

A start-ups guide to e-commerce and marketing

E-Commerce. For some start-ups and small businesses the task of setting up ecommerce can be very daunting and either avoided or given minimal attention, but it doesn't have to be this way. Like anything in business, having a plan is the best way to start and you can do this in consultation with your current or future business consultants. With some careful research the information you need is available, whether you use a free service like PayPal or one of many NZ IT providers to develop full e-commerce facilities.



Start with your ultimate goal in mind. For start-ups and small businesses this can be very costly and daunting in the initial stages. So it is ideal to work to various stages within your plan.



A quick and easy ecommerce solution is PayPal. Money can be received just like another bank account and is ideal for start-ups as fee payments are taken as money is received. This solution could be your first phase leading into your next phases of merchant banking accounts and payment gateways as your business grows.

Web Based Marketing. Your marketing plan should include an element of web based marketing, whatever traditional marketing you do, you can complement this with web based marketing. For some start-ups and small businesses web based marketing is the starting point as cost can be minimized and exposure can be maximised.

First and foremost you should have a marketing plan with a clear goal and reason. Your marketing goal may be to sell products or services or gain more business exposure. One scenario of using web based marketing is to maximize exposure and create a story around your product or service. This marketing can be from resources such as Facebook and Twitter. Here is one brief scenario using web based marketing to create your story and drive traffic:

Electronic Newsletter

- Informs readers about product or services
- Directs readers to Facebook and Twitter
- Direct readers directly to the web page

Facebook Page

- Informs readers and colleagues and friends about the product or services
- Capture more of an audience, builds a following
- Builds a story that prospects can relate to and become involved with
- Encourages purchasing
- Directs prospect to the website

Twitter

- Keeps prospects informed, can tell your story and direct traffic
- Captures more of an audience, builds a following
- Opportunity to converse with potential prospects and hear what they want or like
- Drive prospects to the website

Website Page

- Website page is where your prospect buys into your goal

Using web based marketing requires forethought as there are many applications (i.e. Facebook, twitter) that you can use. Once you setup your preferred applications, you then need the tools to manage your data (i.e. for Twitter an ideal tool is HootSuite to manage all the twitter feeds that come through and ensure you don't miss key information). More on that later...

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