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A boy came home from Sunday school, and at lunch asked his
Dad if Noah had a wife with him on the ark. "Of course, he
had a wife," the father replied. "Have you never heard of
Joan of Ark?"

**** Article I****

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**If at First You Don't Succeed: Five Ways to Fix Slow Business and
Give Yourself a BIG Second Chance**

by Dr. Kevin Nunley

This would normally be a busy time of year for Margaret, but

business is slower than usual. She worries things will get ever slower in the months ahead. Greg came up with a terrific idea for building a second income from the Internet. Months later, his web site and advertising have only brought in a few sales. He is afraid all his time, money, and enthusiasm were wasted.

I hear similar experiences from dozens of people each week. Some are start-ups, others are mature businesses. Most business ideas flop on the first try. The key to success is knowing how to give yourself a BIG second chance. Sometimes you will need to try a third or fourth time before your new product or service brings home the bacon.

Here are five simple ways to give your business new life.

1. Give your business a tighter focus. Many businesses are too broad, trying to interest too many different kinds of prospects. Being too general will leave you lost in a crowd. America has more stores than at any time in history. Retailers are finding their markets split into tiny fragments as shoppers have a bewildering choice of places to spend their money. Meanwhile, the Internet is exploding. Christmas spending in 1998 is 2.3 Billion dollars, twice what it was in 1997. All that money is divided among some 300 million web sites.

How do you compete when there are so many others? Tighten your business focus to include a narrow, very well defined audience. The man who sells John Denver memorabilia from the 1970s has a very specific, almost peculiar business. But he is selling his product like crazy on the Internet. He is filling a niche that deeply interests a particular group of people.

2. Make your prices more competitive. For the past few years consumers have told us they want quality and service with price being much less important. The tightening of the economy has changed that. Now consumers are ranking price as one of the most important reasons they buy from one business and not from another.

Think of ways you can tighten your belt or redefine your product or service to offer it at a lower cost. Maybe you can limit your service to fewer, but still important features. Perhaps your prices are already lower than competitors. You just need to emphasize your lower prices more in your marketing. Lower prices are suddenly an important way to get people to buy.

3. Choose the product or service that sells best for you, then expand it. Go wide and deep. Offer more versions of the same product or service. If the green one is selling well, come out with a red one and a blue one to offer along side your start performer. Look for more related products or services you can offer. I write press releases for people. I have also found those same people want me to write articles for them. That is a related service I can offer along with the popular press release service.

4. Sharpen your marketing materials. With all that competition in the business world, you profit when your marketing and advertising stands out and hits home with consumers. Give all your marketing pieces a headline. Busy prospects need a way to quickly find out "what's in this for me" before they will take the time to read your sales letter, brochure, classified ad, or web site.

Relate the features of your product or service to the benefits the buyer will get. Your "Widget 900" has a clever lever. Tell prospects how that lever will save them time, money, and make their day more enjoyable. It is the benefits that your buyers really care about.

Take a closer look at where you are putting your advertising dollars. It is tempting to place all your cash into big media that reach a lot of people, but are all those people your best prospects?

Marketing is generally more effective when it can be closely targeted to a well defined audience. If your audience is made up of lots of your best customers, you get sales. Consider advertising in trade publications, email newsletters, and neighborhood papers. Postcards are cheap and prospects read them without having to open an envelope.

5. Expand your promotional effort. It takes a LOT of advertising, marketing, and promotion to get into the heads of your busy prospects. People are constantly bombarded with ads and commercials. You need to hit your best prospects over and over again before your message sinks in.

Look for several ways you can CONSISTENTLY market your business. Find affordable methods that reach your best customers and use those methods over and over again. When marketing doesn't work, it is almost always because the business ran out of money and gave up too soon.

Give your business a big second chance. The children's story of the "little engine that could" might as well be a \$1,000 business seminar. The best way to clobber competition and build your business into a cash cow is to give your business a tight focus, make prices more competitive, expand what works, improve marketing materials, and promote big and consistently.

Kevin Nunley provides marketing advice and copy writing for businesses and organizations. Read all his money-saving marketing tips at <http://DrNunley.com/>. Reach him at kevin@drnunley.com or 603-249-9519.

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Innovative Website's Free Advertising Benefits Organizations, Tourists, Businesses.

by JC Smith

The travel industry is still big in the U.S., but with threats of terrorism and a growing sense of anti-American sentiment in some foreign countries, many Americans are opting to travel in our own country. After all, we have a rich heritage, a deep history, and a myriad of family fun activities available right here on our own soil. Cities and states just need a little help promoting their places to visit.

Anyone who has ever booked a trip has seen the big travel sites like Travelocity, CheapTickets, and Orbitz. We know they are all very useful at helping us find and book flights, hotels, and car rentals. That's all fine and good when you're looking for a good deal on travel, but what are you going to do when you get there?

What the Net really needs is something slightly different--

something to fill in the gaps between booking travel and actually taking the trip. There are many sites that help with the arrangements, but precious few that guide us to our destination's best--and often least advertised--attractions.

Tourists should be able to visit a site and browse through their planned destination to find out what unique and affordable to do when they get there. They need a list of national parks, museums, lakes, beaches, and unique historic sites--not just bars and restaurants.

There's a niche market here--one that should really be explored. Tourism boards, Chambers of Commerce, and administrators over historic sites and the like could probably use all the help they can get with getting tourists to their often little-known attractions. If tourists only had the details on tourist attractions like these, we'd have a country full of richer vacation experiences--and wealthier state economies.

Author JC Smith is creator of HotShotTravel.com. For more information about the benefits of getting a free or \$5/month listing on HotShotTravel, visit <http://www.HotShotTravel.com> or call JC Smith at 704-622-5041.

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How do I get my business on the internet? by Ivana Katz

How do I get my business on the internet?

This is one of the most frequently asked questions by small business owners. They are feeling the pressure from their customers and competitors, yet for many business people it is a daunting task, as they don't understand the whole process.

In fact, many people are even asking the question whether they should have a website. Whether you are a consultant, florist, designer, builder, architect or a doctor, consider the many advantages a website provides:

1. Make money Set up an on-line store or get paid for advertising from other companies
2. Save money on advertising Instead of paying for large ads, simply advertise your website
3. Be flexible in your message Change the content as your business changes. No need to re-print expensive brochures.
4. Exposure to new customers You will reach more local clients as well as interstate and global markets
5. Having more professional image Keep up with the times and your competitors
6. Save time. Don't spend hours on the phone, direct customers to your website
7. Keep your business open 24/7 Provide customers information when THEY need it. If you don't, someone else will.

So what does it really take to get your website set up?

Step 1 - Register your domain name OR not.

The big question is whether you need to register a domain name or not. The simple answer is NO, but a better answer is YES it is a good idea.

What is a domain name?

The purpose of a domain name is similar to that of a street address or telephone number. The domain name directs customers to you on the Internet. The domain by itself is not your email or web address. The domain does form the base from which these addresses are derived.

For example:

Company Name: QikPhone

Domain Name: qikphone.com.au

Web Address: www.qikphone.com.au

Email Address: sales@qikphone.com

Do I need to register a domain name to have a website?

NO, you don't need to have your own domain name. Your website can be created and hosted without it. Your website address will look something like this:

www.web4business.com.au/JBCleaning

OR

www.ozemail.com.au/~JBCleaning

The only advantage of not registering a domain name is that you will save yourself A\$70 per year (it costs approx A\$140 for 2 years to register a '.com.au' domain name).

The disadvantages of NOT having your domain name include:

1. If you decide to change your Web hosting company or if that company goes out of business, you will lose your website address. Your website can be transferred to a new company, but your address will change. And that means re-printing stationery and re-doing all your advertising, notifying all your customers etc.
2. Website addresses that contain information other than your company name are long and hard to remember and do not appear as professional. Compare these two and see which one you are more likely to remember:
www.ozemail.com.au/~JBCleaning

OR

www.JBCleaning.com.au

So it is a good idea to register a domain name, even if it is just to protect yourself for the future. Say for example, your business name is JB Cleaning and you decide not to register your domain name for now.

Along comes Joe Bloggs who opens his own cleaning business and registers JBCleaning.com.au domain name. After a year you decide you want to have your own domain name, but since Joe Bloggs already owns it, you won't be able to register it. Not to mention your customers who know your business as JB Cleaning may visit his website, thinking it's your web address and instead hire Joe Bloggs Cleaning.

Step 2 - Plan your website.

Planning your website is a two part process:

(a) Decide on the website design (colour schemes, buttons, special effects etc). This is your website designer's job.

However, you may have a preference for a certain colour or look. To help you choose a design, you may wish to check out other people's websites or work with your web designer's pre-set templates.

(b) The content. There are many items you may wish to include on your website. The most common ones include:

- 1 Product/Service Details
2. Contact Information
3. Pricing
4. Testimonials
5. Frequently Asked Questions
6. Response Form, such as "Join Mailing List"
7. On-line Magazine or Newsletter
8. Resources & Articles
9. Guarantee
10. Survey
11. Events Calendar
12. Search My Website Form
13. Refund Policy
14. Privacy Policy
15. About Us Information
16. Site Map
17. Copyright information
18. Useful Links
19. Media Information

- 20. On-line store
- 21. News
- 22. Directions to Your Bricks & Mortar Premises

Step 3 - Choose a Web Hosting Company.

What is a Web hosting Company?

A Web host is a company that provides server space for your website. You can think of a web host as a commercial building. The web host provides space for your website just as a commercial building provides space for your shop or office. You can build your own building and you can host your own website, but because of the cost and expertise required it is easier to rent the space.

Which Company Should I Choose?

Web hosting companies are not created equal so you need to take a number of things into account when selecting one. A proven track record, experience and reliability form the foundation of any successful business partnership.

Some of the issues you should consider when choosing a web hosting company include:

1. **Support** - Does it provide comprehensive Technical Support - 24 hours a day, seven days a week?
2. **Reliability** - Does it have multiple large-scale links to the internet to provide a fail-safe
3. **Security** - Does it have a robust security system that minimises risk of web site intrusion?
4. **State-of-the-art** - Does the company utilizes leading edge technology and is supported by a large-scale uninterruptible power supply (UPS) system.
5. **Scalability** - Does the product range and services offered allow your business to grow without impediment by making it easy to upgrade and add components to existing product levels.

Step 4 - Getting people to your site.

The marketing of your website is important if you want to draw visitors to your site. If you don't promote your website no-one will ever see it. There are a number of different ways of advertising your website. The best

strategy is one, which integrates your existing promotion methods with your website.

1. Office Stationery -Including your web address and email address on your stationery is probably the easiest way to draw attention to your site. It's cost effective and gets your Internet presence out there in the market place.

2. Business Cards - When printing business cards you should include the individual's email address and main address of your website.

3. Radio Advertising

Radio Advertising should include your web address. Don't include the http://, try "Visit us on the internet at w-w-w-dot-qikphone-dot-com-dot-au". If your budget is limited, you may wish to consider community radios.

4. Email and Mail-Outs

Let your current customers know the details of your website. You can either send them an email or a letter/postcard. Keep your website's content up-to-date and they will keep coming back!

5. Print Media

Print advertising should include a generic email address for the company and include your website address. Normally positioned at the bottom right or bottom center of your advertisement.

6. Search Engines & Directories

People looking for your website who don't know the URL are most likely to use an on-line search engine to look for your organization or the kind of products and services you offer. There are over 300 major search engines and directories, but you should concentrate on the larger, more commonly used ones. These include: Google, Yahoo, Altavista, Anzwers, Inktomi, Infoseek, Lycos, Excite, HotBot, MSN, Dogpile, AllTheWeb etc.

7. Links from other websites

A good way to attract visitors to your site is through the use of hyperlinks placed on other sites. If you know of another site which has a list of links and you think your website would be a good addition, let the website owner know. You might also offer to provide a link from your

site back to the other site. This will encourage the webmaster to include your site. You should also seek out partners for trading links including vendors, suppliers and providers of complimentary products.

8. Link Exchange

Another way to getting a link is through a system called Link Exchange, a free public service designed to help websites advertise each other. With Link Exchange, you agree to display advertising banners for other Link Exchange members and they agree to display banners for you. The System is automatic; you simply add a piece of HTML code to your web page and Link Exchange will display an advertisement for another website. The disadvantage with Link Exchange is that you don't get any control as to where your banner ad appears or the type of banner ads that will appear on your website. It is not possible to guarantee that a competitor of yours may have their banner ad displayed on your site.

9. Paid Banner Advertising/Affiliate Marketing Programs
Various sites give you the opportunity to purchase banner advertising on their site. Some sites will charge you a flat monthly fee while other sites will charge you based on the number of people who see your ad.

Step 5 - Monitor your site's statistics

Your website's statistics should show who visits your website, where in the world they come from, how they are finding your site and what pages are being viewed. Knowing your customers is the first step in effective marketing. Most web hosting companies will provide access to this information free of charge.

Step 6 - Maintaining your website

It is important to update your website regularly to keep your customers interested. One of the great advantages of having a website is that you can change its content virtually overnight at minimal cost (unlike re-printing brochures and flyers).

This is just a brief overview of the process involved in getting your website up and running. In future articles we will cover each step in more detail.

Ivana Katz is the owner of Websites 4 Small Business, a company specializing in the design and promotion of small and home-based business websites. She believes that every business deserves to have a successful website, no matter what its budget is. For more information visit www.web4business.com.au

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