

Business In A Box

By Butch Pujol

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You've seen it on TV - everything you need to start your Internet business only \$59.95. It seems too good to be true! Can you actually get a Web site, hosting, search engine placement and products to sell for under \$60? Can you actually begin to turn a profit within minutes of your site being loaded onto the 'Net? Hmmm... what's the old saying? "If it sounds too good to be true..."

When these types of infomercials start, the pitch is usually something along the lines of, "you can own your own Internet business for only \$59.95 and become rich by only working 20 minutes a day." Granted, they do show testimonials from people who supposedly have made millions with this type of business. And, they do make a persuasive argument that this type of success is possible because the Internet is a worldwide medium. Can it be done? Yes. However, the real question is, "can it be done by your average person"?

The answer to that question is no. How do I know it can't be done? I've tried it. Before I recommend any new products or services to my clients I buy them and try them to be sure they are safe and legitimate. I investigate the companies and their products and services.

Let me share with you what I've found about these types of Internet Businesses In A Box.

Watch Out For the Small Print

Small print seems to play a major role in the advertising campaigns of these firms. For instance, satisfied customers appear showing you the checks they've received from their business. Your natural response is to focus on the rich business owner. Instead, read the small print at the bottom of the screen. "These experiences are unique and your results may vary. Dollar amounts quoted are gross sales." Some even say, "Business owners are fictitious characters portrayed by actors". It's a perception angle. You usually do not notice the small print because the company has directed your attention toward the big checks. They have you dreaming of all the money you will make when you use their product.

Another major surprise that comes from not reading the fine print is sprung on you once the package arrives. For \$59.95 you receive the "how to information" - nothing is done for you - you must do it all yourself. Since most of the purchasers of this type of product are "newbies", the

information does little good. When Internet business people are just starting out, they normally don't know a Web host from a Web site.

The first thing you are instructed to do is build your website. Although the company tells you that the site is easy to build and you need no programming or HTML experience, there is no doubt that the site will appear amateurish. This is by no means a slight to Internet newbies. It is simply a factual statement. I know of no one that could design a professional-looking Web site on their first attempt.

Add On's

Once the Web site is completed, you will need a Web host in order for it to be viewed on the 'Net. Another surprise comes when you discover the monthly hosting fees are not included in your \$59.95. Hosting fees can run between \$10.00 - \$75.00 per month depending on which features you require and the amount of space needed.

What Will You Sell?

During the infomercial the company mentioned that you would have thousands of products to choose from. However, what I found was that there were only 50 or 60. When I questioned this, I was told they either fired their supplier or the contract with the supplier expired and new negotiations were underway. As for the quality of the items... it was sorely lacking. Rather cheap trinkets that had no real value.

How Will Your Customers Pay?

In order for customers to pay online, you will need a shopping cart system. However, I'm afraid I found that this application was another add on. It was not included in the \$59.95 price.

In addition to the shopping cart, you'll also need a merchant account to receive credit card payments. Most merchant accounts require a 2-year contract. However, to receive a merchant account from this company, a 5-year contract was required. I found the set up fees very high and the monthly fees just as disturbing. Not to mention, with a new Internet business, I can't imagine being tied into a 5 year agreement. If the company fails, you would still be liable to pay the monthly fees for the remaining time on the contract.

Bringing Traffic To Your Site

During the infomercial, you are told that the company will submit your new Web site to the top 1,000 search engines with automated software. However, what most people don't understand is that 90% of your search engine traffic will come from the top 20 engines. In addition, most of the major engines require manual submissions, not automated. In order to get your site positioned properly, you'll either need to buy additional software, pay a search engine professional to do the task or learn to handle it yourself. Needless-to-say, that costs even more money.

I am not going to add up all the individual cost of my investigation but I will give you the total cost that was on the contract they wanted me to sign. Not counting the \$59.95 I had already paid for my Internet business in a box, they asked for another \$2695.00.

This article is not meant to discourage you from starting your own Internet business. My business is to educate people about the sharks that will try to take your money.

Can you start your own Internet business, make money, lie out by the pool sipping Margaritas and only work 20 minutes a day? You bet! And it can be done for a lot less than \$2,695.00. Will it

happen the first week you're in business? No. Before you jump into an online business, I urge you to educate yourself, learn how the Internet works, decide what you can or are willing to do yourself and what you will have to pay someone else to do. Calculate the entire cost. You will not get rich over night. It will take time to build your business and automate it. Then, with a little luck and a lot of hard work in the beginning, you can lie out by the pool sipping Margaritas.

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Butch Pujol offers a safe haven for online business owners. Whether you're a Newbie or a Pro, you'll find legitimate and safe Internet business solutions and tools that can help your company grow. Visit <http://www.safeInternetbusiness.com> today.

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