

## Chapter Three

### **How To Market Your Business Online... A Beginner's Guide.**

Here's how to promote your business on the Web.

While many if not most of our members operate national and even global businesses, some of you just want to promote your business locally. You might have a retail store (like a hair salon), your services might be location specific (like a plumber), or maybe you can't do business outside your licensed area (like some lawyers).

We're going to give you a quick seven step sequence to promote your specific business online, as culled from our associates and work with our client/members.

Pay attention though, if your business isn't location specific, some of this might not pertain to you however, you'll still learn some inexpensive ways to generate traffic to your site...ways you may not even have thought of.

#### **Before you do anything...**

The first things we want you to consider before you even start marketing online are:

1. Before defining your business as regional...can you do business outside your region? A lot of companies can actually do business by mail or even electronically, however, they are in a comfort zone selling to a local market...or that's all they've been taught. Is this you? If so, let's expand our thinking. Think about your ideal target market.

If we're going to target markets online, the hardest to find lists and advertising methods are, after all, the geographic ones. In other words, targeting by area or ZIP code. In fact, it's so rare that some companies will charge you triple just to pinpoint a local area. That's because very few have lists that are large enough to be valuable and can be segmented by specific location. In fact most site owners don't even collect ZIP codes.

2. Does your business currently have an existing customer list? Just like your current advertising offline, local online advertising must establish relationships, you're just forming them via e-mail and the Web. You still must create trust and confidence that leads to the sale. If you do have an existing customer list of e-mail addresses, you can start right now. If you don't, the biggest step and the first will be to...

***GO OUT THERE AND ASK YOUR PROSPECTS AND CUSTOMERS FOR THEIR EMAIL ADDRESSES! THIS IS NOT OPTIONAL. YOU ASK THEM FOR THEIR SNAIL (REGULAR) ADDRESSES AND PHONE NUMBERS AND MAYBE FAX NUMBERS...SO NOW YOU HAVE ONE MORE PIECE OF CONTACT INFO TO GET! GET THOSE EMAIL ADDRESSES!***

What if you have a customer or patient or client base that is email deficient? In other words, you don't have many, if any, email addresses.

Well, as I see it, you only have a couple things you can do:

- A. Ask them for their email addresses either as they come in, or you talk to them, or they order, or whatever it is you do with them. You can do this via your monthly newsletter or a solo direct mail piece. You can offer them a sheet to fill out when they transact business with you, or send them a flyer asking for their email address, and offer them a free something or other in exchange for their email address.
- B. Start with new people, and forget your existing prospects and/or customers or whomever you sell to. This is a bad idea, but not as bad as not getting *somebody's* email address!

Only 50% of all people have an email address, and in some markets, 80-90% of people have and use email. You should be able to get their addresses without too much trouble. If you miss a few, who cares?

Just do your best, bribe them in some way if you have to, and get as many as you can as fast as you can! (You'll see why in a couple of minutes.)

3. Why do you want to market online? Is there a good reason or are you doing it because everyone else is?

Marketing online is just another form of marketing. It has to be added to your arsenal of offline marketing methods and compared to the profitability of those methods also.

Now, in the next chapter, we'll reveal seven steps to consider when marketing your local business online.

1. Build an e-mail list of locals.
2. Yellow pages.
3. Offline marketing.
4. Trade links/advertising with local sites.
5. Buy advertising on regional or national portals.
6. Use pay-per-click engines like [Overture.com](http://Overture.com) to target market.
7. Buy local advertising from e-mail and ad networks.

**Let's review them one by one.**