

A Guide to Kick-Starting Your Online Business

TechRounder PDF Edition

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In brief

To kick-start your online business, start by building an engaging, eCommerce-ready website on a platform designed for online transactions. From there, conduct market research to identify your target audience and their buying habits, then launch strategic marketing campaigns using social media and SEO to drive traffic.

So, you've got a novel idea for an online business! Exciting as that may sound, the reality is that establishing, launching, and keeping a new business afloat is not for the faint of heart. With so many challenges ahead, it pays to have a structured guide to keep you on track. Let us help you through the many obstacles you will no doubt come across when kick-starting your eCommerce business. These are the steps we suggest every budding online business owner should follow on their journey to eCommerce viability, profitability, and success.

1: Build An Engaging, Interactive Website That Reflects Your Brand and Business Concept

Building a website that both navigates easily and is also engaging for visitors to interact with is essential for your eCommerce business to be a success. As an online business, your website is often the first impression customers will have of your brand. Your website will also, in many cases, act as your online shopfront. For this reason, you'll need to build it using a platform that can facilitate online payment transactions. Of course, while you have your choice of a variety of different website platforms at your fingertips, a Magento development agency Melbourne will always recommend building your site with that particular eCommerce application over others. Some of the benefits of using an eCommerce-specific web development platform over less shopper-friendly site builders are:

- These platforms will usually have an in-built shopping cart function, which makes accepting online purchases much simpler.
- They are often SEO-friendly, which means they will already be pre-optimised for your future marketing efforts.
- They can more easily facilitate mobile surfing and shopping, meaning even your mobile-based customers will be able to access, navigate, and interact with your website.
- These sites will often load quite quickly, allowing for faster connections and in turn, less frustrated customers.
- They are designed to be safe and secure..

2: Discover Who Your Target Audience is by Dabbling in Market Research

Next, you need to identify your audience. This involves doing some in-depth research into what is commonly known as market segmentation. Market segmentation, essentially, is the process of dividing an audience into smaller sections or demographics. Consider your target audience's interests, and their personal characteristics and attributes. How old is your ideal customer, for example? Where do they live? Are they male, female, or gender-fluid? And, perhaps most importantly, what triggers them to make purchases? Understanding your customer's buying habits is critical when targeting them with your marketing efforts, and will also help inform your online ad campaigns.

3: Set Up Your Online Ad Campaigns and Strategic Marketing Efforts

The next step is to promote your new business to your target audience. You can do this in several ways. Some of these strategies include:

Social Media Marketing (SMM)

Online advertising via social media marketing campaigns is an ideal way to maximise your brand's audience reach. Many marketing experts would argue that in the age of social media, it's essential. Having your audience engage with your social media profiles is also a sure-fire way of raising their awareness of your brand, and the products you sell. As well as this, it gives you a platform through which to gauge customer feedback, and also, obtain reviews you can utilise in future marketing campaigns.

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

SEO has become one of the most highly sought-after aspects of digital marketing today. This is the process of manipulating search engine results by optimising a website so it meets Google's preferences. As it can be a somewhat convoluted process, it is - admittedly - best left up to the experts!

4: Reap the Rewards of Owning an Online Business

Being a business owner certainly has its benefits. Some of the advantages of owning your own business include:

- The lifestyle of independence that comes with being your own boss.
- The financial freedom and flexibility of business ownership.
- A somewhat more measured work/life balance as you get to choose and manage your own working hours and workload.

Of course, that is not to say that the road to online business ownership will not be bumpy, especially at first. But if you stick with it, you will reap the rewards.

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