

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

You Can Do It!	1
The Water's Still Fine	2
Where This Book Is Coming From.....	3
How to Use This Book	4
What This Book Assumes	4
What's Where in This Book.....	5
Part I: Strategies and Tools for Your Online Business	5
Part II: Establishing Your Online Presence.....	5
Part III: Successful Online Business Models	6
Part IV: Running and Promoting Your Online Business.....	6
Part V: The Necessary Evils: Law and Accounting.....	6
Part VI: The Part of Tens	6
An Online Feature: The Starting an Online Business For Dummies Internet Directory.....	7
Conventions Used in This Book	7
Icons Used in This Book.....	8
We're in It Together.....	8

Part 1: Strategies and Tools for Your Online Business 9

Chapter 1: Opening Your Own Online Business in Ten Easy Steps 11

Step 1: Identify a Need.....	11
Getting to know the marketplace	13
"Cee-ing" what's out there.....	13
Figuring out how to do it better	16
Step 2: Determine What You Have to Offer	16
Step 3: Come Up with a Cyberbusiness Plan	17
Drawing up a business plan	17
Step 4: Assemble Your Equipment and Set Up Shop	18
Finding a host for your Web site	18
Assembling the equipment you need	19
Choosing business software	20

Step 5: Find People to Help You	21
Hiring technical experts	21
Gathering your team members	22
Step 6: Construct a Web Site	23
Make your site content-rich	23
Establishing a graphic identity	25
Step 7: Set Up a System for Processing Sales	26
Providing a means for secure transactions	26
Becoming a credit card merchant	26
Keeping your books straight	28
Step 8: Provide Personal Service	28
Sharing your expertise	28
Making your site a go-to resource	29
Becoming a super e-mailer	31
Step 9: Alert the Media and Everyone Else	31
Listing your site with Internet search services	32
Reaching the entire Internet	32
Step 10: Review, Revise, and Improve	33
Taking stock	33
Updating your data	34

Chapter 2: Choosing and Equipping Your New E-Business 35

Mapping Out Your Online Business	36
Looking around	37
Making your mark	37
Evaluating commercial Web sites	38
Flavors of Online Businesses You Can Taste Test	39
Selling consumer products	39
Hanging out your professional services	40
Selling your expertise	41
Opportunities with technology or computer resources	42
Being a starving artist without the starving	42
Marketing One-to-One to Your Customers	44
Focus on a customer segment	45
Boost your credibility	47
Customer to customer contact: Everyone wins	48
Be a player in online communities	49
Add ways to sell and multiply your profits	52
Easyware (Not Hardware) for Your Business	53
The right computer for your online business	54
Processor speed	55
Hard drive storage	56
CD-RW/DVD±RW drive	56
Monitor	57
Fax equipment	58
Image capture devices	58

Getting Online: Connection Options.....	60
A second phone line.....	61
Beyond dialup.....	61
Software Solutions for Online Business	62
Web browser	63
Web page editor.....	63
Taking e-mail a step higher	64
Discussion group software.....	64
FTP software	65
Image editors	65
Instant messaging.....	66
Backup software	66

Chapter 3: Selecting the Right Web Host and Design Tools 67

Getting the Most from Your Web Host.....	68
Finding a Web Server to Call Home.....	70
Installing software to build a Web site.....	72
You've got business: Creating an AOL store	76
Investigating electronic storefront software.....	79
Moving into an online mall.....	81
Turning to your ISP for Web hosting.....	84
Going for the works with a Web hosting service.....	87
Fun with Tools: Choosing a Web Page Editor	91
For the novice: Use your existing programs	91
For intermediate needs: User-friendly Web editors	92
For advanced commerce sites: Programs that do it all.....	94

Chapter 4: Exploiting New Ways to Build Business 97

Advantages of Doing Business Online	98
Operating 24/7	98
Communicating with new tools	99
Taking advantage of micropayments' rebirth.....	102
Auctioning off your professional services	103
Exploring New Products and Services You Can Sell	104
Providing music files and other creative work.....	104
Groceries and other household services	105
Exploring m-commerce.....	106
Online Content and Commentary	107
Blogging to build your brand.....	107
Finding your niche	108
Building Community	112
Partnerships.....	113
Market research.....	113



Part 11: Establishing Your Online Presence 115

Chapter 5: Giving Your Business Site Structure and Style117

Feng Shui Your Web Site	118
Nip and Tuck: Establishing a Visual Identity	120
Choosing wallpaper that won't make you a wallflower	121
Using Web typefaces like a pro	123
Clip art is free and fun	125
A picture is worth a thousand words	126
Creating a logo	129
Extreme Web Pages: Advanced Layouts	130
Setting the tables for your customers	131
Framing your subject	132
Breaking the grid with layers	133
Hiring a Professional Web Designer	134

Chapter 6: Attracting and Keeping Customers135

Features that Attract Customers	136
Don't be shy about what you have to say	137
Making your content scannable	141
Freebies: Everyone's favorite	145
Make your site searchable	147
Writing Unforgettable Text	149
Striking the right tone	149
Getting a little help from your friends	149
Sharing your expertise	152
Inviting Comments from Customers	152
Getting positive e-mail feedback	153
Web page forms that aren't off-putting	154
Providing a guestbook	155
Chit-chat that counts	158

Chapter 7: Building in Security Up Front161

Practicing Safe Business	162
When you sleep where you work	162
Preparing for the worst	163
Installing Firewalls and Other Safeguards	167
Keeping out Trojan horses and other unwanted visitors	168
Cleaning out spyware	168
Positioning the firewall	169
Keeping your firewall up to date	170
Public Keys That Provide Security	170
The keys to public-key/private-key encryption	170
Getting a certificate without going to school	172

Keeping Other Noses Out of Your Business	174
Encryption software for the rest of us	175
Encrypting e-mail messages	176
Picking passwords that are hard to guess	179
A mouthful of protection with authentication	180
Chapter 8: Monitoring and Improving Your Business	181
Strengthening Your Infrastructure	181
Improving your domain name	182
Finding a new Web server	186
Performing Basic Web Housekeeping	187
Making sure your site is organized	187
Adding navigational links	189
Making sure your site is searchable	190
Taking your site for a test run	193
Managing Goods and Services	194
Sourcing goods	194
Handling returns	195
Adding shipping rates	195
Maintaining inventory	196
 Part III: Successful Online Business Models	 197
Chapter 9: Setting Up Amazon.com, Yahoo!, and Other Storefronts	199
Becoming an Amazon.com Seller	199
Become an Amazon.com Associate	200
Join the marketplace	202
Pro Merchant subscription	204
Opening a zShop	204
Amazon.com auctions	205
The tip jar	205
Creating a Yahoo! Small Business	206
Creating Other Storefronts	208
Letting CafePress sell your creative work	208
Launching a PayPal shop	210
Opening a Microsoft Small Business	210
 Chapter 10: Running a Business on eBay	 211
Understanding eBay Auctions	212
Building a Good Reputation	213
Feedback, feedback, feedback!	213
Developing a schedule	214
Creating an About Me page	215

Preparing Sales Descriptions That Sell	217
Details, details	217
Include clear images	220
Be flexible with payment options.....	221
Providing Good Customer Service.....	222
Setting terms of sale.....	222
Packing and shipping safely.....	223
Moving from Auctioneer to eBay Businessperson.....	223
Opening an eBay Store.....	224
Striving for PowerSeller status	225

***Part IV: Running and Promoting Your Online Business* 227**

Chapter 11: Easing the Shopping Experience 229

Attracting and Keeping Online Customers	230
Seeing your merchandise is the first step	230
Tell me that the price is right, right now.....	230
Show me that I can trust you!	231
Give me the essentials; show me the products	232
Looking for a Good Web Host: The 411	233
Domain name registration.....	234
Marketing utilities	234
Catalog creators	235
Database connectivity	235
Payment plans	236
Boosting Business through Efficient Communication.....	236
Making Sure Your Web Site Is Up to Snuff	239
Using software to monitor performance	239
Dealing with service outages	240
Outsourcing Your Business Needs.....	241
How ASPs can help your company	242
Before you sign on the dotted line	245

Chapter 12: Accepting Payments 247

Sealing the Deal: The Options	248
Enabling Credit Card Purchases.....	249
Setting up a merchant account.....	250
Finding a secure server	251
Verifying credit card data	253
Processing the orders.....	254
Online Payment Systems.....	255
Shopping cart software.....	256
VeriSign payment services	256

PayPal	257
Micropayments	259
Other payment options	261
Fulfilling Your Online Orders	262
Provide links to shipping services	262
Present shipping options clearly.....	263
Chapter 13: Service with a Virtual Smile	265
The Best Customer Is an Informed Customer	266
Why FAQs are frequently used	266
Writing an online newsletter	267
Mixing bricks and clicks	269
Helping Customers Reach You	269
Going upscale with your e-mail	270
Creating forms that aren't formidable	276
Making Customers Feel That They Belong	279
Putting the "person" into personal service	280
Not letting an ocean be a business barrier	280
Having a discussion area can enhance your site	281
Starting an alt discussion group.....	282
Starting a Yahoo! Group.....	283
Creating a Web discussion area with FrontPage	284
Chapter 14: Search Engine Placement	287
Understanding How Search Engines Find You.....	287
Keywords are key	288
Links help searchers connect to you	289
Don't forget the human touch.....	290
Taking the initiative: Paying for ads.....	290
Knowing who supplies the search results.....	290
Going Gaga over Google	292
Googling yourself	292
Playing Google's game to reach #1.....	292
Leaving a Trail of Crumbs	293
Adding keywords to your HTML	293
Registering your site with Google	295
Getting listed in the Yahoo! index	296
Getting listed with other search services	298
Adding keywords to key pages	299
Don't make your pages hard to index.....	301
Maximizing links	302
Monitoring Traffic: The Science of Webanalytics	303
Software options.....	303
Do-it-yourself options	304

Chapter 15: Advertising and Publicity305

Coming Up with a Marketing Strategy	306
A brand that speaks for you.....	306
Being selective about your audience.....	308
Publicity Strategies That Are Free	308
Keywords are the key	309
A newsletter for next to nothing	313
Participating in mailing lists and newsgroups.....	316
The power of an address book	318
Linking for fun and profit.....	318
Partners make the profits go around	319
A contest where everyone's a winner.....	320
Waving a banner ad	321
Guerrilla Marketing and Advertising Strategies	324
Popup (and under, and over) ads.....	324
Adding life to your ads	325
Paid search and keyword analysis	325
Minding Your Ps and Qs (Puns and Quips).....	326
Speaking their language.....	326
Using the right salutations	327
Making your site multilingual	327
Using the right terms	329
Joining the International Trade Brigade	329
Keeping up with international trade issues	330
Researching specific trade laws	330
Exploring free trade zones	331
Shipping Overseas Goods	331
Getting Paid in International Trade	333

Part V: The Necessary Evils: Law and Accounting335**Chapter 16: Making It All Legal337**

Trade Names and Trademarks	338
Determining whether a trademark is up for grabs.....	339
Protecting your trade name	340
Making sure your domain name stays yours	342
Practicing Safe Copyright.....	344
Copyright you can count on	344
Making copyright work for you	345
Restrictions Such as Licensing.....	347
Local regulations you should heed.....	347
Restrictions that may restrict your trade	348
Your Business in the Eyes of the Law	349
Sole proprietorship	349
Partnership	349
Advantages of a statutory business entity.....	350

Keeping Out of Legal Trouble	352
Get it in writing!	352
Is multilevel marketing worth it?	352
Adult content is risky business	353
What you don't know about acceptable use policies can hurt you	354
The tax man cometh	354
Chapter 17: Online Business Accounting Tools	355
ABCs: Accounting Basics for Commerce.....	356
Choosing an accounting method.....	356
Knowing what records to keep	357
Understanding the Ps and Qs of P&Ls	360
Accounting Software for Your Business	360
The Tax Man Cometh: Concerns for Small Business	364
Should you charge sales tax?	365
Federal and state taxes	366
Deducing your business deductions.....	366
 Part VI: The Part of Tens	 369
Chapter 18: Ten Must-Have Features for Your Web Site	371
Secure some easy-to-remember URLs	371
Provide a convenient payment method	372
Promote security, privacy, and trust	372
Choose goods and services that buyers want.....	373
Have a regular influx of new products	373
Be current with upkeep and improvements	374
Personally interact with your customers	374
Post advertisements in the right places.....	375
Blow your own horn.....	375
Create a well-organized Web site.....	376
 Chapter 19: Ten Hot New Ways to Be an Entrepreneur	 377
Starting a blog.....	377
Turning your hobby into a business.....	378
Getting other people to contribute	379
Inspiring others with your thoughts.....	379
Offering your services on eLance	380
Opening the PayPal tip jar.....	380
Giving out not-so-free advice	380
Turning to your pets for help	381
Becoming a storehouse of information	381
Need income? Just ask!.....	381
Expanding your existing business to the Web.....	382
 Index	 383