



Starting an Online Business

Nicole Ephgrave: Hi there. This is Nicole Ephgrave from marketingtips.com and blog.searchmarketinglab.com. Today's podcast is going to talk about starting an online business.

Now, I know a lot of you out there already have online businesses, and sometimes you run out of the proper marketing strategies, and some of you are just starting out. So that's what we do want to focus on today, is how to start an online business.

We have one of our Internet marketing experts, Andrew Mallory. He is a big part of our Internet Entrepreneur Club. And if you haven't checked that out, I would recommend going to internetentrepreneurclub.com as soon as you can, and take a look at some of our featured threads.

Andrew is giving people advice every day that's making phenomenal improvements to their businesses and really helping them get started with their online businesses. Hi, Andrew.

Andrew Mallory: Hi, Nicole. Thank you for having me. It's a great pleasure to be here today.

Nicole: Now, what I want to ask you is what would you say are your top three tips to someone starting an online business?

Andrew: Well, I have to say first of all, if they don't already have the "Insider's Secrets to Marketing your Business on the Internet," they should get that. And they should read it. It's a phenomenal resource. It's a great way to find out about Internet marketing if you're just new to it, and it also goes into very advanced kinds of techniques. It's a tremendously valuable all-in-one resource. So, I'm not going to count that as a tip.

Nicole: Could you tell us a little more about the course?

Andrew: Well, one of the great things about the course is that it really addresses a lot of the myths that people have when they are thinking about starting an online business or have had a couple of online businesses that haven't been as successful as they would like.

But my number one thing that I would really suggest is that people need to understand how to find their market. And a lot of people come to business, and come to the Internet side of business, and they have a really product-centric focus.

They have an idea for the product or they're already set on the product that they want to sell. They don't even know if there's demand for that product. They don't know what the competition there is for that product, either direct or indirect.

And because you work so closely with Search Marketing Labs and you know so much about SEO, you know that if you're going to have people come to your website to make a purchase, you've got to have that traffic.

If there's no demand, no matter how great your product is -- no matter how great you think it is anyways -- you're not going to get very far. So, focus on the market. Research supply and demand, and that's the first place to start.

Nicole: That's some great advice, Andrew. Now when you're thinking about researching supply and demand, would you use a tool like wordtracker.com?

Andrew: Exactly. Wordtracker is a fabulous tool, and it is really a great guide to help you through your research. It takes a little while to get used to, and you do need to put some time in on it, but they've got some great tutorials online to help you. You can read the guides and the case studies.

But this is a way of measuring who is searching for what online, and what exact kinds of words and phrases they're using. And this is very, very important. It also helps us to judge the competition.

So, let's say for instance, something like let's say you're interested in selling something like Curious George toys. There might be a great demand for Curious George toys. Maybe you can find 500 people who are searching for Curious George toys a day. But if you've got 100,000 websites competing to show up in the search engine under that key phrase, you're going to have way more supply than you do demand.

And that's something that you're going to have to address. That might not be the best place for you to start.

Nicole: I hope everyone out there got that. So, what you want to think about is you want to focus on problem statements. You want to look at the age-old economics of supply and demand. If there's millions of websites out there already offering a solution, is this the right market for you to get into?

Have you gone too wide? Do you need to narrow down what you're trying to do? If I want to go out there

and start a website on dogs, I would break it down. Do I want to do dog training, obedience training, clicker training? Try and get as specific as you can, and just like Andrew said, use a tool like Wordtracker.

And, again, that's wordtracker.com. Go there, and it's an online database of what people are searching for, as well as how competitive those terms are. So, the websites that are offering the solutions.

Andrew: Yes. That's exactly right.

Nicole: Now what would you say your next tip would be?

Andrew: Well, I would like to follow on with what you're saying about narrowing down the focus. A lot of people may want to please everybody, or create a product that serves every purpose, or they imagine something that they think is a niche market, but is really a huge, huge market.

So, I don't want people to think Wal-Mart. OK? You don't want to get into competition with a big, huge company that has a huge sales channel and has lots and lots of advantages. You need to think more boutique. Start off with one problem. Find the demand for that problem and then provide the solution. Just do one little on at a time, and that's how you'll get into it.

So for example, when you said dogs, you're absolutely right: there are a lot of dogs, there's lots of things around dogs. Everything from "dogs playing poker," "how to train dogs," it could be anything, right?

All of those people are not looking for the same solution. The same thing with golf. Golf is a huge industry, right? I once saw a business plan where their target market was everybody between 18 and 99 years old.

Nicole: Wow, that's a big target market!

Andrew: A big target market. But get very specific. Start with one, succeed with one, and then build on that success.

Nicole: And that is some excellent advice again from Andrew, who's always at our Internet Entrepreneur Club giving people great tips like that. So, again, you do want to focus on multiple streams of income. So don't try to put up some huge, flea market website. OK? You want to focus on solving one problem at a time.

So if you're website's about how to obedience train your puppy, don't start putting up things about angel figurines and how to lose weight. You want to keep it focused on that specific niche market and then branch out.

So, I know Andrew is going to give us one more great tip. Go ahead, Andrew.

Andrew: OK. My final tip is: test your way to success. A lot of people take one of two courses. They either go all in and over-commit to something before they have results or before they know it's going to work out, and they hold on way too long. Or, they don't take any action at all, because they're afraid to make a huge commitment.

I suggest that before you think of building factories for your products and building up a huge inventory of stock, start with something simple, something low-cost, and put it before real prospects and see how they respond.

Work your way up. As you get successful results, you can increase your commitment. If you're having trouble, then it's time to address what's happening and either make adjustments to your business model or your marketing model, or maybe you have to do further research to find out what the real problem is that people are looking for answers to.

And this way, you can create lots of tests very quickly, support the tests that work, abandon those that aren't working out for you, and keep your commitment low until you've got something that working.

And this goes back to the multiple streams of income again. If you get a little website up and you're making some moderate sales, you've done your best with it and you think that's the full market potential, that's great. Go on, do the next one, add the income from that to your income streams, your multiple streams of income.

If you're working on something and it doesn't work out, maybe you've invested a couple of weeks worth of research, you've put up one sales page, and you maybe spend \$50 bringing traffic to that page to see if you can make a sale. That's not a very, very big commitment say, compared to opening a restaurant or trying to open a clothing store at the mall.

So, keep it simple, get feedback from the market, and adjust to the feedback. If something catches fire and starts taking off, put your weight behind it and keep going.

Nicole: Excellent. Now, our motto here at the Internet Marketing Center has always been, "Test, test, and test again." A lot of people abandon ship way too early. When you're starting your online business, some things may not work out right away.

You want to test out your headlines, your open paragraph, your different benefits. A tiny page in a

headline can increase your convergence by 30 percent.

Andrew: Exactly.

Nicole: So, everybody out there, don't give up! Take Andrew's advice, test things out. You need to test out your website to make sure you're hitting on exactly what your target audience wants, and the wording.

Remember, Andrew's from the internetentrepreneurclub.com. So please go check it out. He's there every day helping people start and grow their online businesses.



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