

SMALL BUSINESS GUIDE

HOW TO USE THE INTERNET TO ACQUIRE AND KEEP CUSTOMERS

**WHAT EVERY SMALL BUSINESS OWNER
SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THEIR WEBSITE**



WWW



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How to Use the Internet to Acquire and Keep Customers

“What Every Small Business Owner Should Know About Their Website”

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<http://www.smarterwebsolutions.com/likes/howtouseinternet.pdf>

Disclaimer

This report has been written to provide information to help you build an on-line marketing strategy for small business using websites and email mailing lists. Every effort has been made to make this report as complete and accurate as possible. However, there may be mistakes in typography or content. Also, this report contains information on Internet Marketing only up to the publishing date. Therefore, this report should be used as a guide – not as the ultimate source of Internet Marketing information.

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Message From The Author

Hello, I'm Mike Darling.

I have been an on-line entrepreneur – building and running on-line businesses, since 1998. I have worked as a consultant and project manager for environmental cleanup companies since 1988.

Now, I run a number of on-line enterprises from my home in Bend, Oregon. I also enjoy helping small business owners use the internet to acquire and keep customers using on-line direct response strategies.



I started an internet newsletter business in 1998, and cut my teeth on making money from the internet using affiliate marketing. I still remember my first \$100 dollar day – all from just sending out an email to my list.

Working as a professional registered geologist, consultant, project manager, and owning my own business, has helped me really understand the vision, passion, and unique challenges of the small business owner.

Today, I market information – an infopreneur – and at [Smarter Web Solutions, LLC](http://www.smarterwebsolutions.com), I work specifically with small business owners to help them actually succeed on-line and make money on the internet with their business and their website.

If you want to discover how you can use the internet to reduce your advertising budget and build your small business more efficiently, give me a call at 541-480-3113 to schedule a free online marketing audit.

To Your Online Marketing Success.

Mike Darling
Your On-Line Marketing Coach

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Introduction

Every small business wants more business without having to spend a lot more in advertising. Whether you are a service provider such as a carpet cleaner, or provide professional health care services such as a dentist or orthodontist, or you sell physical goods from a store, or you serve food from a restaurant, you are a small business in search of reducing your overhead and expanding your profit.

And somehow somewhere someone told you about the magical land of the internet.

The Internet – where everything is free and easy. Just throw up a website and watch the customers and profits roll in.

Don't you wish it was that easy?

We all do.

This report will tell you the truth about advertising your small business on the internet. And unlike what you may have heard from web designers and salespeople, I won't be pulling any punches.

You CAN use the internet to acquire and keep customers. And become more profitable.

How?

By dispelling a few myths and remembering a couple of marketing principles that you learned when you first started your business.

Let's get started.

Myth Number 1: “If You Build It, They Will Come”

As a small business owner, you are used to making decisions. You make decisions on everything from your logo to the brands you carry to dealing with employees and hiring an accountant to leasing agreements.

You probably already have a website. Most small businesses do.

Sidebar: If you don't have a website, before you take the plunge and shell out the bucks, take our free short e-course on the “7 Secrets of On-Line Marketing”. The e-course is free. And it might just save you a ton of money. Sign up at www.smarterwebsolutions.com/7secrets.

You knew you needed a website. Why? Because regardless of what you were told or what you told yourself, deep down inside you just knew that if you had a website, people – customers with cash – would find you and spend their money with you.

So, how's that going?

Let me ask a tough question:

When is the last time someone walked into your place of business directly as a result of your website?

A common myth is that if you build a website, somehow magically new customers are going to find your website on the internet, fall in love with you, and show up at your business desperately needing your service.

You were told - *“If you build it, they will come.”*

That is the myth.

The reality is that you have spent hard earned money building a website for your business, and **no one is coming.**

Ok, yeah, maybe once in a blue moon you get a phone call from someone who found you on the internet, but your balance sheet really hasn't changed much.

Your potential customers can't find your website. It is probably on the 45th page of Google search results. Your website has joined the Google witness protection program.

Here is the First Truth.

“Provide What People Are Already Looking For On The Internet, And They Will Come.”

Do this (provide content) and they will come in droves. They will beat a path to your business because you have also discovered a Second Truth about the internet.

“The Internet is Simply People With Problems Looking For Information on How to Solve Their Problem.”

This next part is real important, so pay attention.

No one on the internet is looking for you. No one on the internet cares about you. Or your credentials. Or your awards. Or pictures of your store.

Sorry to be so brutal. But it is important to understand so you can understand why few websites succeed and most websites fail.

Your potential customers have a problem. They are on the internet looking for really specific information on how to fix that particular problem, to make the pain go away.

Here is where your website and your business come in.

To get traffic to your website, your website has to have the content, the “stuff”, the solutions to their problems that people are looking for.

So how do you get traffic to your website?

Simple. Give potential customers on the internet what they are looking for. Give them real specific information and answers to their problems in your website. Take away their pain, and you will be rewarded with traffic. Google will find you. People on the internet will find you. You will see people coming to your website.

Sidebar: Don't sell on your website. Presell. Provide content, the content that your customer is looking for on the internet. Get the best book on writing about delivering content and preselling on the internet – “Make Your Content PREsell!” by Ken Evoy. It used to cost over \$20 USD, but now it is a free download. Go [here to get it:](http://www.smarterwebsolutions.com/likes/mycps)

The bottom line is that your website is not about you.

Your website is about your customer's problems. And how you can solve their problems. Do this, and you will be rewarded.

This is how you **acquire customers** using the internet. Give them what they want!

The next chapter will expose a second myth. And then we will rediscover a couple of marketing principles critical to your on-line marketing success.

Myth Number 2: “A Website Is a Pretty Brochure”

The death march to the sea. Thousands of furry lemmings, all small business owners, following each other following the pied piper of the internet – The Brochure Website.

It is easy. It is quick. A Brochure Website can be very cheap. Or really expensive. And it can be very very pretty.

Do you remember our Second Truth? That people don't really care about you and they are not looking for you on the internet? But instead your potential customers care about themselves and their problem and they are looking for the solution to their problem?

Let us look a little closer at this useless waste of digital media called The Brochure Website. What do we have? We have a Home Page, an About Us Page, maybe a Services Page, a Contact Us Page, and even maybe a Prices Page. Throw in a Privacy Statement and Terms and Conditions Page if we are lucky, and the result?

Four to eight pages of fluff which is all about you and nothing or very little about your customer and their problems. There is no information on the website which your potential customer really wants to know. So tell me, why should your customer buy from you when you don't even know his or her problem?

Now for another tough question about your website:

What do you want people to do when they visit your website?

Write down the answer in the margin of this report. A short two or three words will do.

Now look at your website. Read the text on your website. Does the answer you wrote down in the margin of this report, match what your website says?

Your Most Wanted Response (MWR) is what you want people to do when they visit your website.

If you think that your MWR was “*Call me*”, then look closely at your website. What does your website say? Does it say “Call me” on every page? Is it strong and crystal clear on every page of your website that the website visitor should call you? Or is there a single Contact Us Page with a weak and wimpy headline “Feel free to contact us” and a complicated form with 30 required fields to fill out? Is your phone number even present on the website?

Do you even have a Most Wanted Response on your website? Is it clear what you want people to do? Read the text on your website. Don’t look at the pretty graphics. Read the text. What do you want your website visitor to do next? Is it clear? Have you specifically told the website visitor exactly what you want he or she to do next?

Probably not.

The Brochure Website is kind of like fluffy cotton candy – pretty and yummy, but nothing really to it. It even might give you a tummy ache if you eat too much.

Using the principles from the Direct Response strategies, a website’s Most Wanted Response can be reduced to one of three actions:

- Buy Now
- Subscribe Now
- Contact Us Now

A Most Wanted Response compels the reader of your website to **Actually Do Something!** Your copy of the website is written to engage the reader, and the copy becomes quite compelling so that he/she wants to take action.

A website can actually have different MWR's with a single MWR on different pages, but that is pretty advanced stuff.

If you don't have an e-commerce site and you are not selling something directly from the website, then your Most Wanted Response cannot be "Buy Now". That leaves you with one of two MWRs: "Subscribe Now" and "Contact Us Now".

For a quick explanation of how using either of these two MWRs can literally explode your small business, and create a secure and consistent business, read the next and last chapter.

We will discuss a couple of principles and show how using these principles along with a clear MWR can change your website from Cotton Candy to Meat and Potatoes – and no tummy aches!

Success Principal Number 1: “Take Action Now”

As I pointed out in the beginning of this report, as a small business owner you are used to taking action. You have not achieved the success in your industry without the ability to take action and make things happen.

And your website should have the same mindset as you – **Take Action Now**.

Don't let your website visitor wonder about on the pages of your website like a lost Alice in Wonderland. Give your visitor clear direction. Tell the website visitor what to do next on every web page.

Go ahead and take another look at your website. Go to the home page. Now read it. Read it aloud. At the end of all the text, what did your website tell the visitor to do next? “Click here for more information?” Or was it “To discover how our widgets can save you money click here”? Or how about “Sign up to our eZine and get a free dinner”?

If your website is like 99.9% of the websites on the internet, there is no Call to Action. Your text on the website probably just ended, and you didn't even ask for anything.

You have spent big bucks getting your website up and running, and you have big dreams of getting results. Why aren't you asking your website visitor to take action?

Think of it this way. If a customer came to your restaurant, and no one met him at the door, or asked him how many seats he needs, your customer would finally leave without ordering. You have to ask the customer what they want, and then try to fulfill their request.

On-line marketing is no different. Ask, and keep asking your website visitor what they want. Get them to take action. Asking on a website can be a bit more direct than talking

to a person face to face. You have to penetrate the fog that occupies our brains as we surf the internet.

Can you remember all the websites you visited last night? Of course not. It is all a vast blur, jumping from website to website, spending on the average 3 seconds per website.

How can you get someone's attention if you have 3 seconds?

You have to be direct. Instead of "Feel free to contact us if you want to know more about our widgets", be stronger and more direct such as "Discover how our widgets can save you over \$100 in gasoline this month alone. Contact us now."

Be strong. Be benefit oriented. And have your website visitor **Take Action Now**.

What action do you want your website visitor to take? Unless you have an e-commerce site, you want your website visitor to either Contact Us Now or Subscribe Now.

Contact Us Now is pretty simple. Call us. Fill out this form. Email us. I recommend that you have your phone number plastered all over your website and really urge the website visitor to Call You on the phone. As a backup, do have a webform or email address as a backup especially for the traffic that comes to your website when your office is closed – late at night and weekends.

The **Most Wanted Response** Subscribe Now is so important to your business that it is in itself its own principal. We will show how important it is in the next chapter.

Success Principal Number 2: “Build a List”

If you apply this principal, your business will never lack for customers or cash. If you ignore this principal, you will fight over the same local customers as your competition.

Build a list, build a list, build a list.

There is money in the list.

What kind of list am I talking about? I am talking about building a list of customers or prospects where you have at a minimum their first name and email address. Build this list using an autoresponder service such as Aweber to manage that list.

Sidebar: An autoresponder service such as Aweber is a requirement to professionally managing your list. Don't even think about trying to do this with Microsoft Outlook. For about the price of a large pizza, you can manage up to 10,000 names. Take your business to the next level and build a list of customers.
www.smarterwebsolutions.com/likes/aweber.

To build your list, imbed your subscription box on every web page. To get people to subscribe, do not just say “Sign up for our eZine.” Forget it. Maybe that worked 10 years ago, but today, nobody wants to sign up for an eZine.

BUT! People will sign up and subscribe if they get something. Give your website visitor something for free, and your customer will give up their contact information for free stuff and if they are treated special. What can you give away for free? This depends upon your business.

You have to be a little creative and experiment here.

But can you give away something like information? If you are a restaurant can you give away “buy one get one free” lunch or dinner only valid on a slow day? If you are a clothing boutique store, can you give away a free scarf if they subscribe and bring in a coupon printed on their computer printer?

How special can you treat your customers on your list? Coupons or special events only open to your list. People like to be treated special.

Do everything you can to build your list.

Train your store’s salespeople and clerks to gather contact information from everyone who walks into the store, and enter the contact info directly into the computer. How many people walk into your store or place of business everyday? Each week? Each month? You could build a huge list just on the walk-in traffic, couldn’t you?

Build a list.

Use your list to develop a relationship between you and your customers and prospects. Send regular emails, let them know about store specials, or a new line of clothes you just got in, or share some information that may help keep them healthy. Give and give to the people on your list as they will reward you with their business.

Build a list.

And I have saved the best for last. With an autoresponder service such as Aweber, you can preload the autoresponder with messages, and after someone subscribes, the autoresponder will automatically send them emails on a regular basis.

Hands off – all on autopilot.

For example, you can preload the autoresponder with a 12 messages, sent once per month. And every message contains a store coupon. After they sign up, they automatically receive a message. Every month for a year. Automattically. You only did the work up front. That is how you keep customers.

Happy customers. Happy you.

Build a list. The money is in the list.

The key to surviving and thriving, even during hard economic times, is to build your list.

Acquire customers by providing unique content with your website. **Keep customers** by building a relationship through email marketing.

Build a list.

Now Build Your On-Line Business

You now have more knowledge about on-line marketing than most small business owners, including your competition!

You understand that just building a website isn't enough – that you need to build a website with valuable content and information. You realize the dangers of pretty brochure websites, and the trap that they pose for the small business owner.

And you have learned an important principle of on-line marketing - Take Action Now.

And finally, you are going to build your list. You are going to be doing something different from your competitors – you are going to build strong relationships with your customers and increase your cash flow by building a list.

And now you know how to use the internet to acquire and keep customers.

Recommended Resources

Here is a short list of some of the resources mentioned in this report to help you build your on-line marketing efforts.

Autoresponder

There are several autoresponder services, but the most reliable and the one I use is Aweber. Don't screw around, get Aweber and change your business. Build a list!

<http://www.smarterwebsolutions.com/likes/aweber>

Free e-Course

If you don't have a website yet, and before you spend money on getting a website build, get the e-course "7 Secrets of On-Line Marketing". The e-course is free. And it might just save you a ton of money. Sign up at:

<http://www.smarterwebsolutions.com/7secrets>

Make Your Content PREsell!

It seems that there are hundreds of books about writing *to sell* online. But there is only *one* book about writing *to communicate*... about writing to "PREsell." And now it is free! Learn to "PREsell" on your website with your content. The book was written a few years ago by Ken Evoy, and it doesn't talk about blogs or social bookmarking sites like Facebook. But this free ebook does show you how to build a website that gets traffic and makes money. You can get it here by clicking on this link:

<http://www.smarterwebsolutions.com/likes/mycps>

