

**Online Business:**

**How To Earn Money Online**

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**How to Build Your First Website**

In order to do any kind of business online, you will want to have a website. However, building your first website can feel a bit overwhelming. After all, there are so many choices. Here’s how to build your first website.

**1 Determine your website’s purpose.** What are you going to do on the website? How are you going to make money? This is important because some website languages, templates and platforms are more effective for certain business models. For example, if you’re building a theme-based website, you may want to use a website building service like SiteBuildIt.

**2 Choose your platform.** Once you know what you want to accomplish with your website, it’s time to choose your website platform. There are a number of options here. You can use website design software like DreamWeaver or FrontPage.

There are online courses and books to show you how to use both of these programs. It might take you some time to build your website; however, you’ll be able to create it one hundred percent on your own.

Another option is to use your website host's predesigned templates. These templates are often customizable and are a pretty quick and easy way to get a website up. You can also learn a website design format like Joomla which is a content management system written in PHP, a design language.

You can also use site building services that offer wizards and templates to help you customize a website for your business.

Finally, you can use a blogging platform like WordPress to build your website. And if all of this just seems like too much, you can design your website with a pencil and paper and then hire someone to create it.

**3 Navigation and format.** Before you create your website or hire someone to do it for you, you’ll want to draft your website on paper. Decide what pages you want your website to have.

How are people going to find what they need? How will they navigate your website? What categories or buttons will you have? How will you share your information and how will you promote your products or services? Figuring all of this out before you begin creating your website will help ensure it is a success.

Creating your first website is a strategic process. However, much of the work will be done on paper as you plan the purpose and layout of your website.

Once you know exactly what you’re creating, you can find the best tools to create your site and make it a reality.

**How to Become an Online Infopreneur**

Information marketing has taken the internet by storm. As more and more people begin utilizing digital information, and reading and learning online, more opportunities open up for information marketers.

If you have specialty information or have a passion for a topic, information marketing may be the perfect business model for you.

**What Is an Online Infopreneur?**

An online infopreneur is someone who makes a living selling information. It can be a very profitable business model. An example is someone who is an expert when it comes to bird training. They have a passion for or a strong interest in training birds.

They might create training manuals, videos and courses on how to train your pet bird. The information could range from beginner to advanced tricks like how to train your parrot to play dead. Sounds crazy, right? I mean, who needs to train their parrot to do that? Believe it or not, there’s a market for it.

An online infopreneur’s first job is to determine what their passions are and if there’s a market for it.

You might begin by making a list of the topics you’re knowledgeable in or passionate about. Then you begin your research. Using keyword research tools and investigating online, you’d look to see if people are searching for that topic.

Continuing with the parrot training topic, perhaps that infopreneur began with a passion for birds. They found during their research that many people were struggling with their exotic birds.

They were biting and screaming and being generally unruly. This infopreneur then saw that there weren’t a lot of other businesses providing information on the topic. In short, there was a good demand for the information but not much supply. This is the perfect opportunity to create an information marketing business.

So your first step is to find your interests and passions. Your second step is to research them for profitable niches. A niche is a specialty topic. It can also be a demographic like teen bird trainers or bird training in the desert south-west. Or it can be a skill level - beginner bird training, for example.

Once you’ve chosen a niche, it’s time to create your website and information products. Your website will be dedicated to helping your audience learn what they need to know or want to know about your topic. You might post free article or video content. You may offer free reports and digital downloads.

Once you have people interested and accessing your free information, you can take them to the next step which is to offer them a product to buy. Often this is an ebook, an online course or a video series.

The information products that are successful generally solve a problem for their audience. For example, “How to stop your parrot from biting.” You may uncover common problems during your research or you may need to do additional research to find the answers.

If you have a passion, interest or specialty knowledge about a topic, consider using that to create an information marketing business. It’s a great way to make an income. Some information marketers have gone on to make millions from their books, courses and videos. To your success!

**How to Build a Portfolio the Right Way**

If you’re a service provider or a freelancer, it pays to have a solid portfolio. Your portfolio will show potential clients that you have the experience and skills to handle their project.

However, one of the challenges to creating a quality portfolio is gaining the experience. Here’s how to build a portfolio the right way.

* **Courses -** There are a number of quality skill-building programs online. These programs often offer homework assignments along with professional feedback. This is an exceptional way to create a portfolio.   
    
  It gives you the opportunity to work with experts in your craft. Additionally, you’re able to use the class as a source of credibility on your marketing materials.
* **Spec work** – Spec work is work that you essentially do for free. The agreement between you and your client is that if they like your work, they will pay you for it. If they don’t like your work, they won’t pay you.   
    
  It’s a good way to get around the fact that you may not have a solid portfolio just yet, because it reduces the risk for your client.

Additionally, once they’re pleased with the work - and they will be because you’re going to knock their socks off - then you can use the work in your portfolio. Don’t forget to also add their testimonial to your sales page. And if they don’t like the work, you can still use it in your portfolio if you’re proud of the results.

* **Volunteer work** – Volunteer work is another opportunity for you to build a portfolio and to do good at the same time. Many non-profits can benefit from the work of freelance service providers.   
    
  They get a service for free and you get quality samples for your portfolio. It’s great when you can reference something and show potential customers where they can find your work online too. It’s instant credibility.

As you build your client base, ask clients if you can use your best work in your portfolio. They’re most often quite proud to be shown off and it’s good exposure for them as well. Display your work in the most professional manner.

If you have print samples, scan them onto your computer and save them as an image. Don’t just link to sales pages and content because those links will change. Actually, save the work you’ve done as an image or a document so your prospects can see your work first hand.

Have confidence in your work, whether you’re just starting out or have a portfolio full of professional samples. Confidence and the courage to take a few risks will help you build a portfolio the right way.

**How to Make Money Online – The Basics**

If you ask how to make money online, you’re generally going to hear one of two things. You’re going to hear people telling you that you can’t make money online. That all the good topics and business models are taken up. However, that’s untrue.

You’re also going to hear people who will promise you that you can make millions online. While that is true for many, it’s not common.

What is true about making money online is that anything is possible, and it’s quite likely that you can make a very comfortable living doing something that you love. So here’s the lowdown on how to make money online.

**What Makes Money Online?**

There are a few basic business models that generally achieve a good deal of success online. They include:

* Information marketing – Information is sold online, generally about a specialty topic.
* Membership marketing – Profit is made by selling memberships and selling advertising space.
* Service provider – Profit is made by providing a service. For example, virtual assistants provide administrative services online.
* Retailer or ecommerce – Profit is made by selling a product online.
* Affiliate marketing – Profit is made by promoting the products or services of others and earning a commission.

There are a few things these five business models have in common. They all operate online - that’s a given because we’re talking about online business. They also all need people to visit their website in order to survive. How do they get people to their website?

**Content**

Content is the unifying theme behind successful websites. People go online to be entertained, to be informed, to connect and communicate. The single unifying thread for all of these interactions is content.

Content can be read, watched, listened to and shared. It can be an article, a blog post, a report, a book, an online course, a video or an audio. Without content a website doesn’t stand a chance.

Information is the reason for the internet. If a website doesn’t provide information, it has no value to online users.

**The Basics**

Okay, so you choose your business model. You choose a business topic or specialty; this is often called a niche. A niche is a specialty topic. For example, you could decide you want to start a membership site. Great - about what? Recipes, because you love to cook and share recipes.

Fantastic! Now it’s time to create the content for your website. You need to give people a reason to visit your website and become a member. The next step is to continue to provide value. What are you going to offer your members to motivate them to stay members?

What information are you going to provide as an information marketer that will motivate people to buy your books? What information can you provide clients to motivate them to hire you as a service provider?

Online, regardless of the model you choose, people want to know one thing: “What is in this for me? How will this benefit me?” Choose your topic and model wisely. Create fantastic content and provide value. That’s the core of any successful online business.

**How to Start Your Own Writing for Pay Business**

If you enjoy writing or have a way with words, you can turn that skill into a full-time business. There are numerous opportunities for aspiring writers online and off.

Businesses need people to write content, to blog, to write sales copy and advertisements. They also need writers to write books, articles and technical manuals. In short, there’s a high demand for writers. Here’s how to start your own writing for pay business.

**Step #1** - Decide what you want to write and if there’s a demand for it. For example, do you want to write articles and blog posts? Would you prefer to write books and eBooks? What about sales copy? Additionally, do you have a preference for the topics you’d write on? You can specialize in an industry as well as a content format.

For example, you could position yourself as a brilliant blogger or a fitness expert. You could be an eBook ghostwriter or a writer that specializes in animals and pet care.

Choose a specialty that you enjoy. If you don’t like writing about a certain topic, chances are you’re going to procrastinate and not give your client your best effort.

**Step #2** - Create your business. This will include choosing a business name and a website address, and creating a website. You’ll also want to consider creating a standard work for hire agreement. This will outline the rights and responsibilities of both parties.

Also consider registering your business as an LLC. It offers a few more protections than a sole proprietorship does. Ask your accountant or lawyer for advice.

Finally, you’ll want to create an invoicing system. Many writers require a fifty percent deposit to begin a project with the remainder due when they deliver the content.

This helps ensure a writer gets paid for their work. Sometimes, not often, you’ll run into a client that isn’t professional. You’ll need to decide in advance how you want to handle this. Sending someone to collections isn’t fun.

**Step #3 -** Market your business. You’re a writer, so one of your best marketing tools is the written word. Article marketing, blogging and a well-written sales or landing page are great ways to begin to drive traffic and clients to your website.

Get out and network too. Online and offline, networking offers a valuable way to connect with potential clients and partners. Join your local small business association or chamber of commerce.

Comment on blogs in your specialty areas. For example, if you’re a pet writer then visit and comment on blogs about pets. Link to your website to drive traffic and customers to your front door.

Also participate on industry forums and chat rooms. Social networking sites like LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook can also be good traffic-generating and awareness-building tools.

If you enjoy writing and would like to be in business for yourself, consider starting your own writing business. You can start small while you work your day job and then quit once business really picks up.

**How to Become a Super Affiliate Marketer**

An affiliate marketer is someone who earns a commission selling or promoting the products and services of other companies. Super affiliates are those who are extremely successful affiliate marketers.

They can earn six figures a year and they do it all from the comfort of their home. It’s a tremendously freeing lifestyle. Interested? Here’s how to become a super affiliate marketer.

**Step #1 Build a website on a niche topic.** Ideally, it’ll be a topic you enjoy because you’ll be writing and talking about your topic often. For example, if you’re a parent and you enjoy discussing better parenting you might choose to create a parenting website.

You can choose a tighter niche if there’s a lot of competition in your industry. For example, organic parenting or parenting special needs children.

**Step #2 Search online to find quality products and services you want to represent.** These products and services will be directly related to your website topic. If your topic is organic parenting, then the products and services you’re an affiliate for will be natural or healthy parenting items and services.

You can find these products and services by searching affiliate networks and directories. You can also look to see if your favorite companies have an affiliate program. Most companies today do recognize the benefit of having affiliates promoting them online.

**Step #3 Add your content.** The next step is to make sure you have an abundance of quality and informative content on your website. Your primary value to any prospect or potential customer is to provide information. It’s how they’ll learn to trust your opinion.

It’s what will bring them back to your website and it’s what will motivate them to click on your affiliate links and ads to make a purchase. Much of your content will also pre-sell the products and services you represent.

For example, you might write an article or a report on 15 ways to be a better parent. When relevant you might link to a product or service that you’re discussing.

For example, if you say that to be a better parent you should occasionally treat yourself to a night out and hire a babysitter, you might make the word babysitter a link to a website that helps parents find trustworthy babysitters. If your reader clicks through and makes a purchase, you earn a commission.

As you can see, content is perhaps the single most important aspect of being a super affiliate. You can provide content in the form of:

* Articles
* Reviews
* Comparison charts
* Videos
* Reports
* Online courses
* Checklists
* eBooks
* Audio messages
* Newsletters

One final word about becoming a super affiliate - always strive to provide the best for your website visitors. The best content, the best quality products and the best information. When they trust you, like you and value your information, they’ll click on your links and make purchases.

**How to Get More Clients Fast**

If you’re a service provider or coach, you may be looking to grow your business quickly. After all, the fuller your schedule, the more you can be sure you’re financially secure. To get more clients fast, there are three sure-fire ways to go about it.

**Referral System**

Referrals are when someone, generally a happy client, tells another person about your business. As a service provider or coach you can have an informal referral program or a formal one.

An informal referral program is pretty easy. You simply ask your current customers if they know of anyone who could benefit from your services. They may send people your direction or give you a few names to contact. Many businesses grow this way.

A formal referral program is a reward-based program. Anyone who refers a new customer to you would receive a reward. The reward could be a discount on your services or it could be a freebie.

For example, if you’re a writer you might offer anyone who refers new clients to you a free ten-page report or $25 off their next order. A formal referral program requires that people sign up for the program. You might send a monthly newsletter to members to remind or motivate them to refer new clients.

Regardless of the system you choose, referrals work quite well to get more clients fast because they’re coming from a trusted source.

If you ask someone where to go to eat and they tell you the name of a restaurant they like, you’re more likely to go there than to an unfamiliar place because it’s been recommended to you. You trust the information.

**Affiliates**

The second way to get more clients fast is to start an affiliate program. Affiliates are people who agree to promote your services in exchange for a commission. It requires a bit more work than a referral program; however, it can be extremely effective.

Affiliates market your business for you and they drive traffic to your website. For every new client, they earn a paycheck. It’s a good system. To help them succeed you may provide them with marketing content, advertisements and other information to use on their website.

**Partnerships**

The third and final way to get more clients fast is to forge a partnership with other complimentary businesses. For example, if you’re a writer you might partner with a website designer. Their clients will need content for their website and your clients may need a website redesign. It’s a win-win situation.

To get more clients fast, take advantage of your current assets. What partnerships can you forge, and what clients can you ask for referrals and recommendations?

**How to Get More Testimonials and Use Them**

Testimonials are an exceptional selling tool. They tell potential buyers that you’re trustworthy. They tell potential buyers that your product or service fulfills its promise.

Testimonials tell potential customers that you have credibility. And they tell potential customers what they want to hear – that you really can solve their problems.

Testimonials are an effective buying trigger because they offer information about your product or service that you just can't offer yourself. It’s like a personal recommendation, and it’s worth the effort to get quality testimonials and to use them.

**How Do You Get More Testimonials?**

It’s quite simple, actually. You ask for them. Most people are afraid to ask for testimonials. They feel it’s pushy or they fear being rejected. The truth is, most customers are happy to give them; they just don’t think about offering.

Think about when you have a good or bad experience with a company. If you have a bad experience, you want to shout it from the rooftops. You write reviews; you tell your friends and associates. Maybe you even write a complaint to the company.

When you have a good experience, you say thank you. Generally, we don’t talk as much about the good news as we do about the bad news. However, if someone asks us, we’ll go on for hours about our positive experiences.

So in order to get more testimonials you have to ask. You’ll of course ask all of your happy customers. However, consider also asking experts in your industry to provide a testimonial. Send them a free product or offer a service, then collect the testimonial.

It’ll have more power because it’s coming from someone people like and respect. Can you imagine what a ringing endorsement it would be if Martha Stewart wrote a testimonial for your home organization business?

**Be Prepared**

Many people just don’t know what to say, so consider being prepared with a pre-written testimonial. If they agree that they stand behind the information, they just need to provide a signature and a link. You can then post the testimonial and consider it valid.

**Position Your Testimonials Well**

There are some key places to position your testimonials. One such location is on your sales page. The testimonials will serve to support a prospect’s buying decision. You can also use them in your newsletter and in email communications.

Consider also creating a separate page on your website with testimonials. Place the strongest and most compelling testimonials prominently where they’re sure to be read. To your success!

**How to Write Your Way to the Bank**

Did you know that writers are in high demand? In fact, there are many writers that easily take home six figures a year. And they get to make that money from their own home, the beach, the coffee shop – anywhere they can take their laptop. The writer’s life is a good one. Here are a few tips and suggestions to write your way to the bank.

**1 Choose a lucrative writing field** - Some writing opportunities pay more than others. For example, copywriting pays more than blogging in general because you’re selling a product or a service. Ghostwriting books pays more than article writing. And business to business writing is in high demand simply because there just aren’t enough writers providing the service.

**2 Hone your skills** - The great thing about writing is that you can always improve your skills. Writing is a craft and like most crafts, there is always room for improvement.

Be a constant student. Sign up for writing workshops, read books from expert writers and learn your trade inside and out. You’ll be better able to answer your client’s questions and to provide the best service money can buy.

**3 Specialize** - In order to become a credible expert it helps to have a specialization. Specialization provides you the opportunity to fine-tune your craft, to offer a better service and to charge more for your time.

You can specialize in a topic or field of interest, or you can specialize in a format. You can also specialize in both, for example “self-help sales copy.”

**4 Be ultra professional** - While there are many writers selling their services, many of them don’t take their business as seriously as they should. They miss deadlines. They don’t hire an editor and they don’t handle feedback or communication well.

As a writer, you’re a service provider and a business owner. Professionalism and customer service matter.

**5 Be more than a writer** - That isn’t to say that you should offer additional services; however, you can really write your way to the bank if you act as a consultant. You’re an expert, right? So people will come to you with questions. They’ll want your advice. Be ready, willing and able to give it. When clients are able to count on you as a partner and consultant, they’re more than willing to pay you the big bucks.

**6 Network** - One of the best ways to build a writing business is to network. Connect with your clients and ask for referrals. Stay in touch with them by sending information they might find useful, or send them simple notes to say hello. Word of mouth is a powerful marketing device and it’s an effective way to build a writing business.

**7 Be confident -** Many writers charge much less than they can. Be confident in your skills and charge what you’re worth, keeping in mind what the market can support.

Writing your way to the bank is possible. Don’t believe the myth that writers don’t make any money. They do. Specialize, hone your skills, network and be confident in what you have to offer. To your success!

**How to Start Your Own Virtual Assistant Business**

Virtual assistants are in demand worldwide. As a virtual assistant you could find clients in your own community or half way around the globe. It’s a great way to make a living and work from home.

You’ll meet interesting people, learn new tasks and responsibilities and perhaps best of all, enjoy the freedom that comes with being your own boss. Here’s how to start your own virtual assistant business.

**1 SWOT** - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. This is a personal assessment. Take a look at what strengths you have that will contribute to a successful virtual assistant business. Communication skills, organization skills, professionalism are some strengths. However, you likely bring a lot more to the table. List your strengths.

Take a look at your weaknesses as well. You’re not looking for reasons to not go into business for yourself. You’re simply making sure you’re aware of all you’ll need to do to run a successful business. If you have a weakness, and we all do, then you’ll want to create a plan to manage it.

For example, if your weakness is writing and you need to have sales and marketing copy for your business website, you can learn to write or you can hire someone to do it for you. Knowing your strengths and weaknesses helps you create the best business for you.

Opportunities and threats are the next part of this assessment. Opportunities can be anything from the fact that you have a friend who designs websites to a growing demand for virtual assistants.

Threats are things that may challenge you, like competing virtual assistants and a sluggish economy. When you’re fully aware of your assets and challenges, you can plan for them.

**2 Create a business plan**. Plan the services you’re going to offer and how you’re going to offer them. For example, will you charge by the hour or by the project? Will you offer a discount for ongoing clients? Research your competition and decide whether you want to specialize.

You can specialize in a certain task, for example transcription. Or you can specialize in an industry like real estate.

Specialization is a way to demonstrate expertise and adds credibility to your business. That being said, there are many clients who want a one-stop solution and would prefer a virtual assistant that can do a number of tasks.

3 Set up your business. You’ll want to create a website to market your virtual business. Most of your clients will be online and they’ll often find you through online searching.

A website is also a way to demonstrate your expertise. You’ll also want a business address, a phone number, email and a way to accept payment. PayPal is an easy way to invoice and track your income and expenses.

Once your business is established, the next step is to spread the word. Consider social networking, advertising, SEO and article marketing to market your business. A blog is also a good way to demonstrate credibility, enhance your brand and drive traffic to your website.

Virtual assistants are in high demand. Whether you’re looking for full-time work or a part-time income, it can be the perfect solution. Create your business and start making money from your skills.