

# Can A Network Marketing Business REALLY Be Run Exclusively

## Online?

By Elena Fawkner

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Elena Fawkner  
jan@ahbbo.com

A Home-Based Business Online  
<http://www.ahbbo.com>

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For many people, the words "network marketing" or "MLM" (multi-level marketing) conjure up images of hitting up your so-called "warm market" (those two or three hundred people near and dear to you as well as those unfortunate enough to have crossed your path at some time in the distant past) and pleading, cajoling, persuading, arguing and plain pressuring them to join your program. Or organizing house parties and presentations to make your pitch to a captive audience. Or having to approach complete strangers while standing in line at the supermarket.

Any or all of these options may be unpalatable to you, and for good reason. They certainly were to me. But what if you didn't have to do any of that? What if there was a way to have people approach YOU to join your business rather than the other way around? What if you didn't have to hold face-to-face meetings at ALL? What if you didn't have to make a single approach to someone you know? Or to someone you don't? Would you think differently about network marketing then?

Well, there is such a way. Running a network marketing business using the Internet.

I've heard many people say that it's just not possible to run a network marketing business exclusively online. Well, I'm here to tell you different. Because I'm doing it and if I can

do it, so can you.

Before I tell you a bit more about how a network marketing business can be run exclusively online, let me clear up a couple of possible misconceptions. First, running an online business does NOT mean creating a website and then sitting back expecting the business to run itself. You will work every bit as hard in an online network marketing business as you will in an offline network marketing business. This is just a different method, that's all.

Secondly, when I say "exclusively" online, I mean that's where your lead generation and prequalification work happens, it does NOT mean you will never have to pick up a telephone and speak to a real, live person at the other end.

OK, so what's involved in running a network marketing business online then?

The first thing to understand is that network marketing, just like Internet marketing, is a numbers game. It is for this precise reason that network marketing is IDEALLY suited to being run online. Why? Because ANY Internet business is a numbers game. Just ask anyone with a web site what their focus is when their web site is up and running. It's traffic. It's getting as many people to their web site as they can because somewhere in the range of 2% - 4% of site visitors will click on a link that, in some fashion or another, can generate revenue for the web site owner. Of those 2% - 4% of visitors who click on the link, however, only 1% or so of THEM will go on to buy after clicking on the link. Ergo, with such tiny response rates, high traffic is the name of the game. The same principle holds true for your network marketing business.

At its core, network marketing is a simple business. It's all about generating leads, qualifying those leads and then following up with those qualified leads until they take the action you want them to take (or tell you to stop) - either purchasing product from you or joining your downline as a productive distributor.

= GENERATING LEADS

How do you generate leads? This depends on your starting position. If you already have an established web site and your network marketing business is a natural fit with that existing site, then you will not need to do too much in the way of additional lead generation for your network marketing business other than including a link to your network marketing company's web site from your existing site.

But if you don't have an existing web site, you're going to have to start from scratch. You're going to need to create

a web site (on a subject matter of interest to people who would also be interested in your network marketing business opportunity or products), link to your network marketing company's site from that web site, submit your site to the search engines (and employ all the myriad other ways of driving traffic to it) and you're going to have to start publishing an ezine (electronic newsletter) on a relevant subject and on a regular basis and build a sizeable subscriber list (again using a variety of different methods).

To generate significant traffic to your site and subscribers to your ezine is going to take time. Lots of it. Months, in fact. You should probably allow a year before it's at a size that will make much of a difference.

In the meantime, you're going to have to generate leads in other ways. The two primary effective methods are paid advertising (both for your network marketing business opportunity and the products your business promotes) and you can pay for leads.

#### = QUALIFYING LEADS

Unlike the traditional, offline ways of generating leads for a network marketing business, by definition, the leads you generate online are prequalified. For example, if you're trying to generate leads offline, you're talking to everyone you can at every opportunity. You may be speaking with someone ahead of you in line at the bank or supermarket, a young mother you run into when picking up your kids from school, and any other number of people you come across in your day to day activities.

The problem is, as you have no idea whether these people are even remotely candidates for your opportunity, you can waste a LOT of time talking with people who are poor prospects for your business.

On the other hand, if you've created a web site on a topic of relevance and interest to the people who would also be interested in your network marketing opportunity, by definition your web site visitors are prequalified as, because they have sought you out, they are likely to be interested in at least learning more about your opportunity.

Placing paid advertising and paying for leads are other ways of qualifying leads. What these methods all have in common, however, is that the lead COMES TO YOU, you don't go after them. If someone makes contact with you wanting to know more about your opportunity, it's all of a sudden a LOT easier to pick up a phone and call them isn't it? Or to send them information via email if that's what you and they prefer.

## = FOLLOWING UP UNTIL YOU GET ACTION

The other big, big advantage running a network marketing business online offers is the ability to automate your follow-ups. Every time someone contacts you for information about your opportunity, add that person's email address to your list of prospects and then periodically send follow-up messages to that list. By employing autoresponders (software that allows you to send prewritten follow-up email messages to defined email addresses on a periodic basis), this process can be completely automated, leaving you free to spend your time on generating leads rather than administrative tasks.

As you can see, running a network marketing business exclusively online is not an overnight project and it requires a LOT of work, consistency, persistence and commitment. But it most certainly can be done. If you're serious about making serious money from an Internet-based business, network marketing is the way to go. It's where the big, secure money is. But to earn big, secure money, you need to invest big too. You need to invest time, money and sweat equity into building your business.

Fortunately, however, network marketing online offers one other HUGE advantage over starting any other sort of online business. An upline. If you join a network marketing program that's suited to being run online (and some aren't, by the way), AND you join up under a sponsor who is part of a team that specializes in running the business exclusively (or near enough exclusively) online, you will have at your disposal a wealth of experience, expertise and tools you will be hard-pressed to find elsewhere.

So, think about it. If you're looking for a way to make money from your computer and you had, until now, thought network marketing wasn't for you, maybe you should think again. Network marketing coupled with Internet technology and an upline who knows what they're doing when it comes to running a business online could very well be the answer to the financial independence riddle you've been looking for. Just don't expect it to happen overnight. There are no magic wands in this business just as there aren't anywhere else.

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