By John Williams

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Email

Recommended Resources

- **Web Site Hosting Service**

- **Internet Marketing**

- **Affiliate Program**

Please Read This First

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    http://www.ezy-internet.com/pyboti/

About the Author

John Williams writes books to help people do things better. Everything he writes is based on his own experience and research.

John's books, "Make Your Own Website" and "Power Up Your Website" were written to help people that were building a business that was based on the Internet.

"Promote Your Small Business on The Internet" is for people who want to use the power of the Internet to promote their off line business more successfully.

You can use the Internet to gain more customers for whatever services and products you are selling.

It can also help you to reduce your overall advertising costs and improve the profile of yourself and your business in your local area.

The methods and resources which John uses and explains in this book are low cost [some are free] but powerful and reliable.

John says, "this book is written to help any small business users the power of the Internet for promotion and increased profits". If

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Introduction

Your main goal for reading this book is probably to find some simple and effective ways to tell more people about your products or services and increase your sales.

My goal is to explain the methods I know very clearly and help you get great results with minimum time, effort and expense.

I hope that this book can help you to revive or set up your own business-promoting web site and show you why it is a great investment.

This book will show you how to take those first steps and I will share some ideas and tactics which you can use to shorten the time until your website is producing good results for you.

Every small business is under increasing pressure from competitors, increasing regulation and tighter margins.

You are looking for ways to reduce your costs and get more customers.

Do you ever think about using the Internet to promote your business?

You may have heard that it's just for the big companies.

But, it's easy for just about any small business to make a big impression in the local market by using the Internet.

You may have thought about it and even ask for a couple of quotes from local web designers or consultants. If the prices they charge and the language they speak did not put you off, it was probably the amount of time which you would have to invest.

But, before you decide that you will stick to using your phone book or your newspaper to promote yourself and your business, remember that your competitors are likely to jump on the "electronic highway sooner rather than later.

Then, you will have to consider whether to play catch-up or continue to stay off-line.

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I can guarantee that your customers and many more potential customers are already looking to find the best deals and the latest products on the Internet?

The cost of setting up a website to promote yourself and your business is minimal and the possibilities almost overwhelming.

You are already operating a computer and using the Internet. That's almost all you need to get started.

Well, as long as you read this book.

Then, there is just one important step – take action.

I hope that you do that before your competitors set up their web site and grab that domain name which would have been perfect for your own web site.

I suggest that you read through the book first, then go back through but concentrating on those sections which are of most interest to you.

Thanks for buying this book.

If you want to get any of my other books on the Internet or other subjects, please ask the eBookwholesaler Member that supplied this one to you.

John Williams, December 2009

Do it Yourself or Pay Someone?

This is an important question: should you set up and maintain your website yourself or should you pay either an employee or an outside contractor to do that while you focus on your other responsibilities in the business and just maintain contact and control?

I suggest that you are the only person that is able to answer it.

This book can help you to make that decision more easily and from a better informed perspective.

When you have read this book, you will have sufficient information about what is required of the person who does the actual work on your website.

You will not have all the technical information which you need to do everything that might be required.

But you will be able to decide whether you want to handle the website yourself and whether you are confident to do so.

If you decide that you are not the person who should work on your website, this book will help you to maintain control of discussions with people that you are considering giving the work to.

It will also help you to understand what is actually required and to make better sense of what they do and say.

I believe that many readers would benefit from learning the basics of maintaining their webpages and such tasks as adding an image or setting up a new autoresponder even if they didn't do it on a day to day basis.

After all, there are likely to be occasions when your contractor or employee is not available and you need something like that done in a hurry.

Your Website

You may have already set up a website to promote your business.

Many businesses have done so in the last few years.

But, some people have put little effort into maintaining or improving it because they have not seen anything like the results which they were promised.

There may be a number of reasons for the lack of results which many people experienced:

The website may not have been set up very well: Sometimes, a website can be attractive or even exciting, but pointless. There are some things which a business website must have to be effective and I will explain some of these in this book. You may decide to edit the website which you have or start again with a different design. That may because the new design is more modern, more appropriate to your business or easier to maintain and update.

It may not have been promoted well or at all: Many people have been sold the idea of having a website to promote or extend the business but thought that new customers would come flooding into the business it's as soon as they put it online.

They had not realized that, to get any measurable results, would involve an ongoing commitment as well as the initial outlay.

Checking Your Internet Position

If you already have a website, but it is not giving you the sort of results that you want, you can easily check its current status with Google and use these results as a guide to the improvement you get in the next couple of months.

Go to Google and type in **site: www.example.com** [replace **example.com** with the name of your own website]

This will reveal the number of pages from your website which are listed on Google.

A very important factor in Internet popularity is the number of websites which have credible links to your site. Just type links: www.example.com into Google and it will show the number of links to your website.

If there is a large number, but you are not getting good results from them, it's probably because the links are low quality ones which are not encouraging people to visit your site.

It's not the number of links which is most important, it's the quality.

That is why it is important to get links from sites that relate to your type of business or service. You may be approached by people that want to exchange links with you but you will find that most of the sites which these people are promoting have no content related to the topic of your site. That makes links from them useless to you.

Make sure that the links between different pages on your web site are between similar text.

You can also check how often this search engine visits your site. This is a very important because you want to have the latest updates and improvements you've made to your site showing in the search engine as soon as possible after you make them.

Just click on the underlined Cache link to see your site as it was when the search engine's spider last visited it. Check the date on that view.

When you have made some of the improvements which I explain later in this section, the spider might start to visit your site more often. Be sure to check in a few weeks time.

Of course if you haven't been updating your site, the sooner you start the better.

If you have not got a site, I suggest that you start to set up a simple one as soon as possible.

Before you start writing those pages, get a note book and write down the words and phrases which someone might use when they're looking for your products or services on the Internet.

Then, go to the most popular search engine on the Internet, Google.com.

Working with the Search Engines

Are the Search Engines really Free?

A lot of people wonder how Google and other companies can provide these incredibly valuable search engines and other services without charging for them. They invest in large computer systems to process the flood of information which they continuously gather from the Internet and they also have human staff who check many of the listings to reduce the amount of poor quality or fraudulent entries in the listings they provide when you enter a search term.

The truth is, of course, that they do make money from services they provide to businesses of all types.

You've seen the "Sponsored links" at the top and to the side of each page when you search for something through a search engine. These are paid advertisements which provide income to Google each time they are clicked on. This is called pay per click or PPC advertising.

You can have this sort of advertisements on your web site and Google will pay you a part of the fee it gets for each click through from your site to an advertiser.

I won't go into this in this book because its focus is to build your own profile and the effectiveness of your website promotion for your offline business.

An important point that many people overlook is that any visitor to their site who clicks away through a Google advertisement is not likely to return to their site. So, they are probably giving up any chance of ever gaining that person as a customer in exchange for a few cents commission on the click!

Remember that these companies are always adjusting the scripts which control how they evaluate the information which they gather. So, you can either put in a lot of time to try to keep up with these changes or you can focus on providing reliable information which is easily accessible for your visitors and get on with your business.

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Finding and Using Keywords

At the start, I asked you to choose some words that related to your business and products or services which people would be likely to type into the Internet search engines.

The relevant words and phrases are called "**keywords**". Using the best keywords you can find properly can be a significant factor in the success of your online promotion.

Visit these links to get help with selecting your keywords:

http://freekeywords.wordtracker.com/

Wordtracker provides keyword related services. You can get a 7-day trial of their professional tool but it might be not needed for the limited keyword use on just one web site which is focused on local business opportunities.

https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal

This is Google's keyword suggestion tool. You will probably have to sign up for a (free) Google account to use this tool. The account will also let you use other Google products such as the GMail email service.

Use these tools to find new and, more relevant or popular keywords. But, you can learn much from the results they produce.

I want you to put into the search engine the first phrase which you wrote on your sheet of paper.

Each of the entries which appears in the list will have some text from the page that is listed. You will see the phrase which you wrote down and you will probably see other phrases which are appropriate for your business.

Write these phrases down on a separate sheet of paper.

Now type in the second phrase which you sort of and examined the results which you get this time for more useful and popular phrases.

Always use your favorite keyword phrase on your main page, use your keywords sparingly and make sure that the text is easy to understand.

Choose Your Best Target

Use common sense when selecting your main keywords and phrases. Don't select those which might apply to businesses generally, are very highly competitive and which there are many PPC advertisements for because the level of competition will drive your listings down and probably off the first page which is the target.

You might add your State or City to your main keyword or find another qualifying word to narrow the focus more closely. Use a rifle rather than a shotgun.

Add Keywords to Your Pages

Use your main keywords in your headline and sub-headlines through your pages.

This can give you something close to double the value because your visitors are attracted by words which you know are used to find your sort of product or service through the search engines.

But, the other benefit is that the search engines will find the words you want to e associated in those headings too.

This is one simple way which you can improve your webpages over those on many sites around the Internet.

It also will show you how simple it is to edit some of the code on your webpages yourself.

One of the big secrets of Web design is that most of the tasks that are required to be done are really fairly simple.

This is one of those tasks.

Open your web editing program and then use the File and Open options in the top Menu to open one of the pages which you are preparing for your website.

Instead of looking at the HTML view of the webpage which you can normally see when you open it in your web browser, we are going to look at the Source view which is a page of text that shows the instructions which a visitor's web browser uses to find out how to display your page. It looks like a set of stage directions from a play.

If your are using a very simple webpage editing program, it may not let you look at the Source view of the page. But you can do that by opening the page

in your text editing program such as Notepad which is supplied with all computers which use the Windows operating system.

Open the Source view of the page at the top section between the <Head> and </Head> tags.

Look for the title tags: <Title> and </Title>

Does the title which appears between them give any useful information about your business or your website?

Usually, it just says something like, "Welcome to our Website". That is no different to what your visitors would see on hundreds of other websites they might visit.

I suggest that you use a title which is descriptive and specific to your business.

For instance, if you are a florist in a town called Balfour, you might use something like "Balfour Florists - flowers for all occasions".

That's a very elementary example but it includes the type of business, it's location and most important keyword.

The contents of your title tag will appear in the visitors browser and will probably be recorded with the address of that page if they say the page to their Favorites.

Below that, you need two more sets of tags for your description and your keywords.

The form of these tags is shown here:

<meta-name ="description" content= "Balfour florists design original floral arrangements for all occasions">

The description will be used when your page is listed in response to queries by the search engines which support this tag. Not all do.

<meta-name = "keywords" content = "Balfour, florists, floral arrangement, bouquet, wreaths">

The contents of the keywords meta tag can help with listings by those search engines which still supported but it is a devalued meta tag, so you must be sure to use the keywords in your pages as well.

Silly Keyword Tricks

There are some "smart tricks" which some people might tell you will help you rapidly improve your listings with the search engines.

The search engine providers are constantly checking for people trying to gain an unfair advantage instead of improving their position by providing good information which is easy to navigate.

These tricks would make the results displayed by the search engines less reliable, so Google and the other operators are likely to penalize any site which uses them.

One very old trick is to include a lot of keywords in the page but make them the same color as the background that area of the page. The spiders which roam the web and collect data for the major search engines are clever enough to ignore these pages entirely.

Another version of this which is apparently still working for some people with some search engines at this time is to set up special pages just for the search engine spiders to read. Google and the other major search engines do not want to record pages which are only readable by machines and computer programs, so these pages will also be ignored or their value discounted in the future.

Some of the tricks include using a lot of keywords in each page. Google do not tell anyone that I know of what percentage of keywords is acceptable to them and what level would be regarded as "keyword stuffing" and the percentage is rumored to change from time to time.

Checking your Results

One reason that websites fail to deliver the expected results is because they are not updated on a regular basis. You can check your web statistics to get some idea of the number of visitors you are getting to your website and some details about them.

Many hosting companies provide a program called CPanel (short for control panel) which you can use to check your web statistics as well as many other things. But, there are many other systems which are used by various hosts.

So, if you do not know how to access the statistics for your website, contact your hosting company's support section for advice.

You can also use some free web-based services to see how you are seen, if you are seen at all, on the Internet in general.

http://www.google.com/alerts/

This is another valuable free service from the nice people at Google.com.

Google will gather information from the latest press releases and Web announcements which relate to the terms that you set up an alert for, then deliver it to your e-mail address or RSS feed every day.

Start with alerts for your business name, your main product or service, a popular search term related to your type of business and one for the name of your most significant competitor.

You may think this is cheating but I can assure you that many businesses, probably including the competitor, are doing this already.

After a few weeks, you may decide to add more alerts for and change or remove some of those who began with.

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[**http://www.technorati.com/**](http://www.technorati.com/)

When you go to this site, you can type in your business name or your preferred search terms. Technorati.com will show you if you are making an impression among the blogs and other Web 2.0 sites on the Internet.

As with the Google Alerts, there is nothing to stop you typing in your competitors' business or product names, and terms which relate to them.

Easy Web Site Setup.

Almost anyone should be able to prepare a few web pages with the simple programs that I suggest.

You need three types of programs to produce web pages and put them on your Internet website:

Free Web Page Editors

There are many good programs that you could use to produce webpages. Some cost hundreds of dollars but the two I suggest you try are free!

Trellian Web Page: this is a free program just for computers using the Windows operating system from Trellian.com

Unlike most free programs, this one is being supported by paid staff at the company and updates are issued regularly.

The only requirement for using this program is to let Trellian send you occasional e-mail announcements. In the time I've been using the program, I have never received more than one e-mail from them in a month.

You can find alternative programs which do not have that requirement elsewhere but I am very happy with it and the way the company treats me.

Another program for windows users is Web Page Plus. A free version is available from **http://www.freeserifsoftware.com/**

This company also requires that you provide a working e-mail address. The program has some extras with it and is perhaps a bit simpler to use than Trellian.

I have not seen the version currently offered. It may not let you do some simple editing of the actual code. If not, you can use your text editor (the simple Notepad type of program which is included with all versions of Windows.

Don't let this mention of "editing the code" worry you – if it wasn't simple, I would not be able to do it or explain it myself!

This is important because it helps to attract the search engines. So, I suggest you try Trellian Web Page because it is smaller and makes it easy to edit the code.

For people that are using Macintosh computers, the only free program I have used which has a Mac version is Kompozer from **kompozer.net/**

This program is supported by volunteers but, to my knowledge, has not been updated for a couple of years.

File Transfer Program

This type of program, commonly known as an FTP program, is used to transfer your web pages and pictures from your computer to your website.

I have used a free program called Filezilla from **http://filezilla-project.org/** for a few years with good results.

If your hosting company provides you with a version of Cpanel, you can also use the File Manager section of that to transfer files between your computer and your website. But, a program like Filezilla is a better option when you have many files to transfer.

Free Archiving Programs:

You will find it useful to get an archiving program which can compress several files into one compressed file or extract the files from a compressed file which you download from the Internet.

Most computer programs and large graphic files are compressed into an archive before they are transferred across the Internet to save time and keep the cost of the transfer down.

Stuffit is a very good archiving program for Macintosh computers from **http://www.stuffit.com**

7-Zip is a program which is available for most types of computers from **http://www.seven-zip.org/**

7-Zip is free, but StuffIt is a program which you have to pay for after a trial period.

Another type of program which is very useful when you are preparing or editing your web pages is one that can edit your pictures:

Free Graphic Editor Programs:

Photoscape is a free program for Windows computers which you use to edit any pictures which you want to put on your website. It is available from **http://www.photoscape.org/**

I believe that most Macintosh computers have a graphic editing program installed

Each of the programs come with a Help file and more information about how to use them can be found on the website which you download it from if you you get it from the developer.

Free Website Templates:

A website template is an example page or series of pages which you can use for making your own web site pages.

Many web page designers offer free templates through their own site and also other sites called Directories which host the free templates which are submitted to them by designers, provided they meet the directories quality standards and terms of use.

Because you are in business yourself, you are probably wondering how the designers can offer templates which they have worked hard to produce without charge and how the directories can pay their site costs and, hopefully make a profit?

The designers usually require that people who use the free web site templates display a link to the designer's own website at the bottom of each page of their website. To me, that is a very reasonable condition but some people object to it - they don't want any links on their site to other people unless they make a profit on them.

So, some designers will not permit their free templates to be used without the link. Others require a small fee if you want to remove the link from your pages which are based on the design.
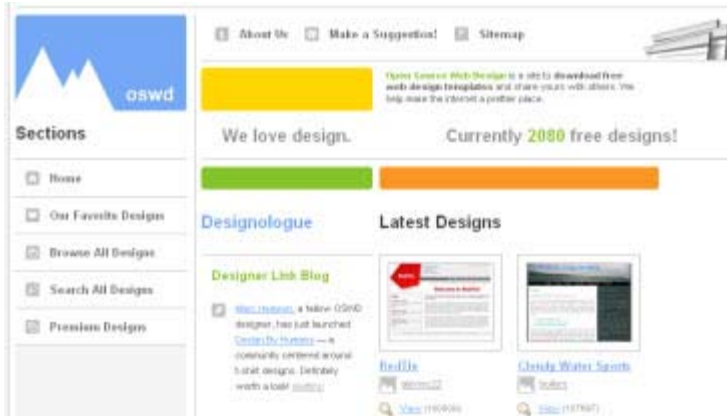
There are thousands of designers and probably hundreds of directories, but the two I will suggest you look at first are:

oswd.org which is a highly regarded Directory, though it apparently has not been updated for more than a year. Despite that, it is well worth looking at. If you find some designs there which you like, you might find it worthwhile to contact the designer and check whether they have produced newer free web templates since 2007.

http://www.opendesigns.org/ is a more up-to-date Directory with about 1400 template designs available when I wrote this.

You will need to download the program you want to use and learn to use it.

I will give you some brief instructions which will apply with just about any Web page editor.

Download the template which you want to use. This will probably be a .zip archive which you will use 7-Zip or your favorite archiving program to extract the files from.

Please be sure to always scan each file which you download from anywhere on the Internet with your anti-virus program. And, make sure that you keep that security program up-to-date.

You will need to replace the pictures and text in the template with your own. If you need more pages than are provided with the template [some designers just provide the one page while others may provide several], just open a template page which is similar to what you want for your new page in your webpage editor program and then save it with a different name.

For instance, you might open the page called index.htm and use the "Save As" command to save it as contact.htm

Now, contact.htm will be opened in your webpage editor. If you need to pay another page, use "Save As" again to make the new page with what ever name you want.

"**Keep it Simple**" is the most important rule with both your text and your pictures.

Keep the sentences short and do not use words which your visitors might not understand.

You also need to focus on what visitors to your website are looking for.

They don't want to know the history of your company or where you went to school.

They want help with a problem which you can provide. If they don't see immediately they will click away. Some research suggests that period from arrival to leaving may be as short as ten seconds!

That is why you should focus everything about your website on helping your visitor with their problem.

Only use pictures which are directly relevant to the interests of your potential customers.

Write the text for your webpages as if you were telling a friend why they should use your product or service. Avoid hype and don't try to impress visitors to your website - let your product or service do that.

My favorite "rule" for writing webpages is to under-promise and over deliver.

Legal Issues

I'm not a lawyer. These are my opinions but, for your own peace of mind, you need to consult your own qualified professional for advice in this area.

But, don't think that your web site could not have problems at some time.

One source of good information about most legal matters affecting business people on the Internet and all areas of the United States is **Nolo.com**

Be Careful About Rights.

You should only use pictures and text which you own or which you have written permission to use.

You also must ensure that you have permission from any person that is shown in a picture on your website to use that picture for your advertising and promotion.

If you are unsure about what rights you have to a picture or some text, I suggest that you do not use it. I personally know of people that have paid $1000 or more to settle a claim over just one picture on their website.

People can sue you for alleged misuse of their image and, if they win the case, the payout could be substantial even if you thought that you had permission for your use of the image.

But, the amount of your time and money that could be taken up just in defending yourself and the potential damage to your reputation could be an even greater penalty.

Using somebody's picture without their permission may also be against some laws in your country.

Privacy and Other Concerns

My comments in this section are just my personal opinions. You should consult a lawyer who has experience in this area and pay for the lawyer to examine your site and prepare suitable documents.

You also should check the information provided by your government about any relevant laws.

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I have read that some search engines may downgrade sites which don't have the appropriate disclosures and documents available.

A Privacy policy is required in some countries on each web site, whether it is used for business or is just about a personal past time. This discloses what information is collected about visitors to your web site, how this information is used and how a visitor can check about any information you have about them.

There are legal requirements regarding handling private information about visitors and especially when dealing with children even when your site may not be intended for use by children.

Here are a couple of relevant links to sites with good reputations who offer help in this area.

The OECD Privacy Statement Generator

http://www.oecd.org/document/39/0,3343,en_2649_34255_28863_271_1_1_1_1,00.html

Make sure that you copy the whole link into your browser and check it before you click the button.

The article about "**How to Construct Your Privacy Policy**" on the Direct Marketing Association (U.S.A.) site is well worth reading.

http://www.dmaresponsibility.org/PPG/

The Association also have a "Children's Privacy Policy Generator" and other forms which are mostly free for non-members to use.

http://www.the-dma.org/privacy/childrensppg.shtml

For your own safety and peace of mind, never disclose any highly personal information about yourself, your family or anyone else to any web site unless you are comfortable with their security and need for the information.

Copyright

Do not copy any privacy policies, text, pictures or anything else from anywhere on the Internet without permission.

If you are unsure about the rights you get from the site, check the documents on their site, particularly any "Terms of Use" or any similarly titled document.

I remember a photo directory offering free download of hundreds of pictures for almost any use. But, the Terms of Use required that anyone downloading and using the pictures absolve the site owner from any responsibility and even pat to protect them if there was legal action over the use of any of the pictures!

I use pictures from **Clipart.com** who provide clear rights statements. But, I also check with them before I consider using any of their pictures for something where I am not sure if the license permits it.

Protect Your Own Material

Remember that almost everything which is put on the Internet will be stored (copied) at other places at some time, with or without your permission.

You can use services like **Copyscape** to check for unauthorized copies of your text elsewhere on the Internet.

When you find something which has been copied from you, you must decide how to handle it.

The first step must be to get a copy of each page where your material has been used on their site and store that away.

Keep copies of all emails with the headers (the detailed tracking information which is included at the top of every email but is usually hidden while you are reading it to save time).

Always be polite and professional in your communication with the other site.

Usually, it can be enough to contact the webmaster of the site and ask that your material be removed.

If that is not effective and you are sure that you are the originator of the material, you might consider finding out the hosting service which hosts the site and contact them.

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Sometimes, someone finds that their entire site has been copied.

If that happens to you, you should still contact the person that owns the site as a first step.

Be sure to keep copies of all emails and any other relevant material.

When you consult a lawyer, as I believe you might be wise to do in these circumstances, try to find one that has relevant experience dealing with legal aspects of the Internet.

Why you Need an Autoresponder

An autoresponder is a computer program that can send prepared messages at set intervals to people that have requested the information.

Some autoresponders can only respond with a standard reply to any email message sent to the address of that Autoresponder.

The other main use for autoresponders is to collect the email addresses of people that subscribe to your electronic newsletter (a series of Autoresponder messages) through a form on your web site.

The Autoresponder is one of the most useful programs which you can add to your web site.

You can choose from programs which you set up on your web site or services which you pay a monthly fee to use a number of autoresponders. The service hosts the program and provides the email addresses for your autoresponders.

This is a major advantage over hosting the autoresponders on your web site. Many people have complaints made about them for allegedly spamming even when they are very careful to provide an unsubscribe link in every email and honor all such requests immediately.

Unfortunately, some organizations that are set up to fight spam will blacklist people that get just one complaint against the and it can take a while to get that sorted out.

Meanwhile, some web hosts who use that organizations list of spam senders to protect their clients' email addresses may prevent the delivery of your emails to their clients addresses.

The major autoresponder services monitor the flow of messages and build relationships with the major spam blacklists so that they can help to minimize any problems for their client, providing they follow the rules.

Buying and setting up an autoresponder program on your own web site is perhaps a cheaper option over time but I prefer the peace of mind that using a reliable service gives me.

You can also use a program called phplist which you download from their website at **http://www.phplist.com/**.

Phplist is another program which you can also install through the Fantastico part of CPanel if your web hosting service provides it.

But, I would recommend that you seriously consider using a reliable independent service such as **aweber.com** or **wizardresponders.com** instead.

Press Releases from the Internet

Press releases have been a standard form of business promotion for many years.

It was easy to predict that the power and speed available for transmitting files across the Internet would mean that many press releases would no longer be sent by mail.

In the last few years, several online services have been set up to handle distribution of press releases.

Most of these services offer paid and free options.

Some people are happy just to use the free option of the service which they select.

But, of course, it is worth considering an upgrade to their paid services if you find the free option reliable but limited.

A service that I have heard excellent feedback about is PRweb at **www.prweb.com/** This well established service is possibly the largest on the Internet. They no longer offer a free option.

Even if you decide that you will probably use another service to distribute your next press release, make sure that you visit their site for advice and the guidelines which your press releases must meet to be distributed through PRWeb.

Another Press release Internet-based service is **prlog.org**

This free service allows you to:

- Include HTML (clickable) links in your press release.
- Use multiple categories and keywords

They provide spam protection on your email address, and a free press release account.

You can schedule your press release.

PRlog distribute to Google News and various search engines.

I have not used PRlog at this time but have read some glowing recommendations from people with good reputations.

It seems that it would be worth your time to check it out along with PRWeb.

I would not discard the idea of trying some of the paid services because you will probably find that your press releases get better distribution when you use them and the distribution is often completed more quickly so you don't have to wait for the results to come in.

I have never heard anyone complain about the money they spent to send their press release through a company like PRWeb but keep in mind that there are no guarantees with press releases, however much you pay or sweat over its preparation.

Good preparation and paying a professional rate just make the gamble a little bit more likely to produce the results you need.

Formatting Your Press Release

All press releases should follow a specific format.

The first line on the top left of the page should state when the information may be used by the media; either "For immediate release" or "For release from 11/15/2010".

Follow that with an attention grabbing headline.

You should spend some time writing several headlines before deciding which one you would use.

The headline can be a major factor in whether the reviewer for the distribution service and the media ever read through the rest of your press release.

If they don't, then the whole all your effort to produce and distribute your story is wasted.

A strictly factual headline with no spark of life in it is not likely to succeed against all the other press releases which the reporter or editor has received that day.

You can use your local or national newspapers to get some idea of the type of headline of which the professionals create to attract your eyes.

The next section of your press release should contain your contact information. Give them as many options as possible and make sure that all the details are correct.

Give the full contact details of the person that will represent your business with the media.

Put a special page on your web site for the media to get your press releases online or by email. Do not advertise this page to the general public.

Have downloadable copies of your press releases available in PDF format for offline printing and which can be read with the free Adobe Acrobat Reader and also in rich text (.rtf) format which some journalists may want so they can easily edit and format it to suit their publication.

The e-mail address you use should appear professional and be one that you check frequently.

If you get a lot of emails, set up a separate email address just for the media so that you will see and can respond to any messages quickly.

For each phone number that you include, add the hours when you or a reliable adult will be ready to answer any questions which they have.

Many people put a short outline of the most important information you are providing before the full story. This is likely to be helpful to and appreciated by media people who are approaching a tight deadline.

Keep this to no more than three (interesting) sentences if possible.

The next section is the first paragraph of the actual press release. This should include the most important facts and answer the traditional Press questions; who what when where and why.

While you are preparing your press release or any other writing for the media, keep in mind that the critical point which will decide whether your story is used is not the benefits for your business but the level of interest which the

story is likely to create in the readers of the publication or the viewers of the television program.

That interest may be based on real news value, novelty or human interest.

But, if there is no news value there is not likely to be any interest from the readers or the media in your story.

If it's about a new product, focus on how this will benefit people in the community rather than the company's bottom line.

Always use the full web address for your links in the story. These will become clickable in media that allow it but will also remove the chance of errors by people that see and then type in the web address on their computers.

End your press release with three hashmarks ### on a separate line.

Try to keep your release to a single page. Always number the pages if you have more than one. Put "more" on a line by itself at the bottom of each page except for the last one.

Keep your story is simple and straightforward.

Keep your paragraphs short with only one idea or action per paragraph.

If you are promoting a book or some small product, provide a sample. But, don't expect that the release will be used or the sample returned.

Don't contact the media about whether they have received or will use your information.

Don't wait for that press release to appear in the media.

Just get started on the next step in your promotional campaign.

Dealing with the Media

Remember to treat all media people well, whether they represent the smallest local or the largest national publications. They have long memories and always remember any perceived slight or let-down.

Check with each media contact about the way they want your releases delivered – some may still prefer mail.

Always keep your word about returning phone calls or providing requested information, samples or anything else.

Their deadlines are always pressing and you may cause them more problems than you realize if you don't get the promised material to them on time.

Create a list of media contacts and keep it up to date. Sending a release to "The Cooking Editor" will not get as warm a reception as addressing it to "Ms Suzanne Perrier, Cooking Editor".

You don't have to contact each individual to find out their name – just call the receptionist at the newspaper or magazine office.

Learn to remember names and other details for the time your notebook got wet. It's really easy and can pay great dividends in your personal as well as your professional life.

Look in your favorite search engine for "media directories", "press release distribution services" and "news distribution services".

The Real Value of Press Releases

Some people believe that the only value which counts is the effect on the bottom line of their business in the weeks after the press release has been circulated.

But there are other considerations which should be kept in mind.

Your press release, if it is picked up and used by media outlets, will probably reach many potential customers that do not use the Internet or do not know of your business through other means.

The cost of preparing and distributing a press release through the Internet is low, especially when considering the potential benefits which could accrue.

The main cost is for your time or that of the employee or contractor who prepares the actual release.

There is also an implied credibility which is attached to a positive news story about your business. This can have benefits for months after the paper where it originally appeared has been used to line the parrot cage.

            http://www.ezy-internet.com/pyboti/

You should always ask the publisher for permission to use the story and/or photograph for your own promotion. Permission is unlikely to be refused but it is possible.

There may be conditions on the use you can make of it and you should confirm the wording and size of any credit line which they require you to put near the story or photograph.

Some publishers do not allow other people to use their stories or pictures on the Internet.

Of course, you can pay for one of those advertorial stories which are always accompanied by an advertisement from the business in the same publication. But, they cost a lot and have limited credibility with the public or media.

Getting your first press release published in 'real media" can be a great feeling. With the shrinking amount of available media and the increasing demand for space, a story that is positive and not paid for is a real coup.

Do you Need a Blog

A blog is a web site where the person or organization that owns it up posts informative and helpful information on a regular basis.

They also usually encourage visitors to comment on the information and ideas which they present on the site.

This is not a new phenomenon but it has become extremely popular in the last few years.

Google provide a search which only looks for information displayed on blogs around the Internet.

Technorati.com provides information about blogs and their content as well.

This shows there could be some advantage to providing information and the opportunity to comment on your business' products and actions through a blog as part of your web site.

Political parties have started to view press accreditation to some bloggers to focus on political matters.

Many businesses have a blog, or more than one if they are a large and diverse organization, on their web site where authorized members of their staff or even hired, experienced bloggers present the company's news and seek feedback from customers and other interested people that visit the site.

Using WordPress for your Blog

Currently, the most popular type of blog software (computer program) is the free Wordpress package from **WordPress.org**

This popularity has unfortunately attracted a lot of unwelcome attention from hackers and there are frequent updates, often with both security fixes as well as new or improved features.

But, it is important to keep all the programs which you use for your business up to date so that there are the minimum of security holes in your systems.

WordPress is fairly easy to use, though there is a learning curve like there is with any powerful computer program.

          http://www.ezy-internet.com/pyboti/

There is a forum on **WordPress.org** where you can get advice with any aspect of using the program.

But, you will need to check the basic information on the site first and make notes about what happened when you installed or were using WordPress. If you have not searched for the answer to your question and it has already been answered many times in the Forum, you will not get the sort of answer you want.

The experienced Forum Members are very helpful but you've have to show that you have tried to help yourself first.

You can get the latest version of the program from **WordPress.org**.

After you have scanned it with your antivirus program and unpacked it into a folder on your computer, you can start to prepare it for use on your website.

There are detailed tutorials for the installation (which might take you about ten to fifteen minutes the first time) on the website. It is usually as easy as they say.

The Easiest way to set up WordPress

But, there is an even easier way to set up WordPress on your website if your hosting provider supplies you with the Cpanel control center on your website.

You simply log in to the Cpanel with the username and password sent to you by your hosting provider.

Scroll down to the bottom of the main Cpanel screen.

Look for either Fantastico or Fantastico Deluxe.

Click on the icon (small picture) for either of those programs and then select WordPress from the Menu on the left of the Fantastico screen.

Just follow the prompts to have the Fantastico program install Wordpress for you.

Make sure that you have your email address and other information ready to enter when required and also that you write down the information which appears on the screen during the last part of the installation process.

             http://www.ezy-internet.com/pyboti/

You should make sure that you tell the program to email the details to you at the end as well.

I won't go into how to use Wordpress because they give great information through the Help link in your Wordpress installation and, of course, on their site.

There are many other options for creating and maintaining your Blog but, at the time of writing, Wordpress is the most popular with a huge number of users and thousands of software enhancements (plugins) and designs (templates).

There are some that are well worth the price asked but there are also many which could sell very well but they are offered without charge unless you want to make a donation by the producer.

Always check for any terms of use with free and paid plugins or themes. Like the producers of free web page templates, most theme designers expect that you will leave a link to their web site on the bottom of their theme if you use it. That's a small price to pay for what could have been several hours of work.

Blogging Tips

I will give you a few suggestions about how to be a successful blogger that can promote the business without making visitors click away at first sight.

Even though your blog is part of your business, you should keep any promotion of your products or services low-key.

You should welcome comments about the entries you create in the blog (called posts) but ensure that you use efficient spam blockers and that you moderate all visitors' comments before they are posted on your blog in public view.

Blogs usually have a less formal tone than you expect from a business web site. But, whoever writes any of the material which appears on the blog on a business site must remember that they will be seen by some people as representing the business.

On the same theme, remember that anything which you put on the Internet will be available for use for or against you for many years to come.

You may erase it from your web site as quickly as it drops from your memory but someone somewhere will have a copy and it could come back to embarrass you when you least expect it.

Another very important tip for all people that use a blog on their web site is to participate at other quality blogs that relate to the topic of yours. Leave a comment (no advertising, of course).

You will probably find that the owner of that blog will visit yours at some time and return the favor.

Forums

Forums are a type of site where people that are interested in a particular subject from Internet marketing to goat breeding gather to discuss all aspects of their common interest, get help with any problems and share ideas.

You usually need to register and provide some basic personal information before you can participate in a Forum.

Look for forums through the search engines with a line like:

forums: goat breeding

I just made that up as a test for this book and was surprised that Google returned 467,000 results for forums: goat breeding!

When you first join a forum, carefully read the rules and ask for clarification about anything which is not clear.

Try to contribute by answering questions you have answers for.

Don't respond if anyone makes some kind of negative remark or comment about someone else. They may just be trying to attract attention to themselves.

Leave them to the Administrator and Moderators who have the experience and authority to fix them problem usually without much disturbance for the rest of the Members of the Forum.

Most Forums let you attach a short signature to your username when you post a comment or reply in the Forum. Make sure that yours is within the rules.

Don't spend too much time in the Forums. They might have some potential benefits for your business in the long term but there are plenty of things that you could get more and quicker benefits from.

I've explained some of those in this book.

I wish you great success with your autoresponders, blogs, press releases and other tactics.

Thanks and Good Luck

Thankyou for buying and reading my book about promoting your offline business on the Internet.

I hope that it will inspire and help you to use the power and reach of the Internet to boost the results which you get from your business.

I also tried to show anyone that was doubtful about their ability to produce and manage their own business web site because of a lack of time, knowledge or cash.

It's simple but not always easy. Be prepared for obstacles to rise and you will find fewer in your path.

For most people the electronic highway can be the high road to success.

John Williams

Another eBookWholesaler Publication