify your target audience - who is your ideal client or customer and where do they hang out online?
- Establish your brand - what's your USP?
- Register your domain name (use www.Godaddy.com) and reserve your business name across the major social media platforms (use <http://namechk.com>)
- Get your website hosted with a reputable host like Hostgator.com
- Plan and build your website keeping in mind what your target goals are. Use Wordpress as your website platform - it's the best out there.
- Optimize your website to be found in the search engines. Start by submitting your website to Google, Bing, Yahoo
- Choose which medium you're going to create your content in - written, audio, or video.
- Plan and create your content by providing solutions to people's problems.
- Set up your email management system and autoresponder using AWeber.
- Create your free give-away and start your ezine to start demonstrating your expertise.
- Set up your ongoing blogging, vlogging, or podcasting schedule.
- Submit your expert articles to EzineArticles, Idea Marketers, GoArticles, Article Dashboard, comment on other blogs, and create audio & video content.

- Set up all of your accounts in the major social media site. You must at least have a presence on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#).
- Start using [Twitter](#) with its powerful business applications.
- Start using social bookmarking sites like [Digg](#), [StumbleUpon](#), and [Delicious](#).
- Establish your presence on review sites like [Yelp](#) and set up a [Google alerts](#) account.
- Publish press releases online to increase your SEO using sites like [PR.com](#), [Press Release Point](#), and [PR Newswire](#).
- Start spending your ad money online with sites like [Facebook](#), [Google AdWords](#), and [Groupon](#).
- Track your ROI using sites like [Google Analytics](#), [Websitegrader.com](#), and [Google trends](#). See what's working and do more and more and more of that.

And that's it! Of course this is just an executive checklist of an already high level overview. Be sure to continue on throughout this guide. Learn and then apply it to your business to make more money!

A Few Questions to Think About

- When someone “Googles” your business, what comes up?
- Can you even be found?
- What if you do have a website already, does it accurately reflect the professionalism of your business?
- Do you know what people are saying online about your business?
- Are you demonstrating your expertise online with thousands of potential clients or customers?

- Do you have a database of people eagerly clamoring for your products or services?
- Are you still wasting time and money on offline ad campaigns that aren't yielding any results?

These are some tough questions I know. Here's the thing: Everyone knows the Internet has changed business forever.

The day has come where if you're a business owner and you're not online, you're losing a huge population of potential customers.

Make no mistake. Having an online marketing strategy applies to ALL businesses, even the brick and mortars. And yes, this means even the local dry cleaner now needs to have an online presence because, among other things, the phonebook has practically become extinct.

What's laid out in this brief guide is applicable to any business. It doesn't matter if you're an independent business owner, bed & breakfast, author, speaker, plumber, realtor, coach, mortgage broker, dentist office, car dealership, pool cleaner, roofer, restaurant, salon, travel agency, bookstore, karate dojo, theater, handy man, photographer, auto mechanic...I think you get the point.

By the end of this little guide, you will be able to answer all of the above questions. You will have a marketing plan in place and have started to build your business using the mighty Internet.

Frequently Asked Questions

Before we get started, I'm going to answer a few common questions.

Who's this for?

Everyone who has a business and wants to make more money.

What if I already have a website? Does this guide still apply to me?

Yes. There are some things we'll cover about setting up a website, and it might be here that you want to rethink your current one. If it was built over 5 years ago, chances are very good you need to revamp it.

What about Facebook? Am I supposed to be marketing there?

Yes, you are. But before you start a shotgun approach to marketing there, this guide will help you set up a focused plan by laying a good online marketing foundation first including your website.

I'm a traditional brick and mortar business. Do I still need a website?

Absolutely yes! Every business needs to be online. Period.

Do I have to have a marketing background to do this?

No. I won't lie though, it does help. But this guide is designed to walk you through everything you need to get started. Mostly, you just need to know your industry really well and be able to communicate that online.

Don't I need a lot of money to market online?

No. In fact, marketing on the Internet is completely free in many cases. If you do any paid online advertising, it's a fraction of the cost compared to offline advertising costs.

Do I need to hire an online marketing manager?

Nope. This will get you pointed in the right direction. In fact, I created this guide as a replacement to myself sharing the same information with clients again and again. These are, however, the same tools and methods we use here at SocialVoyager.com for our clients that ask us to do these task for them.

Isn't it too late to get into online marketing? Aren't all the good websites taken?

Not at all! There's always room for more. Now, more than ever, if you share amazing stuff, you'll get discovered fast.

Do I really need to have my business online?

Yes. Unless you're not concerned with making money, increasing your organizations awareness, or just plain getting found by thousands of people looking for what you have to offer.

I'm with a non-profit, do we still need this guide?

Absolutely! There is no better way to get your message out than the Internet.

10 Common Online Marketing Mistakes to Avoid

Marketing your business on the Internet is by far one of the most powerful ways you can get your message out. However, there are some key things you need to know before you jump in. Here are 10 common mistakes:

1. Not having a defined online marketing plan
2. Putting up a website without any planning just because you know you need to
3. Not engaging with potential customers or clients online
4. Spending time in social media with no clear goal or marketing purpose
5. Not keeping your online and offline messaging consistent
6. Not supplying your best trade secrets in easy to understand articles and videos
7. Not seeking out potential partners in different parts of the country or world
8. Not tracking to see what's working and what's not working
9. Not using sites like Twitter or LinkedIn because you think they're dumb or don't understand them
10. Not building a list of emails from people eager to buy more from you

These are some of the most common mistakes that people make when marketing their businesses online. The Internet is a different ball game and there's a lot to learn. With that in mind, I've outlined what I feel are the 21 most immediate, most profitable ways to boost your business using the Internet.

How This Guide Is Set Up

This is divided into three parts. Each part is what I call an Internet marketing phase. Each phase builds on the previous one. Phase I talks about forming your online foundation. Stuff like getting your marketing plan in place and your website live.

Once you have your website up and running, Phase II talks about creating your content and how to build an online database of eager customers.

Phase III will teach you about how to cultivate your community of fans. It's never been more affordable (even free) and more effective to get your message out to the masses. Phase III will also help you track what's working, what's not, and how to change.

Keep in mind that each tip is designed to be implemented immediately and shouldn't take too long for you to go through. Some things will require a little more time than others (like the building of your website) but you should be able to move through every step in this guide in under 30 days easy.

If you would like to expand your understanding and increase your profits, contact us over at [Social Voyager](#) for a complimentary online marketing strategy session.

OK. Enough said, let's get moving!

Phase I

Forming Your Foundation

“The Internet is becoming the town square for the global village of tomorrow” - Bill Gates

It's been said that the Internet is the single biggest shift in information to the masses since the invention of the printing press. It's been further said that the Internet will have infinitely greater influence than the printing press ever did and across all fields of human interest, especially business. I agree 100%.

The advent of the Internet is the biggest game changer business has ever known and anyone who's interested in making money absolutely has to be online.

In this section, you'll learn how to form an online marketing plan, buy your own domain with your own hosting, and design and optimize your own website.

#1

What's Your Message? Outlining Your Online Marketing Game Plan

This first step is simple. You're going to jot down your online marketing plan. I know you might not know all the ins and outs of online marketing yet but it really isn't too different from your offline marketing plan. In fact, maybe it's time to pull your business plan off the shelf and look at it.

Tip

When you get through this guide, be sure to come back to your online marketing plan because as you learn about some key online marketing tools, you might want to change some of your strategies.

The only real difference will be the strategies. Instead of mailings for example, you'll map out online advertising. Instead of door hangers, you'll be posting articles on high traffic websites. Often, you can take your current offline strategies and apply them to their online counterparts where they will be much more effective.

It's important to outline a plan first because the Internet can take up a lot of your time. You need to have a clear, focused goal. If you're not careful, you can spend hours and hours surfing the Internet and not getting your business any closer to increasing its revenue.

So, what do you want your business to do?

The ultimate goal of marketing is to design and implement the strategies that will get your company where it wants to go. So, what does your business do? What about your product or service makes you special?

Think about, say out loud, or jot down your elevator speech. What do you generally say when someone asks you about what your business does?

The goal here is really just to get an overall feel for what you do and where you want to be. In the next three steps, we'll look at competition, your target audience, and

your overall brand. Right now, focus on what your core message is and your goals. Where do you want your business to go?

In regards to revenue, how much do you want to make by the end of this year? How does your business currently make money? Where does the majority of your business come from each month? What kind of marketing are you doing to generate this income?

Everything you'll do online is about helping someone with a solution. Think about your overall feel. Are you serious (like an attorney) or are you fun (like a DJ)? What do you really want to get across to people? Keep these things in mind, or better yet, jot them down.

Now we're going to expand your online marketing plan by looking at what others in your niche are doing.

#2

What's the Market Doing? **Analyzing Your Competition**

Tip

Get used to looking at your competitors as potential partners. Look at their strengths and their weaknesses. Could your businesses complement each other to better serve a client/customer? Joint ventures are an amazing way to increase business and make it a win for all. Get rid of the competition mindset. Welcome the cooperation mindset.

Why should you care about what your competitors are doing? You probably already know the answer to this but let's explore it as it relates to your business online.

First of all, who is your competition? What are your competitors doing online? Start by going to your favorite search engine (I still prefer Google myself) and type in your industry and see what comes up. Then enter in your industry with your area. Like, "contractor in Dallas".

Visit their websites and take notes of what you like and don't like about them. The mere fact that they're online and that you found them says that they're at least doing something right. But I'm willing to bet that, with what you'll learn in the rest of this guide, you'll pull ahead of them very quickly.

Now, as you've thought about (or jotted down) what you like and don't like about their websites, think about what you can do better. What advantages does your business already have over theirs? If a prospect were to pull up your business webpage and your biggest competitor's webpage, why would they choose you? Jot this down because you'll need it when we discuss designing your website.

A note about keywords

In the online world, keywords and keyword research are vital to see what others in your field are doing. Basically, keywords are the words people enter into the search engines when looking for what you have to provide. Keyword research is discovering which words and phrases people are searching for when looking for something. Simple as that.

The benefit to you is that it helps you decide what words you're going to include on your website and in your social media efforts. This will result in more traffic to your website and higher rankings in the search engines. To do this, you can use Google's [Keyword Tool](#). Just enter your businesses main term (like photographer) and see what other words are coming up.

Now that you know a little more about what's happening online in your niche, it's time to narrow down who your core audience is.

#3 *Who's Your Tribe?* Identifying Your Target Audience

Is your ideal client a married 43-year-old woman living in North Carolina who loves gardening? Did you know with the mighty Internet you can spend all of your advertising dollars selling to people just like her? It's true, but first you have to make sure you've narrowed down exactly who your ideal client/customer is.

We won't spend a lot of time here because you probably already know this. What you need to make sure of however, is really thinking about your ideal client/customer's behavior. If you were them, where would you spend your time online? Would you be on Facebook? Would you be reading blogs? Would you be asking questions in forums?

Think about the problems or challenges they have and how you can help them. What would make someone get online and look for what you have in the first place? Maybe you're an accident attorney and they just got into a wreck. Maybe you're a plumber and someone's pipes just broke. Maybe you're a weight loss coach and someone wants to get in shape before summer.

Really take some time to identify and jot down your ideal client/customer. How much money do they have to spend? Where do they live? How old are they? Do they have kids or pets? The list goes on. At first, this might be a bit of a challenge because you never thought you could be so precise in your marketing. Well now you can!

Once you've identified your core audience, now you're going to zero in on your brand.

#4

Your Business In 140 Characters or Less Establishing Your Brand

Tip

What's your USP? USP stands for Unique Selling Proposition. This basically means "what do you have that sets you apart from all the rest"? Especially online, you must have something that distinguishes your business from others. What can you offer people that they can't get anywhere else?

You already know your overall game plan. You already know what your competition/"future partners" are doing. You already know your perfect client/customer. Now you need to come up with your brand.

Your brand, especially online, is simply the overall message you want to get across to your prospect. Like your ideal client, you probably already know what your brand is but now you're going to share it online so your message and brand must be laser-focused. Why? Because online you only have a few seconds to impress your visitors.

So, how do you come up with your Internet-friendly brand? Think about and jot down answers to the following questions.

- Are you marketing yourself or your business name? If you're an attorney or coach, it might be the same thing.
- What is your business tagline?
- What benefits do you offer that can be seen immediately? i.e. - "24 hour plumbing service"
- What are the top three benefits people will gain by working with you? Use only one word descriptions.
- What makes you an expert?
- What are your business colors?
- Do you have a simple, impactful, or memorable logo?
- What else do you feel goes into your brand?

When it's boiled down, branding is nothing more than giving your clients/customers a way to clearly identify and separate you from the rest.

Think of some of the big ones like Nike, Apple, and Donald Trump. They have name recognition. As a small business, your ultimate goal will be to get as much name recognition as possible. Think of something that sets you apart from the rest and build on that. Be creative!

Wondering why the “your business in 140 or less” title is needed? As an example, that’s how many characters you get in Twitter when you want to send a message out to your Twitter followers. With the infinite amounts of information available online, it’s vital that you brand your business in as short and benefit rich message as you can.

Now that you have your overall marketing plan established, let’s get moving on actually getting you online. This is where it really gets fun!

#5 *Master of Your Domain* How to Secure Your Online Presence

It's time to make sure you own your space online. Just like your physical business location, you're going to have an online home and it starts with your own domain name.

What's a domain name? It's the string of words used to identify computer addresses online. A domain name is like a virtual address. It's like 123 Main St, Happy Town, USA., but online. It's the www.yourbusinessname.com thing.

You never truly own a domain name. You're basically renting it from the company you register with. You'll have the option to sign up for one year, two years, or more. Sign up for as long as possible and as much as you can afford.

Don't worry. A domain generally costs about \$9 a year, with discounts if you buy multiple years in advance. By signing up for 3 years or more, it locks in the domain name to you and it helps your search engine rankings.

Here are the steps to getting your domain:

1. Choose a phrase that relates to your business. Ideally it's your business name. Like "NewYorkWeddingPhotography". It should be easy to spell, memorable, and have key words included if possible.
2. Now go to Godaddy.com and see if this domain is available. If your business name isn't available, check first to see if it's for sale or you can try a different combination of words. There are other domain registrars out there but GoDaddy is one of the biggest and they have great customer support.

Tip

Having your own domain on a hosting site enables you to have your email at your domain. For example, if your business is “Jack’s Roofing” you can have your email be “jack@jacksroofing.com”. This is much more professional than ja43z@yahoo.com. Just one more way to better your branding and increase your professionalism!

3. Make sure you get the .com extension. Other extensions like .biz and .co are coming up in the world but .com is still the best. If you’re a non-profit, still get the .com but be sure to use .org as your main domain.
4. If you want, purchase the other extensions like .net, .info, etc. This way you buy up any chance of someone trying to piggy back on the great brand you’ll be creating.
5. Register your domain for as long as possible. Ideally, 5 years.
6. Google “coupon codes for GoDaddy” and see what you find before you purchase your domain.
7. DO NOT sign up for any hosting through GoDaddy. We’ll talk about hosting next. You’ll see lots and lots of little up-sells before you actually get to the checkout with your domain name. Most of these you don’t need so don’t bother with them.

Let’s not forget social media!

Now you need to also reserve your business name across all social media platforms (or at least as many as possible that are relevant to your industry).

There are a number of tools out there to do this but here are a couple I’ve found helpful. They all do pretty much the same thing so you decide which one you like the best and go for it.

- <http://namechk.com/>
- <http://knowem.com/>
- <http://www.namechecklist.com/>

You'll quickly see there are literally hundreds of social media platforms to register your business name on. Here's a quick list of the key platforms you should definitely be registered with.

- [Twitter*](#)
- [Facebook*](#)
- [Youtube](#)
- [LinkedIn*](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Delicious](#)
- [Stumbleupon](#)
- [Digg](#)
- [Ustream](#)
- [Reddit](#)
- [Revver](#)
- [Vimeo](#)
- [Yelp](#)
- [Viddler](#)

*These will require you to start a personal account first before you set up a page for your business.

Even if you have an anti-social media personality, do it for your business. You only put up the information you want. Nobody has to see pictures of your golden retriever wearing a tutu if you don't want them to!

Also, be sure to register with social media sites that are specific to your industry. You can see an ever-growing list at [Wikipedia](#).

Now that you've locked up your domain and brand online, it's time to get hosted!

#6 *Get a Host* Choose a Hosting Company

You'll be setting up a website as your online home with your domain name as your virtual address. So if your domain name is your virtual address, hosting is like your virtual rent. A hosting company is someone who "hosts" all of your website data on their server.

Because the Internet is growing so fast, the price of hosting has come down dramatically and customer service has greatly improved. When it comes to hosting your website and all the hard work you've put into it, you want to make sure to choose the very best.

To get set up with a hosting company, [HostGator](#) comes highly recommended. Like GoDaddy, they have great prices and their customer service is exceptional. That's a big deal when it comes to techie stuff!

[Hostgator](#) has different packages based on your business needs. I recommend you start with at least the "Baby plan". This plan offers unlimited domains, unlimited disk space, and unlimited bandwidth. What that means to you is that you can host your website (and any number of others if you end up having more) in one single web hosting account. That saves you a lot of money.

Another great feature about Hostgator is that it uses cPanel. This makes it very easy to upload a CMS (content management system) such as Wordpress or Joomla. In fact, you can even do it with just a few clicks!

That actually leads to what were going to talk about next - getting you up and running on your own website!

#7**Create Your Online Home
Plan & Build Your Website**

Now, comes the time where you are going to build your own website. For those of you who already have a website, still continue to read through this. Especially for those of you whose website was built over 5 years ago. Even 3 years ago. A lot has changed and there are some things you can pick up here.

After your online marketing game plan, building a website is your most important step. Everything else that we'll do after this point is only to bring people back to your website. Simply put, your website will be your biggest marketing tool which will make you the most money in the easiest way possible.

If you've never built a website before, don't worry. It's easier than ever to create something fantastic even if you don't know a thing about HTML, design, or content. Entire books have been written on this subject and this section could potentially go on for days but I'll keep it as short and relevant as possible.

What is listed next will provide you with a head start to get you pointed in the right direction. If you do what I share here, you'll have a fully-functioning website that is search engine optimized and ready to be found by your new clients/customers.

Planning your website

You've already gone to other people's websites in your industry right? What about their websites did you like? What could you do better? You want to spend some time thinking about these things before you get too involved in the actual production of your new site.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when considering what goes into your site:

- Will visitors instantly be able to see what you're all about in 5 seconds or less?
- What on your website will make a prospect want to choose you over your competitors?
- What do you want the overall feel of the website to be?
- What experience or emotions do you want people to have when they first see your site?
- How will your website provide the solution to why they were searching online in the first place?

Keep in mind that while you can't judge a book by a cover, people do judge a business by their website. If your website is laid out poorly or looks like your brother-in-law's sister's half cousin built it for a last minute college project, then that's how they're going to judge your business. There's a reason you did all of that market research at the beginning!

Your website should be a resource of valuable information. Remember, it's a web 2.0 world now so you can no longer afford to just have a website that only lists your products/services and hours of operation. Make your website "sticky". Make it a place where people will have a hard time leaving and want to come back often.

For example, if you're a realtor, perhaps you can have home listings and photos on your site as well as some tools like a loan calculator and map. People are going to find the information they need online anyway. It might as well be on your website.

We'll talk more about this in the creating content section but keep these things in mind as you plan out your website.

Designing your website

When designing your actual site, there's a lot to consider. Here are a few key elements to include:

- Easy navigation
- Tagline
- Color
- Call to action
- Detailed “about” page
- Have a place to search for info on your website
- A place for two-way conversation (i.e. - blog comments, built-in forum, etc.)
- Links to social media
- Video
- Sitemap
- Email opt-in (more on this later)
- Great content (more on this later)
- Tools relevant to your industry
- Multiple ways to contact you including social media

There are a few tools that make it very easy to build a website without knowing any HTML or code. Among others, [Worpdress](#), [Weebly](#), & [Joomla](#) are effective for helping you to get a site up fast. My personal favorite (and the favorite of web designers around the world) is Wordpress.

Wordpress started off as a blogging platform and has now turned into a very well-rounded content management system (CMS). You can host your Wordpress site with your own domain on Hostgator. You can set up your site in a manner of minutes with a simple install button through your Hostgator account.

Wordpress uses “themes” which serve as different styles or layouts for your website. Just look up Wordpress themes online and you’ll find thousands of different themes to choose from. Wordpress also has an amazing amount of plug-ins and widgets that help the look, performance, and feel of your site.

Now that you have your website up and running, we’re going to talk about how you can make sure it gets found.

Get Found Basic SEO and Search Engine Submissions

Just like website design, there's enough information on SEO to fill volumes. SEO stands for search engine optimization. It's the process of adjusting and, well, optimizing your website in order to achieve higher rankings in the search engines.

Ideally, it's best to have your website come up first on the first page of the keywords that someone is searching for. Remember when you researched keywords for your industry? This is why.

You want to come up in what's called the organic search. It's the part of the search listings that are there "naturally" or without being paid for. When asked, the majority of the population says that when they're searching for something, they always click on the sites in the organic listings.

There are entire businesses that have been created to help you increase your website's SEO. There's a lot to it but here's a list of some things you should try to incorporate into your online marketing efforts.

- Have a keyword-rich domain name (you already did this)
- Have your page titles include keywords
- Keyword-rich page descriptions
- Add keywords to any photos and images you upload
- Make sure all of your content has keywords listed throughout
- Create content that will get other people linking back to it (more about that coming up)
- List your website in local directories, chambers of commerce, and on your business partner's sites

- Link to your website in all of your social media sites (more about that coming up too!)
- Link to other pages on your site within your site - called “internal linking”
- Make sure to include a sitemap

Remember, this is a small list. The search engines are always changing their algorithms and tactics that might work today won't necessarily work tomorrow. General rule of thumb is to create a nice website (using Wordpress) and then continually add amazing, keyword-rich content to it. This will help you stay on top no matter how much the search engines change.

If you're using Wordpress, you already have an advantage over everyone else. You can get set up in the site title and description keywords to help search engines find you. There are also a lot of themes that you can get which will help you specifically with SEO. Also, there's a plugin called [All in One SEO pack](#). Be sure to upload this to optimize your site for the search engines.

List your website with the search engines

The next thing to do is to make sure you get your new website listed with all of the major search engines. Here's a list of links to the big 3 search engine url submission pages. By listing your websites here, the others search engines will find you and list you too.

- [Google](#)
- [Bing](#)
- [Yahoo](#)

The above search engines are just the bare minimum. To really get found online, you need to continually submit your site to all of the search engines. This is kind of a pain.

Luckily, there's a great service called SearchEngineStartup.com that will do it for you. They will submit your website to over 250 search engines! And the best part - they will do it every month for you. This ensures that your site is continually ranked and increases the traffic to your site. It's a powerful service and I highly recommend you check them out.

Believe it or not, you've just learned how to plan, design, and create your very own website on your own domain with your own hosting and optimized for the search engines. Now we'll take this even further by making you a online content publisher.

Phase II

Creating Your Content

“Content is King” - One of the most common phrases online

Tip

Strongly consider doing video. YouTube is now the 2nd largest search engine after Google.

Why? Because people would much rather watch something than read something. If you can, try to make video as much of your content sharing strategy as possible. It will payoff big time.

People go to the Internet to be inspired, entertained, and educated. It’s the content that gets people there. It doesn’t matter if someone is searching how to relieve a pain in their back, top 10 reasons to buy a new house, or where to list their used car for sale. Everything boils down to quality, relevant, and fresh content.

In this section you’ll learn how to produce your content and in what medium, how to build a powerful email list, and where to show off your new, awesome content.

#9

Choose Your Medium Written, Audio, Or Video

You already know the Internet has changed everything about business. Because of digital downloading and file sharing, record labels no longer have the power they once had (although I don’t think they know it yet). Because of places like YouTube and Ustream, anyone with talent can start their own talk show or daily vlog and make money with advertising. Because of podcasting, anyone with a voice and something good to say can attract large audiences.

As you start down the path of creating and sharing your content with the world, you need to decide which tools you'll use. The type of content produced is unlimited but the format it's delivered in comes in three forms: written, audio, video.

So, you need to think about what most appeals to you. Are you good at and enjoy writing? What about speaking? Would you rather talk something out than write it out? What about getting in front of a camera? Would you enjoy sharing your wisdom on film? You don't have to be tied down to one. You can mix it up and do a combination of all three.

We'll talk a little bit more about each of the content delivery systems later, but I put this in first to help you decide which you would like to do. Now you'll get to the actual planning and creation of your content.

#10 ***Content Is King*** **Plan and Create Your Content**

Be a solution provider. You've heard this ever since you started your business right? In fact, it's the only reason you even have a business. This is no different online.

As I previously mentioned in setting up your website, you need to include a lot of tools to help people. Maybe this is a simple blog. Maybe it's a series of videos. Maybe it's a downloadable white paper or MP3 specific to your industry. It can be anything you can think of so long as it's useful content that really helps your potential client/customer.

Having great information on your site is what's going to set you apart from everybody else out there. What makes you different? If I'm new to your site, how can you solve my problems? Having this kind of information is going to show you're a leader in the industry, will help to establish your brand, and bring in more business.

Your website is your always-on sales tool working for you. You must make a great impression and that happens through your content! Your content demonstrates your expertise and that opens a lot of doors. It can be in the form of increased clients/customers, new people wanting to work with your business, or even joint ventures. The more you show your stuff, the more you'll move up in the world!

Keep in mind, the content you create needs to be professional but more importantly, it needs to be really, really useful. People want clear, specific information. That's all. It's your job to give it to them. If you have a Wordpress site, all you need to do is add a page or post and throw up your new article, podcast, or video.

Here are some quick tips for producing great content for your website:

- Think of what each page/post is going to talk about and outline it first.
- Write in a conversational tone - you can even use voice to text software if you're more comfortable with that. If you can talk, then you can write.
- Answer common questions that people have about your specific field.
- Don't be afraid of getting in front of the camera! It can be very powerful!
- Research what others in your field are teaching and give it a twist based on your own experience.
- Make sure you edit your work and use spell check.
- Be sure to use lots of space - it's hard to read large chunks of text on a computer screen.
- Make sure all of your links to external websites actually work.
- Be specific - being longwinded is a great way to have people click off your site. You don't want that!

To start, you need at least 25 topics in your field. Map those out and then get busy creating. Once you get some solid content on your website, have some people you know and trust look it over and give you feedback. Take to heart what they say. It's easy to get too close to a project and lose sight of the big picture.

When you've finished with your initial content, take a breather and enjoy the fruits of your labor. You've built a fully functioning website. That's something to be proud of!

Now that you have content on your website, you're going to need a way to stay in touch with the people who visit and that's next.

#11 *The Money Is In the List* Email Management Service

What if you were able to send out one or two emails and receive thousands of dollars in sales in return? That's not just hype, it's real for businesses who properly integrate email marketing as part of their online campaign.

Once you have your initial content on your site, you need to start building your list. This is just like your database of customers except online. Every business has a list of customers who it can send information to. This may include the latest news about their business, specials or coupons, product announcements and so forth. You've probably even signed up for a few of these in your life. Maybe you signed up for your favorite shoe store's mailing list and they send you coupons and other announcements.

Well the same thing applies online. Even more so really. Ask any person who makes a living online and they'll always tell you, "The money is in the list". And it applies just as much to brick and mortar businesses as well.

To build your list, you have to have an email management service. This will include an autoresponder that will automatically send your potential client/customer a series of emails that you have written previously.

Tip

As you start to grow your own list, you will have a following that will be eager to read your next email. The catch is that you must provide value. If you give away great information, your list will grow. If you don't, you'll find more people unsubscribing than signing up and that's not a good place to be. The key is value! Set yourself apart from the rest by giving away the best information.

This saves you time to responding to every email manually. It's like having your email marketing done for you on autopilot. You can also send a "real" email anytime you like or personally respond to a particular question.

Which autoresponder to use

A great tool to help you to build a list is a software company called [AWeber](#). They're affordable and provide great customer service. They are a notch above all the others because their software is easy to use and it's fast!

AWeber offers everything you need to build your list of customers or potential business partners. They also have lots of tutorials that will walk you through all the steps. It's really easy to get up and running fast.

You want to get started building your list as soon as your website is built. Now that you have a website and a way to start growing your list, you'll want to demonstrate you know your stuff.

#12

Demonstrate Your Expertise Create a Give-Away and Ezine

You're going to be an all-out information marketer and pull in thousands of new clients/customers simply by showing them you know your stuff. People are looking for information. Now it's your turn to give it to them. You can do this in two main ways.

The Give-Away

The first is providing a free give-away. This is something you use to entice people with to get them to sign up on your list. You'll want to do this because having something you give away increases your odds of getting people to join your mailing list. It gives them an incentive. In a sense, you are selling them something valuable in exchange for their name and email.

In a world full of spammers, people are more and more reluctant to fill out their email addresses. You should respect that and make sure what you're giving away provides great value. You'll quickly realize that the people who are really doing well with the online portion of their businesses are the ones giving away incredible information for free!

There are lots of different things you can use to offer as an incentive to people. A great example might be a white paper you've written. Maybe you've created a great video or powerpoint presentation. It really can be anything.

A general rule of thumb is to think: Would it be something you would want? Would it be worth it to you to enter your name and email for what you're getting in return? So, as far as how to actually create the give-away, that is really up to you and what you think might be valuable to your audience. To get ideas, see what other people are sharing or offering and emulate that.

Load it up with your [AWeber](#) account and have it go out in your first message when people sign up on your list.

The Ezine

An ezine is short for "Electronic Magazine". Because of the resources already available on the Internet, you don't need to have a full-time staff equivalent to Time Magazine. You just need a good message with truly helpful information.

An ezine or newsletter is the e-correspondence you'll have with the people on your mailing list. It can be made up of articles, hot tips, the latest industry news, and so forth.

This is all done through your AWeber account. So every time someone new signs up, no matter where in the world they are or what time of the day, your autoresponder will start sending them messages. Pretty cool huh? You can of course send a "live" email any time you wish.

The ezine is designed to give your people great information they can actually use and to build your relationship with them. Many ezine owners often sprinkle in events from their personal lives to help establish rapport. Big events like buying a house or car or even getting a new dog or cat can help your audience bond with you. Some ezine owners even choose to monetize by offering advertising space to their readers or other publishers. You can also allow other people to write for your ezine. This gives them great exposure and helps you provide great content.

To do this, log in to your AWeber account. Set up your first few messages or you can even set up a year's worth. Be sure to include your give-away in your very first message. It's that simple.

By the way - AWeber now has programs that walk you through the steps of setting up your list and messages. It's really easy.

Now that you've set up your initial content, chosen your medium, and your autoresponder is all good to go, you're going to start on your content generation strategy.

#13
Become a Publisher
Start Blogging, Podcasting, or Vlogging

This is possibly the shortest but hardest step to do. Now that you've already created your initial content, it's your job to establish a routine and stick to it. Set up a schedule where you will create new content and publish it on your website. It can be daily, weekly, even monthly. But do it and be consistent about it.

Over time, your site will grow with tons of amazing content. Before you know it, you'll be an authority in your field just by the sheer amount of content you've produced.

You must do this both for the people looking for you and also for the search engines, to have a reason to remember you. Just think that every time you produce and publish content to your website, you're giving Google more reason to show off your website. It's Google juice!

This is it. Like I said, very short, but very important!

#14
Give Your Knowledge Away
Information Marketing

You have a business right? I'm sure you're an expert in what you do. There are certainly some key points that you know that could help others. Why not write some articles? There are thousands of publishers looking for good, quality content.

You can write articles and submit them as a way to bring people to you. As with everything in your marketing efforts, you must provide value. This is the only way for anyone to take you seriously. In fact, you should provide some of your best tips.

“But wait!” you say. “I can't give away my best advice!” To that I simply say, “Yes you can and you should”. Why? Because if you don't, there's someone else who gladly will and the business will go to them.

Article directories

One good way you can show the world you know your stuff is to post your articles in article directories. Typically these are websites that have thousands and thousands of articles on every subject imaginable. The deal is that anyone can reuse these articles on their websites or other publications in exchange for a big signature line and links to your website.

Using articles to market your business can be very good. This is primarily because if someone clicks through to your website from the article, they've already been sold on you because you've shown you know your stuff. Posting in these directories also has the added SEO benefit of more links pointing to your website.

Here are just a few article directories where you can submit your content to and get some visibility.

- [EzineArticles](#)
- [eHow](#)
- [Idea Marketers](#)

- [GoArticles](#)
- [Article Dashboard](#)

There are all kinds of article directory websites out there. Almost too many it seems. While these aren't necessarily article directories, it's worth taking a look at both [Squidoo](#) and [Hub Pages](#). Both will allow you to publish content and link back to your own website.

Blog commenting

As you get more and more familiar with the online world, you will see that many websites, especially blogs, allow for you to leave comments. This is a great way for you to get your message out!

By writing great comments on other people's sites, they benefit from the great content and you benefit by being able to leave your custom signature. Generally, you can even link directly to your own website. It's a win-win! As always however, be respectful of the blog owner and make sure you actually provide quality information. Otherwise it's just a waste of everyone's time.

To find blogs in your niche, simply type your niche followed by "blog" (i.e. - Auto Mechanic Blog). You can also use Google's blog search engine. Just go to <http://blogsearch.google.com/> and type away.

Solution websites

Another place where you can show off your expertise is in the solution websites. These are the sites that are brimming with information all provided by business owners and experts like you. Spending some time helping people out on these sights could give you some huge returns. Here are just a few to check out:

- [Yahoo Answers](#)

- [Instructables](#)
- [Ehow](#)
- [Xomba](#)
- [Slideshare](#) - good for powerpoints

Not a writer?

What's been covered thus far is all about sharing your written content. What if you don't like to write? There's always audio and video. I have a personal preference for video because it's so powerful. The main place to get going on video is YouTube. We'll dive into this further in the next section.

Keep in mind that this giving of information is vital to your business. Think of it as nothing more than a sample. If you have a product, I'm sure you're willing to give out a sample to encourage further purchases. Same thing goes with the services side; I'm sure you're willing to give a little to really show what you can do. Well, this is the same concept just put on steroids. It's always working for you 24/7. And the best part, you only did it once! The rest goes on autopilot!

Now that you're going to get out there and be an expert, wouldn't it be nice if you had some people who actually cared about your knowledge? It's now time to get into social networking.

Phase III Cultivating Your Community

“Social media equals business. Period.” - Gary Vaynerchuk

The advent of social media has not only changed the way things work online, it affects every single aspect of business online and off. Every day, literally millions of people head to social media to hang out, learn, chat, and even discuss your business.

In this section, you'll learn how to tap into the power of social media, where to spend your online ad dollars, and how to track your ROI.

#15 ***Time to Connect*** **Social Networking**

Social media is very hot right now and because of it, you as a business owner need to take it seriously.

The latest figures show that more than 60% of small businesses in the U.S. are still not using social media to market their business. Another study showed that while more and more companies are starting to implement social media in their business, the majority didn't have a plan or even know how. What that means is that there's a very big opportunity for those willing to learn it and do it.

Thankfully, you're already ahead of the curve just by reading and doing the tips outlined in this guide!

What is social media?

Social media is a combination of technology, people, and ideas. In a way, it's the democratization of the Internet and business in general. This is because people are now freely able to talk with each other about anything they wish. It's the free exchange of information. This is especially important to businesses because it's crippling traditional advertising.

In this new social media economy, when you generate a great product or service, everyone will know about it. The contrast is true also. If you produce something that is mediocre or bad, people will rate it, blog it, and spew it out through hundreds of different channels online. Stick to the good for the sake of your own business!

Word of Mouse

Another powerful reason social media is now, and will always be, such a powerhouse is due to the power of the word of mouth concept or, "word of mouse" as they say. Large companies spend millions to position their products in front of you via advertising. This isn't nearly as powerful as someone simply logging onto their Facebook account and asking which new car they should buy. Social media is the ultimate word of mouth.

The big companies know it. Just think of the last time you saw a commercial for Toyota or Pepsi or Nike. Where are they trying to get you to go? Facebook.com/Toyota or Facebook.com/Pepsi or Facebook.com/Nike right? They might have even said to come join them on Twitter or Facebook.

Why? Because they want to connect with you there. They know billboards and commercials and radio spots don't work anymore. They want you to follow them so they can build the relationship with you via social media.

Tip

Be sure to review each of the social networking platforms seriously before jumping into them. What may work for some businesses might not be as effective as for others. Simply review your online marketing plan and see if each of the major platforms is pertinent to your business. The ones listed here are a must for any business.

This is where it gets really exciting for you, the small business owner. It's my feeling that social media is really best geared for the small businesses. People want to connect with the local businesses. People would much rather become a "fan" of the local coffee shop online than they would the mega coffee chains. This is because of the nature of affinity and wanting to support something local and identifiable. It's not that the big companies aren't good, they just don't have a face.

Online, the cream rises to the top. Produce something good and you'll quickly grow a huge following of loyal fans, customers, or clients. As proof, there are already numerous musicians and artists that have huge followings (and a healthy income on the side) because they focused specifically on sharing their best stuff online, for free, via social media. This can apply to any small business with a quality product or service that really helps people in some way. Share it, using social media, and you'll be a superstar in no time.

I could go on and on about all of the implications social media has for business. There's a lot of buzz about social media and rightly so. Here's the bottom line: it's not just a fad, it's the new way of business. It's something you have to get into and learn and capitalize on. If used correctly, it has the potential to bring you the biggest rewards your business has ever seen.

Social network platforms

Let's talk about some of the different social media platforms. There are hundreds of networks out there already with more popping up almost every day. We're only going to talk briefly about the major players and how they relate to your business. Keep in mind these are social networks. We'll talk a little more about social bookmarking and review sites later on.

Also, this is a very high level overview. Like everything else in this guide, entire books can be (and are) written about each of the below networks.

Facebook

Facebook is the biggest player in the social networking world. Heck, it even got its own movie! It now has well over 1.7 billion users with thousands more signing up every day. Its power comes through its simplicity. You create a basic profile, load up whatever you want (photos, favorite movies, etc) and then connect with others you know. Before long you'll be interacting on other people's "walls"; as they are called and staying up to date with everyone you want.

Facebook has powerful business applications as well. The reason behind this is easy. Business goes where the people are. Because of its nature, Facebook also has very targeted advertising capabilities. You can create a personal profile and then create a page for your business. This is a great tool to interact with your tribe.

Twitter

Twitter is a microblogging network (more on this in the next section) which allows you to build a network of followers. It's unique in that it only lets you send a message out of no more than 140 characters at a time. Beyond that, the sky's the limit. You can tweet however often you want, what you want, and with however many people you want.

Twitter has a powerful search engine feature using the hashtag or # symbol. When people are sending out tweets they can attach a key word to this symbol and it makes it searchable. What this means to you is that you can search for keywords in your industry and see results in real time. The implications of this are huge!

YouTube

YouTube is a video sharing site as well as social network. It's a place where anyone can upload videos about pretty much anything. Like I mentioned previously, it's currently ranked as the second biggest search engine after Google. This means that video is hot. Reportedly, it's the number one activity in the social media world!

The magic of YouTube is found in a few things. First, anyone can upload a video on whatever they want. As this relates to your business, this could be a how-to tip, a product or service testimonial, or even a daily or weekly company diary (vlog). Second, these videos can be ranked and given a thumbs up by viewers. The more views and likes, the better the chance your video will be seen. Third, YouTube makes it easy for others to embed your video into their websites, blogs, and other social media spaces. What this means, is if you produce an awesome video, it's going to "go viral" and be spread all over the online world. This would mean huge exposure to you and your business.

I have a personal bias towards YouTube (and all video sharing sites for that matter) because I think that video is the best way to get your content across online. It's powerful stuff.

Instagram

Instagram is like YouTube's photo-sharing cousin. Instead of uploading videos, Instagram users upload photos. The last numbers I saw, Instagram reported having over 400 million users who have uploaded over 40 billion photos! Just like all the others, Instagram is also a social network where you can grow a web of friends who all love your work.

If you're a photographer, you should've been on Instagram years ago. But it's not just for photographers or artists. People love pictures. You can use Instagram to show off your products. You can use it to show off your company and different things about your company culture. Did you just have a company picnic? You can throw those pictures up there. It all builds to adding a face to your business and another way people can connect with you.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is primarily a network for professionals. The latest figures show LinkedIn's members over 400 million. Most of the professionals on LinkedIn use it to upload their credentials and work history. It's very much like an online resume.

This adds to your business in that you can show your stuff as an expert in your field. LinkedIn, like Twitter, Facebook, and others, allow you to post updates and link to blog posts, articles, etc. You never know who may be scanning your profile and see what content you have to share. There are tons of stories where people have created joint ventures and even created new companies based off meeting via LinkedIn.

LinkedIn, like Facebook, also lets you set up a page for your business. It's just another way to show off your business and connect with like minded people.

Now that you've got a better handle on social networking, let's break it down to the nitty-gritty with microblogging.

#16 *Bite Size Information* Microblogging

Microblogging is the act of updating statuses, sending out links, and other relevant but short tidbits on a number of different platforms. Facebook and Twitter are by far the most popular. Just like any other social media site, microblogs let you interact with others, grow your following, and allow you to follow others.

The advantage of microblogging is that it's a very easy way to deliver short bits of potent information to your followers. Instead of pumping out a longer, high quality blog post, a microblog post can be just a quick snapshot of what's going on in your business in that given moment. This allows you, and your followers, to stay plugged in to what's happening.

Another great advantage of microblogging is that because it's only limited bits of information with each post, everything is more concise. It's kind of like texting versus a long phone call. Each has their place but sometimes you just want the real juice and you want it fast.

Like I mentioned, Twitter is the main microblogging platform. But there are a couple others coming up in the world. Tumblr is worth mentioning. There are not as many players in this network and that could work out to your advantage. You could end up being a large fish in a small pond.

If you haven't yet, be sure to establish your account on Twitter for sure (you should have done this back in step #5! 😊). Then be sure to check out Tumblr. Some people swear by them. You decide if they're right for your business.

- [Twitter](#)
- [Tumblr](#)

So once you're all set up on Twitter (and maybe Tumblr) now it's time to start bookmarking.

#17
It's Sharing Time
Social Bookmarking

I'm sure you've been to a website that you loved so much you bookmarked it in your web browser to come back to it later. This is really the simple concept that drives most social bookmarking sites. Social bookmarking sites like Digg, StumbleUpon, Delicious, Reddit, and others all make it easy to organize sites that you come across that you like.

As you start to grow your network, others will see which sites you are liking and possibly visit them too. There are some tremendous opportunities for visibility here for your business. It's really a super fair system. The content that gets the most votes will get placed on the first page of these sites exposing it to millions of visitors. So the moral of the story, as with everything you should do on the web, is to provide value, value, value. Again, the cream rises to the top!

Coupling social bookmarking with your content strategy is a brilliant way to get a lot of traffic back to your website. Another key advantage to social bookmarking is of course the SEO benefits to it. The more links pointing back to your content, the better your website is going to be ranked. Like I said earlier, social media in general is democratizing the way all business is done. In the end, the business (big or small) that produces the most value wins.

Here's a list of the four major players in social bookmarking as of today. There are always more coming out but having a presence on these four should give you a very good head start.

- [Digg](#)
- [StumbleUpon](#)
- [Delicious](#)
- [Reddit](#)

Hopefully you're already bookmarking a bunch of content and seeing that people are already bookmarking yours. But if you're not sure what people are saying about your business, you'll learn that next.

#18 ***What Are People Saying About You?*** **Review and Opinion Sites**

Do you know what's being said about your business? Do you know what the biggest concerns and compliments are about your products and services, and what people are sharing about you online? Did you know you can know that stuff? It's true!

I've been beating to death the point that people are talking online with each other and that includes talking about your business. It's almost like the Internet is the biggest gossip machine that's ever been invented, and you can actually leverage it.

It's referred to as "the rise of the empowered consumer". These days, more than ever, people are making better educated shopping decisions. When it comes to making a purchase (especially a large one) people are going online to see what's being said.

A perfect example of this is Amazon.com. This website started out selling books online and quickly became much more than that. What was unique about it was the ability for users to sign up and then rate the products and give them each a review. That's become almost a standard for any large retailer online. People are basing their purchasing decisions off of what others are saying. Word of mouse!

Another example of the empowered consumer is with car dealerships. A potential buyer can research all he or she needs to about the car; gas mileage, features, and so forth, including the base price for the particular make and model they like. Then, they go to the dealership armed with all the information they need about pricing, loan offers, and so forth. The dealer has lost the power and the showroom has become just, a showroom. The dealer shows the car and guides the paperwork through, that's it. Talk about the power of the Internet!

Now, how do you find out what's being said about you and then how do you handle it? First, let's talk about the tools you can use to track what's being said.

Before anything else, I recommend setting up a [Google alerts](#) notice. You can determine what words to track and how often you get notified. When something is mentioned online including the keywords you've plugged in, you'll be given the link

to where it was listed. It's that simple. To make it even more specific, enter your keywords using the "quotes".

Some other key sites to monitor what's being said about your business include, [Yelp](#), [Epinions](#), and [Rate it all](#). There are even more that are industry specific. For example, doctors and contractors will want to make sure they're listening in on [Angie's List](#). Doctors will also want to hang out with their lawyer buddies on [Avvo](#). If you're a real estate agent, you might want to check out [Incredible Agents](#).

If you're in a particular industry where you're not sure if there's a review site, simply search for "(your industry) review site". Look at the results and then check it out.

How to handle feedback

Every review/opinion site has a different set of rules but generally you can represent your business in a fair way and interact with your reviewers. First of all, just to be reviewed by someone, good or bad, is a good thing. It means you're on the social media map! Second, keep in mind that the majority of people are lurkers. They're reading but they're not necessarily saying anything. So even if only one or two people have said something, potentially hundreds or more have actually looked at it.

Anytime someone gives you a review you should engage. If it's a positive review, thank the person for listing it. Show your tribe you love them. If someone lists a negative review, first stop and breathe. Don't take it personally. You know already you're not going to please everyone.

What you can do is send a very courteous reply thanking them for taking the time to review you. Then you can evaluate what the issue was and see if there's a way you can remedy it. For some people, this is all you need to do. For others, they're still going to be unhappy no matter what.

Bottom line, keep all of your interaction extremely positive and never confrontational. Like I said, there may be a lot of lurkers watching what will happen next. Besides, people are smart. They know a bad egg when they see one.

Enough for what other people are saying about your business, let's move on to what you want to say about your business and what you want reporters to be saying.

#19 ***Announce to the World*** **Online Public Relations**

The Internet may be killing off the newspaper but it's providing a new place for journalists to discover great stories. Such stories include the latest announcements from your business for example.

Online PR is actually really simple. Don't tell your local PR firm I said that though! Just create a newsworthy piece of content such as a new product and put it into a news-type template. To find the kind of template I'm talking about, just search "free press release template". In fact, if you use Microsoft Word, it already has it.

Then you take that press release and shoot it out to the world starting with your own blog. A digital press release helps your online marketing efforts in a lot of ways. For

starters, it's carries great SEO benefits. As your keyword rich press release shoots out through cyberspace, it will get picked up by people looking for those same keywords.

Then, because it's a press release, the press themselves are going to shoot it out to their people. This is where "news" starts to kick in. As your press release gets more visibility, you'll get more traffic to your website which is the whole purpose of the exercise.

What's worthy of a press release?

A press release doesn't have to be just for a giant announcement like Apple's latest electronic wonder. It can include simple things such as a new product line in your business. Maybe you brought on a new employee. Maybe your business is throwing an event and you want all the local media to show up. Maybe your business just partnered with another high-profile business and you want to share your growth.

There are a lot of ways you can utilize the press release to your advantage. Be sure to include your SEO friendly keywords and phrases multiple times throughout. If you're a local business, be sure to let local papers and chambers of commerce know.

A few key websites to load up your press release include: [PR Web](#), [PR.com](#), [Press Release Point](#), and [PR Newswire](#). There's a lot but the ones listed should get you pointed in the right direction. Most of these have a free and a paid service. For the paid services, it usually means you get more exposure and longer listings.

Now that you are developing a good amount of online content and getting some traffic with press releases, you're going to take it to another level, advertising.

#20 *Take Your Ad Money Online* Internet Advertising

Leave the Yellow pages where they belong - in the 20th century. We're now over a decade into the 21st century and some businesses have still not grasped the importance of being online. Hopefully by now you've seen the power of creating great content and getting it out to as many channels as possible online. Also, besides your time investment, mostly everything I've already mentioned in this guide is free. That's powerful.

I can't hype up blogging and social media enough because it's very, very good for your business. But I also know every good business allocates a certain amount every month to advertising dollars. So, why waste your dollars offline when you can make it so much more effective online?

Social media advertising

Remember how I said you can advertise directly to a 43-year-old woman living in North Carolina who loves gardening? Well this is how you do it. Facebook in particular has the ability to help you target exactly your ideal client/customer. Learn more about [advertising on Facebook here](#).

It's important to note that each business is going to have different ad needs according to how aggressively they want to market. An accident attorney in Los Angeles is probably a lot more busy than a beekeeper in Billings, Montana.

This will also determine which social network to advertise in. It goes back to analyzing which networks are right for your business and then seeing about what programs they have for advertising. If you're a recruiter for example, I would definitely be spending some time and money on LinkedIn.

Google AdWords

You may have heard about Pay-per-click? This is a term used to describe the paid listings that come up in the search engines when someone searches for something. Usually it's the shaded boxes at the top of the results and along the right hand side. Different businesses have different results based on their industry.

[Google AdWords](#) and the other search engine paid placements works on a daily value that you assign to your campaign. You bid on certain words and then the search engine will run your ad when someone searches for those words. When your ad is clicked, it takes them to your website or wherever you want to send them.

AdWords isn't as powerful as Facebook ads because it doesn't have all of the personalized information about the person viewing the page. It's still a fast and effective way to market however. Be sure to track everything. You can spend quite a bit of money with no immediate results if you're not careful. Learn more about it all here: Google.com/onlinebusiness

Groupon

Groupon is the first of many sites that offer discounts or coupons to local businesses in your area. Groupon is growing at an exponential rate. In fact, in 2010, Google offered to buy them for a reported \$6 billion dollars. They said no. What this means to you is that if the “all knowing” Google was willing to fork out that kind of money, Groupon must be on to something. And that means you’ve got to learn about it.

Groupon is a great place to be especially if your business lends itself to frequent coupons to get people in the door. A frozen yogurt shop is ideal. Even if you’re a contractor or dentist or some other business where you don’t traditionally offer coupons per se, you can still offer a free consult or whatever makes sense to you.

Now that you’ve learned a bit more about online advertising, you’re ready to learn about tracking how all your hard work is paying off.

#21 *Is It All Worth It?* Measuring Online Marketing ROI

Traditionally, marketing is challenged to show trackable return on investment (ROI). This is not the case with online marketing and it's a big, big advantage! Finally, you can see exactly what you get in return for your efforts. You can see what's being clicked, what ads are working, what emails are being opened, and so forth. You can see what's working and what's not, often even in real time.

Tracking your online activities is actually a very important part of your overall online marketing efforts. I even debated putting this section near the front. Why spend so much time creating content and marketing if you're not seeing what's working or not?

Measuring your online activities boils down to tracking two main areas: one, your website and two, everything else online.

Tracking your website

There are a lot of tools out there to track what's going on with your website traffic. By far the most popular option is [Google Analytics](#). It's robust enough to handle any size business and it's totally free! You can see how much traffic you have, where your visitors are located, what websites they're coming from, and more. This is kind of like the "how did you hear about us?" question except even more detailed.

This is powerful information for you and your business. It's really easy to do. Just go to [Google Analytics](#) and it will walk you through the process. You're going to get some code that you can stick on your website and viola! You'll be a marketing analyst in no time!

Tip

Even though I'm really talking up measuring your online efforts, don't obsess over them. People can spend hours and hours analyzing data. However, what's more important is to build real relationships with real people. The best way to do that is through what you've already learned with content creation and social

One more tool that's handy is Websitegrader.com. It gives you a grade based on a number of variables. Another free tool, it gives you a lot of insight as to how you might be able to improve your website.

Compete.com is another tool similar to websitegrader.com but it also lets you compare other sites against each other. There's a lot of different reasons how you could use this data. Very interesting stuff!

Here's one more. Google trends is another great tool to check out your site and also to see what's happening in your industry. If you want, you can even compare your site to other businesses and see how you stack up.

Tracking everything else online

Now that you're tracking everything on your own website, you're going to track everything else on the Internet. To start, you've already set up Google alerts. This is a very good head start to see who is saying what about your business.

Another thing you can do is to search for your business name in quotes and see what comes up. First look to just under the search bar and see how many results come up. The more the merrier. Next, look at who else is talking about you. You can also do this for your competition - which we now know are really just future partners right?



With social media, it's a little easier to track what's happening. Simply look to the number of friends/fans/followers you have and see how active they are in promoting your business. Be sure to reach out and thank them. The number of fans doesn't necessarily equate to how well you're doing but it helps. While quality will always be

more important than quantity, the more eyeballs that could potentially see your stuff doesn't hurt. I know that sounds somewhat contradictory but it is what it is.

For some further analysis, be sure to check out [Twitter grader](#) and [Facebook grader](#). Happy analyzing!

Conclusion

Whew! Is that a lot? Are you ready to take your business online? Have you already started? I hope by this point, I've at least convinced you of the importance to moving your business online. Also, I hope that your brain is swirling with ideas on what you can do. Now you have the tools. All that's needed is to follow it up with focused action.

Be sure to form a daily routine. With only 30 minutes a day you can create a powerhouse presence online. Keep it up for a good period of time. Make it a habit and don't stop. Track what's working and what's not. Stay on top of trends. Be a leader.

Most of all, enjoy the fruits of your labor as your business starts to grow because of the leveraged effort you're putting into it. You'll get to the point where a new client or customer is calling you with their credit card in hand ready to pay you for your products or services. I know. It's happened to me and it's happened to my clients. Now it's your turn!

Thank you

Thank you for reading this guide. I sincerely hoped it has helped you get moving online and harness the power of the mighty Internet for your business.

If you feel so inclined, please share this report with everyone you think might also be interested.

I'll see you online!

About Nick



Nick Young is a hyperactive online marketing activist and a principal at SocialVoyager.com - a results-based Online Marketing Firm that specializes in SEO, Local SEO, Social Media Marketing, Content Marketing, Reputation Management, Website Design, and Website Support & Security.

Nick's ability to grow businesses stems from his passion and knowledge that the internet is THE place to help grow a business. In his words, "Nowadays, hands-down no matter what, your business *must* be online. If you're not online, you're just leaving money on the table."

Nick Young
Social Voyager

Glossary

Above the Fold - all of the content that's displayed above the line where the computer monitor starts. The information on a webpage that you see before having to scroll down.

Article directory - websites that contain articles written by individuals in various industries. These articles are usually available for reprint if the authors information remains intact.

Blog - shortened from "web log". An interactive website where the publisher updates information on an ongoing basis.

Domain name - the online address of a website.

Email marketing - the process of collecting emails and sending out relevant information to the people on the list.

Hosting - a service that allows your website files to be stored and shared on the Internet.

HTML - hyper text markup language. The language used on web pages.

Keywords - target words or phrases that people search for online.

Metadata - information like website title, description, and keywords on your website for search engine listing.

PPC - pay per click advertising. The most popular is Google AdSense.

RSS - really simple syndication. Many websites offer this to help readers stay connected to their content by using a reader and not having to go to their website.

Search engine - a robust application for searching websites like Google, Yahoo!, or Bing.

SEO - search engine optimization. The process of increasing key elements of your website to make it rank higher in the organic (non-paid) search results.

SERP - search engine results page. The list of websites that are returned after entering in key words.

Sitemap - a list of pages available on your website specifically geared for search engines to log

SMM - social media marketing. Advertising in social networks like Facebook or LinkedIn and online communities like blogs or wikis.

Tags - keywords assigned to posts, pages, or other content on websites and social media networks

Traffic - all of the visitors to your website. Very important to monitor and grow.

UGC - user generated content. YouTube is an example of a site that is all UGC.

URL - uniform resource locator. It's your website address or the "http://www.yourbusiness.com" thing.

Vlog - a blog that uses primarily video for the post content.

Web 2.0 - simply, websites and applications that allow interaction between two or more people

Widget - an application designed for a certain function on your website.

