
3. Start Now Steps

When:

Phase: Business Planning, Activity 3.



Who:

Entrepreneur, Mentor

What:

Here are steps for starting a home-based online business quickly.

Why:

With today's technology starting an online business is not very difficult at all. Once online, you have instant, potential customers to buy your products or services and that is exactly what you need.

How:

Here are the basic steps:

1. Define your products or services or both.
Remember that these products or services should provide something to the customer that they need. They should either eliminate a "pain" or provide very desirable items or services.
2. Set up a website.
There are many free/inexpensive website builders such as Wix, Shopify, WordPress, Squarespace, etc. If you're comfortable around a computer, then setting one up should be no problem for you. If not, there are lots of students and consultants that will do this for you at a fair price.

Many of my clients have chosen to sell on sites such as eBay, Etsy, Amazon, etc. These are among the easiest sites to set up rapidly and to personalize. These sites charge to list items and a small percentage of a sale.
3. Setup a way to get paid!

Go on your computer and “Merchant Services” for a current list of payment processors. We like PayPal and Stripe, they are simple to set up, with fair fees.

Be sure that your merchant services vendor takes most, if not all, credit cards. Of note, Etsy, Amazon and several vendors like these have the payment process built into the website.

Essentially you simply connect it to your business/personal bank account.



4. Advertise your product or services.

Yes, you have a custom website or an Etsy /Amazon/eBay site but so do hundreds of other companies offering the same or very similar services. Now what?

5. Setup your “key words” and learn about “Search Engine Optimization (SEO).”

When setting up a website with your products and services listed, Keywords are ideas and topics that define what your content is about. In terms of SEO, they're the words and phrases that searchers enter into search engines, also called "search queries."

If you reduce everything on your page, all the images, video, copy, etc., down to simple words and phrases, those are your primary keywords.

As a website owner and  content creator, you want the keywords on your page to be relevant to what  people are searching for so they have a better chance of finding your content among the results.

6. Build and have your products or services available to ship.

Designate areas to house your products so they can be inventoried and made ready for shipping. Use shipping services that make it easy to package, buy postage, create labels and deliver or get picked up to be shipped.

USPS is awesome in that they provide free shipping materials and they pickup, plus there are many drop-off locations. The same is true of UPS. FedEx, DHL offer great services and free shipping materials but tend to be more expensive than USPS and UPS in our experience.

Service offerings will probably be in the form of digital downloads or the like.

7. Keep an accurate inventory of your items.

Inventory control can be as simple as a spreadsheet or as exotic as a commercial software offering. You should be able to make that determination based on the number of products you are selling.

If you build a simple website or use Etsy, Amazon, eBay, Shopify, etc., inventory can be managed through their capabilities. You need to add products to those sites as you receive/build inventory. The sites will subtract inventory on a sale. What you have physically on hand should match your site's on hand numbers.

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