

Finding Your Niche on the Internet

By Angela Wu

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Those who are new to the Internet business world -- heck, even those who have been successfully operating online businesses for some time -- can attest to the difficulty in deciding what to sell.

"Newbies" in particular may be led to believe that the more "stuff" they sell on their websites, the more money they'll make. They place dozens of banners and ads on their sites for everything from dating services to internet marketing manuals, from pet toys to self-improvement tapes. It's pretty hard to persuade a visitor to purchase anything from a site like this; chances are -- if they even managed to find your site in the first place! -- they'll simply go back to the search engines and find a site that's offering them exactly what they want. One click-of-the-mouse and they're gone, probably for good.

You can't be everything to everyone. Choosing a tightly focused niche market gives you the ability to home in on a specific group of like-minded individuals: it's easier to find out what they want, and thus easier to come up with and develop new products and services. It's also easier to make your site "stand out"! You'll have a better chance of success if you take the time to define a niche.

However, the strain of trying to figure out what to build a business around often leads people to do what they perceive as the "easiest": copy what other people are doing.

For instance, many people decide to build websites around teaching others how to market on the internet. But if you use Overture's popular Search Suggestion Tool, you'll see that "internet marketing" received 102085 searches (at the time of writing), compared to:

- * recipe - over 1 million searches
- * pet supply - 109975
- * jewelry - 449044
- * gardening - 787621
- * golf club - 548398
- * exercise - 129368

As you can see, there's a market for a wide variety of products and services. Your "job" is to figure out what people are looking for -- whether it's a new product or an "improved" version of an existing product -- and ask yourself how you can fill that need.

As you do your research, try to assess the demand (ie. how many people are looking for that type of product) in relation to the supply (ie. how many businesses provide the product and how well they do at meeting the demand). Ideally, a great niche market would be one for which there is high demand but not (yet) enough supply.

There is always the possibility that there's no real demand for the product, which is why no one has bothered to create it. Most people would prefer to find this out before they invested a great deal of time, effort and money into creating a product no one wants!

Even if you don't create your own product but instead decide to promote affiliate programs, a great deal of work still goes into the promotion of your affiliate link.

One way to research a new idea is to run the key phrases that represent your business through the NicheFinder software (<http://onlinebusinessbasics.com/findniche.html>). This software will automatically produce several informative and eye-opening reports and charts to help you assess the potential of your idea.

Some people start businesses related to their current line of work because they already have many of the skills and the experience they need. Others build their business around specific interests or hobbies. Regardless of what you do, be sure it's something you **want** to do -- don't choose a niche solely because "other people are doing it" or because you think "you can make lots of money". Do what you love, and **enjoy** the journey to building a profitable business.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Angela is the editor of Online Business Basics, a practical

guide to building a business on a shoestring budget. It features loads of instantly usable tips and tools that were specifically chosen for beginners. For details, visit <http://onlinebusinessbasics.com/article.html> or download the free trial version of the Online Business Basics manual: <http://onlinebusinessbasics.com/freebook.html>

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