

# Introduction

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According to estimates, there are over 108 million web sites online, and billions of web pages. Unfortunately, most of them will never amount to much. My goal is to help you beat the odds. After you have read my book, you will know more about building a successful online business than most people do. My purpose is to provide you with simple explanations for some complex topics. Contrary to popular belief, you don't have to be an expert to build a successful online business, but you have to have the right tools. This book is one of them.

*Triumph On The Web* will guide you through the seemingly daunting task of building an online business. Even if you have an existing brick-and-mortar business, expanding your business to the web will bring about unexpected challenges. My purpose is to help you succeed. Experience gained from a successful offline business is great, but it is not enough to help you succeed online.

In the mid-nineties, some business experts predicted that e-commerce would replace commerce altogether. Of course, they were wrong. Instead of replacing it, e-commerce has revitalized commerce. Today there is no distinction between e-commerce and commerce; they are one forever. A business cannot expect to dominate its industry without a successful web presence. If you think that this is only true of fortune 500 companies, you are wrong.

Even a neighborhood dry cleaner can become more competitive, more profitable, and less vulnerable with a great web presence. Sooner, rather than later, you cannot expect to dominate your own neighborhood without maximizing your online presence. This is true for taking advantage of the opportunities web presence provides.

Don't confuse having a web site with having a web presence. A web site is not enough to succeed. Let's face it—many businesses have web sites, but most of them have no idea what it really does for them. While the term "web site" has become part of our business vocabulary, web sites themselves have remained outside of our business consciousness. A web site is not something to have; it is something to *be*.

If it doesn't become an ingrained part of your business, you are wasting your time and your money. This book will help you plan, build, and live a winning web presence.

Despite incredible opportunities, many businesses resist having a web presence. Business owners and managers are still thinking in first generation Internet terms when a web site was the thing to have. This second generation of the Web requires much more. It demands a web presence.

Unfortunately, some businesses never even made it to the first generation and expect to succeed without a web site. When put on the spot, business owners and managers list pathetic excuses such as, "Our customers don't use the Internet," or that "We don't have a budget for that." The truth is that they are afraid, because the Web requires a different way of thinking. What made sense offline might not make sense online and vice versa.

As I introduce you to key concepts throughout the book, I ask you to keep an open mind. Don't dismiss ideas because you have believed them to be different or nonexistent in your offline world.

By the time you have finished the book, you should be able to

- Plan your web presence strategy
- Choose the most appropriate domain name
- Consider important legal matters
- Find the right hosting solution
- Hire a suitable web design firm
- Expand your brick-and-mortar business to the web
- Determine if a blog is the right tool for you
- Recognize the importance of affiliates
- Market your web presence
- Optimize your web site for optimal search engine rankings
- Identify niche markets
- Source products
- Secure your website
- Monitor your web presence performance
- Build credibility
- Advertise with Pay-Per-Click

- Build you customer/client list
- Build a profitable customer list

Books, articles, and business gurus have been telling us since the mid-nineties how the Internet is the fast track to big money. Their formula for success declared that all you need to do is to add .com after your business name and laugh all the way to the bank. The hype was overwhelming, and many had to learn the hard way that it takes real skills to succeed online.

Succeeding online is not as easy as many have thought. There have been some unbelievable success stories such as Amazon, Google, eBay, YouTube, and many more. Unfortunately, there have been many more failures than successes. The Internet has changed a great deal about society and the way we do business, but it has not been able to change most business fundamentals.

Many now failed dot com companies have ignored the fundamentals required building a successful online business.

Even an online business must have:

- Customers,
- A profitable product or service,
- A winning marketing strategy,
- Measurable goals,
- Credibility, and more.

Read this book and learn what it takes to build an online empire.

This book is

- Your guide to winning strategies to start or improve your online business,
- Going to help you build a successful business from the start,
- Applicable to any type of business, regardless of size,

- NOT a get-rich-quick scheme,
- NOT an introduction to the web,
- NOT so highly technical that only a computer whiz can comprehend it,
- NOT an introduction to the Internet; there are more than enough books about that topic already.

I have spared you from having to read fifty pages of fluff about the history of the Internet. Neither have I tried to bore you with the basics of the history of the Internet. There have been more than enough books written about such topics. Every chapter in this book has real value. You will not find any unnecessary filler content in this book.

Expect to learn the techniques that separate the winners from the losers. Building an online business requires real skills. A web site your hobbyist nephew has built you might have been cute in 1995, but you'll need to do much better to succeed today. Just like you wouldn't want to operate on someone after watching a surgery on TV, you can't expect to succeed online without real skills. The Internet has become incredibly competitive. Building, marketing, and promoting your web site requires real commitment. This book is going to help identify your market, source your products, and communicate with your customers.

You don't need 100 million dollars in venture capital or the backing of fortune 500 companies, but you do need dedication. Well-funded online business ventures fail every day of the week. You can succeed with a low-budget web site, but you can't succeed without a complete commitment to market your needs. Don't waste your time creating a product nobody wants or developing a service nobody needs. Instead, develop a product or service, or solve a problem. Create something that will benefit enough people to support a market.

Don't try to beat eBay at developing a better online market place, or Amazon.com at selling more books, or YouTube at showing more video clips; instead, try to be the next business that solves a problem that needs to be solved. Dedicate all of your energy to finding solutions to problems you face. Improve someone's life with your service. Enrich someone's day with your product.

Only when you have determined that there is a market for your product should you start your business. An idea in itself is insufficient to succeed, and a great product doesn't guarantee success either. Every day, companies fail in spite of having great products and excellent service

because the people in charge can't sell, promote, market, and plan properly. The techniques you learn in this book prepare you to succeed.

If you think there is no more room for newcomers in the online sphere, you are wrong. Despite all the successful online businesses mushrooming up from nowhere, there are more opportunities today than there were ten years ago. The ride since the early days of e-commerce has been exhilarating. Who would have thought that student projects, hobbyists, and garage entrepreneurs would build billion dollar empires? They succeeded because they have solved problems better, faster, and more efficiently than any other business in the market.

You too can become the next overnight success story of the online business world. You have made the right first step when you have purchased this book. Now it is your time to Triumph On The Web.