

Gonzo Logic

"We Work The Web So You Don't Have To"

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10 Things to know before you go online

Before you do anything, think about what you want on your site, what it will do and how much money and time you are willing to commit to it. Too many businesses get caught up in the hype of being dot-com darlings and don't think about these things because it is "**easy to put your business online**".

- 1) What is your total budget for web hosting, site development costs and web site promotion? These costs should be calculated before hand so you can determine the most cost effective choices for the development and promotion of your site.
- 2) What is the focus for your site? Electronic Brochure? E-Commerce site? Corporate Presence? You must know this before you start, otherwise you'll spend more time redesigning your site after it is built, therefore costing you more time and money. Without a good focus, it's easy to lose track and waste money trying to reinvent yourself.
- 3) What are your keywords or phrases that describe your business? Think of phrases that are very specific to your company, product or service and use them in your web page text. This helps with Search Engine Placement.
- 4) Purchase a domain name for your business. The name should be specific to the product or service you offer (think keywords here) or your company name. Having a domain name lends credibility to your business.
- 5) You then have 2 choices:
 - Do it yourself - be prepared to spend upwards of \$800 for the software and graphics programs you will need to create a professional site, not to mention a scanner and the three weeks or so to learn the software.
 - Hire a professional web site developer - save time and money and have it done the right way the first time. Most web developers can also help with hosting and promotion.

Promoting your site online....

6) Search Engines - Absolutely critical if you want visitors to find you...Over 80% of the traffic on the net is generated by a search engine, portal site or specialized directory. Top engines like Yahoo, Inktomi, Alta Vista and Lycos offer various methods of rapid review or inclusion into their search results. If you need traffic in a hurry, it is not a bad idea to pay for these rapid submission programs, most of which promise to review or add your listing within 48 hours – 7 days. There are no guarantees on being listed or your ranking in the results, therefore make sure your site is ready prior to paying any fees.

Some are worth it, some aren't, so do some research on your own or ask a professional consultant which ones are worth considering. A good consultant will have first hand experience with which engines draw traffic and which ones don't. It is far better to spend \$50-\$100 or so on a consultation than to spend hours of your own time trying to figure it out and wasting money on paid inclusion that doesn't help you. The consultant can also review your site prior to submissions to make sure it meets each search engine's guidelines for inclusion into their index.

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7) Internet Yellow Page Advertising –

Just like the old 20 pound phone book we all grew up with and used to find everything we needed, the internet yellow pages offer a plethora of business information, phone listings, addresses, maps, business profiles and much more. Some IYP Publishers like Verizon, will even build you a mini web site from 2-5 pages.

8) News Groups/Classified Ads/Article Submission –

Newsgroups are a good resource for discussions about your product or service, and a great way to spread the word about your business to other TARGETED prospects.

Classified Ads, both online and offline are a great low cost measure to spread the word about your product or service.

Article Submissions – another low cost way to promote your knowledge about a particular subject or industry. Being considered an expert lends credibility to your business and also develops a sense of trust with potential customers.

9) E-mail Advertising - If done carefully, it can be the most valuable marketing tool you possess. A well-crafted company newsletter or monthly update will allow you to keep your subscribers informed of company news, events and specials. It is also a great way to stay in front of your customers by giving them updated information, which allows you to make additional sales or solidify your current relationship with them. E-zines or Newsletters can also help you build a customer list for future promotions or sales. Just make sure your newsletter offers good content and provides reliable information or articles each month. A blatant sales pitch or rehash of last year’s info will get people to unsubscribe in a big hurry.

10) Online Research - I strongly suggest that you spend the proper amount of time researching your online competitors and find out what they offer. If you are to compete online, you need to know what you are up against. This takes time but is well worth the effort. Use this research to strengthen any weakness in your position or to take advantage of opportunities your competitors may be missing.

FINAL FACT - Your web site's effectiveness is directly proportionate to the effort and money you put forth - you get out of it what you put in it, and that's a fact... yes, you can do things "on the cheap," like having your brother-in-law or friend design your site, but you have to ask yourself, "what does this say about my business?" On the web, first impressions not only count, they can make or break you in 15 seconds or less.

If you have any questions feel free to call me @ 623.972.6907 or look for more free web tools at www.gonzologic.com

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