

The Bottom Line

By Bob Osgoodby

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It's no secret that the US economy has slowed down, but the stock market does appear to be on the rebound. Thousands of companies however, are still struggling, and are being forced to cut costs, decrease benefits, and even lay off employees. Many of those who lost their jobs, will try their hand at doing business on the Internet.

It seems however, that lately I've been hearing a great deal about the difficulty of doing business online. Put aside the talk about the hype and the scams. They existed from the first day the Internet was commercialized. They are becoming more sophisticated with their promises of earning millions, but as people become more experienced, they quickly see through them. Fake email addresses, spam and broken dreams will continue to abound until either legislation forces them to do business ethically, or the well of suckers dries up.

Sounds pretty negative doesn't it. Under other circumstances, it would be enough to put someone off trying to do business on the net. But let's look at the positive side. I don't know about you, but I've met some pretty fine people on the web. They are honest, hard working and a pleasure to do business with. While there are a few "bad apples" (and aren't there offline as well), it's amazing how many friendly, helpful people there are out there.

In the early nineties, before the entrepreneurial invasion of the Internet, the only game in town was the proprietary bulletin boards such as run by Prodigy. Anyone who "dared" become commercial was summarily banned from the boards, and "blacklists of offenders" were actually shared between the board moderators. But, as commercialism crept in, and the old bulletin boards joined the ranks of the dinosaurs, a whole new strategy started to evolve.

People have learned that you don't have to create something new or re-invent the wheel to make money online. You can join an affiliate program to get started with a minimum of capital outlay, and a decent income can be made. But the old saying "there's no such thing as a free lunch" is even truer today.

Sure, you can advertise online for free, but except for isolated instances, there is a catch. Forget the FFA (Free For All) sites where you can post a free ad for your business. They get thousands of submissions hourly, and most only keep the latest hundred or so current, so your ad has a life measured in seconds.

How about the free ads you find in newsletters? If the newsletter has content and a decent subscriber base, they are a great deal. However, many times the only subscribers who receive it

are those placing the free ads, and once they check to see if their ad is there, they "click away" and don't even see anything else.

While you might not immediately learn how to advertise your business, you quickly learn how not to. Email spamvertising is simply a waste of time and money. If it is annoying to you, and the ads are summarily deleted without being read, why waste your money on a similar campaign.

Those who want to do business on the web, and are succeeding, are evolving into a whole new breed of entrepreneurs. They learned from the mistakes that are being made, and have developed a business plan that is working.

So, what is the secret. It really isn't a secret, and it is as obvious as the nose on your face. People are not stupid, inexperienced maybe.- but not stupid. Treat them with the same courtesy and respect you would like to receive, and you will be amazed at the results.

Unfortunately, many would be entrepreneurs don't take their business seriously, and will fail. This is not something you can do when bored, and there is nothing good on TV that night. If your bottom line is to succeed, you must take your online business seriously, and the returns you receive will be in proportion to the effort you exert.

Bob publishes the free weekly "Your Business" Newsletter Visit his Web Site at <http://adv-marketing.com> to subscribe. As a bonus, get 40,000 FREE E-Books from Larry Dotson, when you visit <http://www.ldpublishing.com>

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