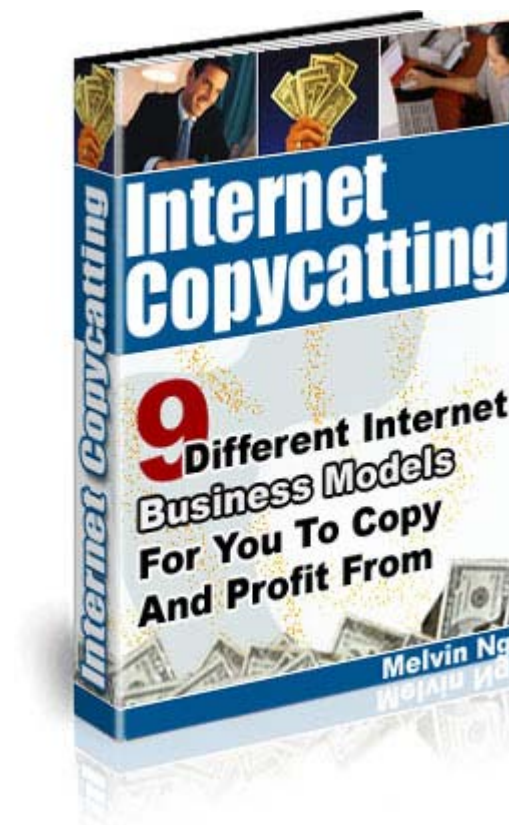


Internet CopyCatting

**“9 Different Internet Business Models For You
To Copy And Profit From”**

by Melvin Ng



Graphics contributed by AbsoluteCovers.com

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INTRODUCTION

Now that you are reading this, I presume you are planning to start an Internet business, or you already own one.

But just in case you are still undecided on starting one, let me give you 7 'Excellent' reasons why you should start one TODAY!

SEVEN Advantages Of Making Money Online

1) Global market.

The Internet knows no boundaries, be it cultural or territorial. More and more people are getting to the Internet for a variety of reasons from sourcing for information to shopping online. This is indeed one of the fastest growing markets in the world today.

2) Mobility.

As long as you have an Internet connection, you can operate your business anywhere, and I mean ANYWHERE. Be it your bedroom, toilet, Australia to Hawaii. It doesn't matter.

3) Flexibility.

Nobody cares if you wake up in the middle of the night to work and sleep late the next day, or you might want to take a week off from work and go on a vacation. You CAN do that.

4) Low capital.

I'm not saying NO capital. Most, if not all Internet businesses will need some kind of initial investment or expenses, but compared to an offline business, this is peanut.

5) Leverage on technology.

In MLMs or network marketing, the concept is to leverage on people, but in the Internet world, you can leverage on technology. There is a lot of software that will help you to automate a lot of tasks which otherwise would have taken much of your own time to do.

6) Minimal overhead costs.

Other than your Internet connection fees, hosting fees and a couple of other miscellaneous fees, you practically do not have anything else like an offline business do, like rental, salaries for employees, etc.

7) Entrepreneurship.

You are the BOSS. How much you make and what you do is entirely your decision. Your destiny is in YOUR hand! Nobody dictates how many days in a year you can take off and when you can take off. The best part is nobody tells you what time to wake up on a Monday morning (I sure love this.).

Now that we have dealt with the reasons why you SHOULD have an Internet business, we can proceed to the second part of my introduction, which is the purpose of this book. What it hopes to achieve.

THIS IS NOT ABOUT INTERNET MARKETING!

You read that right. I'm not here to teach you Internet marketing know-how. I'll leave that to the marketing gurus.

But I'll show you 9 Internet business models that you can copy from.

When I say copy, I don't mean literally COPYING the whole website (i.e. known as STEALING). I actually meant modeling after them. After all, the fastest way to success is to find a mentor and model after him or her. Don't do it the hard way and reinvent the wheel.

"If you want to be successful, find someone who has achieved the results you want and copy what they do, and you'll achieve the same results"
Anthony Robbins

This report serves to explain 9 different types of Internet business models so that you are aware of what kinds of businesses are available to you. I'll explain how each of them works, what do you need in order to start (at least the basics), the different ways you can make money with those business models, the pros and cons. Where possible, I've been generous enough to include a couple of interviews from my membership site. If you like what you read, do

visit us at Internet-Business-Success-Stories.com for more information on Real People Making Real Money.

If you already own an Internet business, you might want to create an additional stream of income by starting business number two, three or even nine for that matter.

BUT, why show you different models of Internet businesses instead of just telling you that this business is the best and that business is the best? Good question actually. If you scour the Internet for business opportunities, you will be flooded with hundreds, if not thousands of them. Each one claiming to be the best. But exactly which is the BEST?

Actually none of them. Each business model is unique and different. And each of them has their own pros and cons. The BEST business model would be the one that you suit you.

But in order to come to that conclusion, you'll need the necessary information about all of those businesses. If you choose the wrong business, you would not persist or strive for it. You won't enjoy it. And worse of all, it's likely you will not succeed.

If you have noticed, there are a lot of proponents on making money from information products. I do agree that selling information products is an excellent way to make money online. But does that mean you will need to sell information products in order to be successful?

NO! There are plenty of other businesses that can make you money. Selling information products is NOT the only way. When you read the interview stories with people who are making money with their Internet business, you'll notice that not all of them are in the information product business or the Internet marketing turfs.

In the course of your online business, you will have to spend quite a lot of time searching for certain tools and services like web hosting, auto responders, mailing software, web designing, forums, and so on. I have compiled a list of useful resources at the back of this book for your easy reference.

BACK TO BASICS

There are certain basic components that you need when starting your online business. Of course not all business models will require each of them. But I'll explain the few basic components that MOST will need.

1) Domain Name

Depending on what you want out of your domain name, this will determine how you choose it.

If you are looking for a short, catchy and easily remembered domain name, then go for something short and unique.

But if you want your domain name to have good rapport with the search engines, then go for keyword rich domain names. (This is the general understanding. Whether it really HELPS in the Search Engines or not cannot be guaranteed)

2) Web hosting

You need to find a good web hosting company. There are many in the market out there. Check out which one will suit your business needs.

Generally, you'll need secure server capabilities. As is the common practice now, they should be offering you cgi capabilities and ftp accesses.

One thing to take note, do not be tempted by FREE hosting. Nothing is FREE in this world. The risk of your site having downtime and lousy support far outweighs whatever you can save by not having a proper hosting company.

But if you are just testing out some mini-sites, then it's okay to go for free hosting. But be forewarned, you get what you pay for.

3) Order processing

If you are selling something that needs to accept payment, then you will need to be able to accept credit card payment online. If you don't, you are missing out on 90% of your potential sales.

It's quite simple to set-up a third party merchant account with one of those companies that provide this facility, i.e. accepting online payments.

Got it? Good, let's ROCK 'n ROLL!

COPYCAT BUSINESS #1 - DIRECT RESPONSE WEBSITE

This is one of the most common business models you will see on the Internet. Why? Because it's one of the simplest website to create. A typical direct sales website will have one sales letter (typically a rather long one) 'persuading' you to buy the product it is offering. And if the visitor likes the product, they proceed to the order page to purchase.

If they do not wish to buy at that point in time, they leave. But are they let off that easily? Not really. The experienced marketer will find a way to get hold of the visitor's email address so that they can keep in touch with the visitor again.

The reason is simple. Majority of your visitors will not buy on their first visit or first contact. Studies have shown that it takes on average of 7 contacts before a sales is concluded (for your information, this applies to both online and offline marketing).

In order to have the optimum results for converting visitors into customers, you need to contact them on average, 7 times.

By capturing their email address, you can email them with some useful information and at the same time promoting your product again, thus increasing your chances of conversion.

Nuts 'n Bolts

➤ Your OWN product.

This does not necessarily means a product you create on your own. It can be something you created, you bought a resale rights to or even something that others created for you. But the bottom line is you have to have CONTROL over the product.

➤ Product visual.

Whether you like it or not, visuals do appeal to the eyes, one of the human sensors. Visuals alone will not define your success, but it will assist you in converting MORE sales.

➤ Sales letter

This will make or break your business. Whether your visitor decides to buy or not will depends on how persuasive your letter is. There are lots of resources on how to write persuasive and compelling sales letter. If you are a Warrior member, you can download lots of excellent resources for FREE. [To find out more on becoming a Warrior member, click here.](#)

Another resource that you can download lots of excellent information and e-Books is at my membership site, 'Internet-Business-Success-Stories.com'. [To find out how this site can inspire and benefit you, please click here.](#)

➤ Payment processor

You NEED to accept online orders. I'm sure you have heard that.

➤ Pop-Up Window

If you want to capture your visitors email address, this feature (whether you like it or not) will increase your sign-up rate by more than 200% as compared to just using a sign-up form at your site.

➤ Auto-Responder Messages

Prepare a series of messages to be sent out at certain intervals (example everyday or every two days) to those who opt to sign-up to your mailing list. Remember, do not just send out blatant sales messages. Before you even reach the 7th series, they would have already unsubscribe.

Instead, offer something useful and informative relating to your product, and subtly recommends that they need your product.

The Goodies

This model can be extremely profitable, especially if your product is an intangible one like downloadable e-Books, software, audios and so on. Your product and delivery cost is practically zero.

After having built a successful website on your product, you can automate a lot of the tasks involved. This will free up your time to launch another website.

After selling your product, there are opportunities to profit from recommending related back-end products to your customers.

The Baddies

You need to have a product. To some people, this can be quite a challenge. The next thing you need is writing your sales copy. Depending on your command of the English language, this can be easy or challenging. I suggest getting some resources to learn how to write compelling sales copy.

The next tough part is driving traffic to your website. Please do not have the impression that visitors will 'automatically' visit your website just because you are selling something which you 'think' they need. Tough luck!

Tips, tips and tips

Internet marketing plays an important role in this type of website. There are lots of Internet marketing books and courses that you can learn from. Of course, there has not been a manual that is the Bible of Internet marketing. Simply because marketing is dynamic and unique to each business, you need to tailor what you learn specifically to your website.

Interview Stories courtesy of Internet-Business-Success-Stories.com

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Melanie Mendelson

PracticalWeightLoss.com

Melvin:

Hi Melanie! Thanks for taking time off from your busy schedule to have this interview with us. To get our readers acquainted with you, perhaps you could give us a brief introduction of your background (e.g. what you were doing prior to starting your Internet business).

Melanie:

My education and background is in Information Technology. Prior to starting my Internet business, I have been working full-time as a web programmer. I never enjoyed working Monday through Friday, nine to five in a corporate environment.

I have been looking for ways to escape the corporate world and work for myself, and I found the answer in Internet marketing. I have written a weight loss e-book, started selling it from my website, and was able to quit my full-time job to pursue my dream of self-employment.

Melvin:

I understand that you currently owns the website, PracticalWeightLoss.com that sells your recipe for slimming. How did you conceive the idea for this website? Was it a 'light bulb' kind of moment or something else?

Melanie:

I have personally lost 23 pounds several years ago and got down to my ideal weight. Best of all, I have been keeping the weight off ever since. I was able to do it without pills, diets or strenuous exercise.

Then it dawned on me that there are so many people out there who need and want to lose weight, but have never been able to do so. Most people think that losing weight should involve extreme measures like starving, spending hours at the gym, drugs or even surgery! This could not be further from the truth.

I decided to share all my weight loss knowledge and experience with people, and wrote my e-book "Practical Weight Loss". My e-book helps people duplicate my weight loss success - lose weight in a healthy way and keep it off forever.

Melvin:

Could you describe to us exactly what your site does, who is your target customers, how soon your site turned in a profit and the size of your business (this can include the staff force, annual revenue, profits, traffic size, etc).

Melanie:

My website caters to all people who wants to lose weight. The weight loss market is huge - according to statistics, almost two out of three Americans are overweight, and one out of five is obese. Even many of those people who are not clinically overweight still want to lose a few pounds.

In addition to selling my weight loss e-book, my website provides free content such as weight loss articles, calorie and weight calculators, recipe of the day and a very busy discussion board. I also publish a biweekly weight loss newsletter. Because of the quality content and the weight loss community, many people come back to my website day after day.

I have turned a profit the first week after offering my e-book for sale. My site traffic averages to about 1,500 unique visitors a day. My average profit from the e-book is about \$2,000 a month.

Melvin:

Great! Do you mind sharing with us how do you drive traffic to your website (as in from Search Engines, Pay Per Clicks, Newsletter, JVs, etc)?

Melanie:

Most of my traffic comes from the free search engine listings and links from other sites. Because my site has a lot of quality content, I have good search engine positions. I also have a links directory with reciprocal links from other related sites.

I have tried buying traffic through pay-per-click, but barely broke even, so I stopped doing it.

I also publish my weight loss newsletter every two weeks, and I see a spike in traffic every time I send it out. I also had my articles published in several other e-zines, so that brought in some traffic as well.

Melvin:

So, how much time do you spend on average per week on this website of yours? Do you outsource or automate any tasks so as to free up your time? And if yes, whose service and what tools do you use?

Melanie:

I spend 5 to 10 hours per week on my website. Most of this time is spent responding to related e-mails, monitoring my message board and publishing a newsletter.

I do not outsource any website maintenance tasks. My website is automated pretty well: mailing list subscribing/unsubscribing, message board posting and e-book ordering are all automated.

To minimize the time spent answering e-mails, I have the template answers to common questions that I just copy and paste into e-mails as opposed to typing my answers from scratch.

Melvin:

Why do you think you have achieved the kind of success you are enjoying right now? What did you do right that so many others have failed?

Melanie:

I decided to create my own product, and I stuck with this plan and did not give up.

Creating my own product was the key to success for me. Before that, I tried to make money by promoting affiliate programs, but I haven't made any real profit with it. I'm the type of person who can actively promote only something that is truly mine, and I'm sure many other people are the same way.

And of course, persistence and belief in yourself is crucial. The only reason why most people fail is because they get discouraged too easily and give up too soon.

Also, creating your own product is hard work, and not everyone is willing to put in this work. You have to be disciplined enough to keep working when there is no boss watching over your shoulder.

Melvin:

What have been your biggest mistakes, challenges and regrets, if any?

Melanie:

My biggest challenge is overcoming procrastination. It is difficult to force myself to do useful work instead of aimlessly surfing the Internet. I have so many different business ideas, but the hard part is actually acting on them and bringing them to life.

Melvin:

Besides making money from selling your 'recipe', how else do you make money from this website? I mean we all talk about multiple streams of income coming from one website, right?

Melanie:

I make some money by publishing other people's articles with my affiliate links to their products. However, 99% of the money that I make from my website comes from the sales of my "Practical Weight Loss" e-book.

Melvin:

I'm sure our readers would like to know this. From your experience, what do you think would be the common mistakes 'newbies' make in a typical 'direct sales web site' business model?

Melanie:

They purchase reprint rights to one of those e-books that "everyone and their dog" is selling, and expect to make money with them.

Also, many newbies are selling the information that they have no expertise in. For example, they sell the material on how to make money on the Internet when they never made money on the Internet themselves. Or they sell the e-book on how to drive traffic to a website even though their website is only getting five hits a week.

If you do not understand, apply and benefit from the material that you are selling, how do you expect others to trust you and buy it from you? In other words, you should always practice what you preach.

Melvin:

Thanks again for your time, Melanie. As a parting gift to our reader, what advice do you have for people venturing into this 'direct sales web site' business model?

Melanie:

Do not listen to the negative people who try to discourage you from pursuing Internet business. When I told my friends and relatives that I was going to write a weight loss e-book and sell it from my website, they thought I was crazy and did not believe I would ever be able to sell anything. Well, I proved them all wrong!

If I could do it, anyone can do it too. It's all a matter of perseverance. Anyone can do anything they really set their mind to.

Do not be afraid to be different. We only live once, so do what makes YOU happy and not what others think should make you happy. Always be true to yourself.

COPYCAT BUSINESS #2 – ONLINE AUCTION

Yes, you can make a living using online auction. When we talk about online auctions, eBay comes to mind, the granddaddy of online auction websites.

You can sell practically anything and everything from collectibles, second-hand goods, crafts, etc.

In typical auction manner, you list an item with one of the online auction sites for others to bid. You can have a minimum price, better known as reserve price among auctioneers, set. Bidders will make a bid for your product and at the end of the auction period, the product goes to the highest bidder.

More than 35 million people have participated in online auction. Just why are they so popular?

More and more people are looking into online auction for a variety of reasons. Some go there to offload 'unwanted' stuff, some to get bargains, some to make a serious living, while some consider auction as a hobby.

The fact is online auction provides the seller a ready traffic stream, and as long as they sell something in demand, the buyers are there.

As for the bidders, they have at their fingertips, listings of all the 'suppliers' / 'sellers' for the particular product they are looking for. This makes price comparison very easy. And they can get a good bargain!

Nuts 'n Bolts

➤ **An account with an online auction site**

If you are just starting out, I suggest you go for eBay. You can learn a lot from there. Only when you have built up your experience, then only you go for the niche auction sites.

➤ **Digital camera**

This is a **MUST** if you are serious in making it in online auction. A picture speaks a thousand words. By having a visual of the product you are selling, bidders will know 'EXACTLY' what they are buying. Also, this will tell them that you indeed **HAVE** the product.

But then, if you are tight on cash, you do not have to invest in a state of the art camera. Just go for something simple and cheap. Your purpose is to capture the image of your product.

The Goodies

With online auction, you do not need to have a website. Saves you the trouble of creating and maintaining one.

You can sell anything you want and change it anytime. You are not tied down to promoting traffic to your website.

The Baddies

If you are selling a physical product, which is normally the case, you would need to deal with shipping and handling. Depending on the type of product, this can easily take up a lot of your time.

You might have to deal with sales tax, which can be a chore, depending on which state you are selling from.

Not only that, if you are selling physical goods, prepare yourself for product returns, damaged and lost goods.

Tips, tips and tips

Selling using online auction can be a very satisfying endeavor and this money making model requires no huge investment nor overhead costs. To learn more on Internet auctions, learn from the 'gurus' who are the 'powersellers'.

Before you jump right in, find out what sells. You do not want to waste time on low demand products. Also, bear in mind that what I mentioned about online auctions are in it's most basic form. In order to be really successful, I suggest reading more about online auctions from professional sources.

Check out this [ebook on Internet Auction FAQs](#) written by Karol Gadja.

Interview Stories courtesy of Internet-Business-Success-Stories.com

This is just one of the many interview stories available to members of Internet-Business-Success-Stories.com For more of them, please visit us at Internet-Business-Success-Stories.com

Jim Cockrum

SilentSalesMachine.com

Melvin:

Hi Jim! Thanks for taking time off from your busy schedule to have this interview with us. To get our readers acquainted with you, perhaps you could give us brief introduction of your background.

Jim:

Before I got into Internet Marketing, I had a pretty good sales job with a software company. I made a pretty good living, but my real passion was the desire to have a business of my own. I wanted flexibility in my schedule and I wanted to be able to work on my own from home. I found all that in Internet Marketing.

Melvin:

I understand that you currently own the website, SilentSalesMachine.com that sells your e-Book. I suppose you are rather successful making money from online auctions. How did you come upon the idea of making a living from online auctions? Was it a 'light bulb' kind of moment or something else?

Jim:

It's not an overnight success story. I started out selling just a handful of items at a time on eBay, but as my business grew I noticed a recurring pattern. I had a lot of customers contacting me with questions about my product. Instead of answering them one at a time I wrote an e-Book and sold it to them. From there, SilentSalesMachine.com was born and the rest is history.

SilentSalesMachine.com is ranked in the top 1% most visited websites in the world after just a year or so on the market. The first year and a half of my business went kind of slow, but after that things really took off.

The key to my success has been listening to my customers.

Melvin:

Very impressive, Jim. Could you describe to us exactly what you sell, how do you do it, who are your target customers, how soon you turned in a profit and the size of your business (this can include the staff force, annual revenue, profits, etc).

Jim:

I'll answer as much as I can.

I sell just about anything that carries a potential for profit and that requires very little of my time to deliver to the customer. My target customer is anyone willing to spend money online. I started turning a profit almost immediately on eBay - that's easy.

I won't tell you the exact size of my biz, but it's safe to say that I earn 3-4 times more (profit) than anyone I went to college with this year. It's still a one-man show...just me. I am planning to hire help soon to help with email.

Melvin:

So, how much time do you spend on average per week on this online auction? Do you outsource or automate any tasks so as to free up your time? And if yes, whose service and what tools do you use?

Jim:

I like auctionwatch.com. I don't sell as much as I used to on eBay simply because I have so many people demanding my time to help teach them my secrets. At the peak of my eBay business I was working 3-4 hours per day and earning about \$60-\$70,000 annualized.

The best advice I can give anyone in this biz is to grow your mailing list. Make that the hidden purpose behind everything you do online. You can benefit from that in hundreds of ways.

For example - when you buy advertising don't send people to your website. Instead ask them to send a blank email to your autoresponder for more info.

Another example: when I advertise for my 'Silent Sales Machine' book I put in the ad a request to send a blank email to newsletter@silentsalesmachine.com. If I just told about SilentSalesMachine.com in the ad I wouldn't be growing my list as quickly.

Melvin:

What a good idea that was, to collect email straight from the ads.

Why do you think you have achieved the kind of success you are enjoying right now? What did you do right that so many others have failed?

Jim:

Listen to your customers. Treat them right and then ask them what else they need. Find a niche and become the best in your industry.

I consider myself one of the top one or two guru's in the world when it comes to teaching others how to turn a simple eBay business into a serious hands-free income stream by taking advantage of all the non-buying customers that auctions get. Now that's specific, but I'm the best of the best at it.

Melvin:

In your opinion, what would be the pros and cons of online auction?

Jim:

The toughest part of selling using online auctions in my opinion is finding items to sell that will get a lot of hits. I use auctions as a traffic generation tool - I'm not so concerned about profit on each auction.

You have to experiment to know what is 'hot' and what is not. If you want to skip the 'experimenting' step the best way to quickly determine what items are getting the hits (or visitors) on online auction sites is to check out auctionkeyword.com. They offer a service that tracks the most popular searches on the major auction sites. I give them my highest recommendation.

Don't get trapped selling 150 items per day and wind up running a full-time business packing and shipping. That's a J-O-B!! Use auctions to generate leads for your residual income opportunities. That's what I teach!

Melvin:

What have been your biggest mistakes, challenges and regrets, if any?

Jim:

I seriously have no regrets so far. If you are afraid to fail and learn you won't make it in this biz. I don't regret any mistakes I've made. The success more than makes up for it.

Melvin:

Besides making money from online auctions, how else do you make money from your existing customer base? I mean we all talk about multiple streams of income, right?

Jim:

It's all about the list. I love to market high quality e-Books and electronic products that don't require any shipping. It's great to get up in the morning and find out I earned \$200 while I slept...that's exciting and it happens all the time.

Melvin:

I'm sure our readers would like to know this. From your experience, what do you think would be the common mistakes 'newbies' make in on online auction?

Jim:

They give up too soon. They think that they have to find the lowest price on the planet on an item in order to profit from online auctions. They try to earn a living in the first month. They give up when they can't find something to sell.

Melvin:

As a parting gift to our reader, what advice do you have for people venturing into online auction?

Jim:

Buy some things on eBay. Sell some things on eBay. You'll get hooked. After that, begin legally collecting the email addresses of your customers and auction visitors and grow a business. I have 25,000 subscribers to my newsletter using those ideas. About one year ago I had 100 subscribers.

Melvin:

Thanks again for your time, Jim. That's an IMPRESSIVE number by the way (your list). I wish you all the best!

Recommended resources for online auctions:

[Net Auction Masters Course \(it's FREE\)](#) – Start and grow a profitable net auction business. Click on the link to send a blank email and the course will be sent to your email address.

[Auction Riches](#) – by Robbin Tungett

[Auction Hints](#) – by Jim Wilson

[Silent Sales Machine](#) – by Jim Cockrum

COPYCAT BUSINESS #3 – AFFILIATES

Just a quickie on this ☺. I don't mean promoting affiliate products in your website or to your customers. Of course it's one of the income streams in those business model.

But what I'm saying here is to promote affiliate products without a website or newsletter. HUH! Can you do that? Of course you can!

If you are still learning and researching the Internet world, not ready to launch a full business complete with website and so on, you could use this ZERO cost method.

I'm sure you have been to discussion forums and message boards. And I'm sure you have noticed that those people who post something there will normally leave a sig file (short for signature file) at the bottom of the post.

It's about four to five lines, giving their name and promoting their website. Now, if you have a website, then by all means promote YOUR website.

But if you do not have one, it doesn't mean you can't use it. By all means use it to promote someone else's affiliate products but using your own affiliate links.

You can use this method to earn some money before launching into a full-fledge Internet business complete with your own website.

But do note that you won't make a lot of money using this method.

Nuts 'n Bolts

➤ Be an affiliate of a few good websites.

Bear in mind that you would not have the time to profitably promote every affiliate program in town. Instead, sign up for a few good ones that relates to your interest and promote it.

The Goodies

There's no cost involved! You do not have to worry about overheads, customer service, etc.

It's the easiest to start with if you just want to get a feel of how the Internet business world works before venturing into something of your own.

The Baddies

Frankly speaking, you won't make much money without a website and a product of your own. Don't expect to strike it rich using this method. To earn some profits for funding your business is okay, but doing it in the long run can be pretty exhaustive and once you stop, there goes your commission checks.

Tips, tips and tips

Be careful of who you sign up as an affiliate with. Make sure they have a reliable affiliate tracking system as well as a reputation for paying out commission checks.

I do not wish for you to be a victim of some unscrupulous people who cheat you of it. I would suggest promoting products listed with ClickBank. They will pay you the commission as well as track your affiliate sales. This way, them being an independent party from the seller, you are at least secure from the few unscrupulous sellers.

But take heart, there are still plenty of nice people out there.

To find out how you can earn high commission from Internet-Business-Success-Stories.com's affiliate program, please visit our affiliate page:

<http://internet-business-success-stories.com/affiliates/index.htm>

Recommended resources for Affiliate Marketing:

[Affiliate Masters Course \(it's FREE\)](#) – Shows how to become a high-earning affiliate champion. Click on the link to send a blank email and the course will be sent to your email address.

[Super Affiliate Handbook](#) – by Rosalind Gardner

COPYCAT BUSINESS #4 – FREE LANCER

There are people who don't fancy the idea of surfing the Internet for hours everyday. Looking for information, marketing their website, looking for products to sell at online auction ... to them this is a chore. Something they would rather not do. Are you one of them?

Does that mean that you can't make a living online? Of course you still can. Offer your services (if you are good at a particular skill) as a free lancer.

Before you jump to the conclusion that you need to be a techie (a technically inclined person) in order to do free lance work, think again.

There are certain freelance works that will need techies to do it like programming, coding, etc. But at the same time, a non-techie can still offer his / her services online. For example, you could be a ghost-writer (if you are good at writing), graphics designer (if you are artistic), writing business plan (if your business skills is strong enough), and so on. The possibilities are unlimited!

I've listed 3 websites on where you can find out more on free-lance work:

<http://www.elance.com/>

<http://www.rentacoder.com/>

<http://www.scriptlance.com/>

Nuts 'n Bolts

➤ Register yourself with a free-lancer website

You may need to pay a fee to register as a member in order for you to bid at projects.

Some may not charge registration fees but will charge commissions based upon the value of your work billed.

The Goodies

You do not have to worry about building a website. Just register at those free-lance site and you are ready to do business.

The Baddies

What you earn is in proportionate to what you do, i.e. your time. And once you stop bidding for projects to work on, your income stops.

Tips, tips and tips

If do not wish to go through the trouble of learning about Internet business and Internet marketing, but still want to take advantage of the Internet to make money, this is something that you can consider.

After all, this is not limited to just IT stuff, you can apply your knowledge from your business background, your creative talent, writing flair and so on.

COPYCAT BUSINESS #5 – SERVICE PROVIDER

If you are good at something, like web designing, programming, graphics design, e-Book cover design, cgi script installation and so on, you could provide these services on the web. Instead of just offering your expertise as a free lancer, build a website and operate it as a business.

It's can be very profitable, but at the same time, can be time consuming if you are the one who's doing everything. Then, business will be limited to the amount of time you can commit.

Other than the services mentioned above, I would classify web hosting, auto-responder services, affiliate tracking services, ads-tracking services, and a whole lot more as under this category.

Nuts 'n Bolts

➤ Your OWN product, which is the service you are providing.
Preferably come out with a service that people need. Search the forums for clues. More often than not, if the same question keeps popping up, other people will have the same question. Solve this problem by providing a solution.

Don't try to compete with the established services. Unless you're a marketing genius and confident of capturing the market share. Otherwise, leave it alone.

➤ Sales letter

This will make or break your business. Whether your visitor decides to use your services or not will depend on how persuasive your letter is. There are lots of resources on how to write persuasive and compelling sales letter. If you are a Warrior member, you can download lots of excellent resources for FREE. [To find out more on becoming a Warrior member, click here.](#)

➤ Payment processor

I've mentioned this before, so I'm not going to repeat myself. Refer back to the 'Back To Basics' section.

➤ Pop-Up Window

And I've mentioned how important this is in the Copycat Business #1 ☺

➤ Auto-Responder Messages

Same as above. Refer back to Copycat Business #1

The Goodies

Similarly to Copycat Business #1, this business model can be extremely profitable if you are providing a service that is in demand.

Because you are in CONTROL of the product, you get to choose who to market it, what kind of promotion you want to run, what pricing to set, and much more. You get to decide.

The Baddies

Like I mentioned earlier, your time is your own limitation. Unless of course you employ someone else to help you.

Yes, yes, as in providing any services, you need to deal with customer service. It can be a hassle. But hey, that's part and parcel of doing business.

Tips, tips and tips

Try not to compete with the mass public, ESPECIALLY web hosting. You are in for a tough battle. Instead find a need where there isn't much competition. Not sure you can do that? If you LISTEN carefully enough, you will HEAR.

Interview Stories courtesy of Internet-Business-Success-Stories.com

This is just one of the many interview stories available to members of Internet-Business-Success-Stories.com For more of them, please visit us at Internet-Business-Success-Stories.com

Ovi Dogar

AbsoluteCovers.com

Melvin:

Hi, Ovi! Thanks for taking time off from your busy schedule to have this interview with us. To get our readers acquainted with you, perhaps you could give us a brief introduction of your background (e.g. what you were doing prior to starting your Internet business).

Ovi:

Melvin, I feel really good about being interviewed by you. I'm sure your site will be a real success.

Since I was a teenager I was in love with computers and all the things you can accomplish with them.

I used to work as a designer for a local newspaper for more than four years and this was my learning period. I worked with real artists that helped me a lot. I really learned what looks good to the eye and what's the difference between an image that make a lot of sales and one that don't.

Melvin:

I understand that you currently own the website, AbsoluteCovers.com that offers e-Book cover and web template designing. How did you conceive the idea for this web site?

Ovi:

Since I didn't want another 8-17 job, I decided to do something that I love to do. And computer graphics really fit the scene. The idea was premeditated so I worked following a clear plan that was in my mind.

Melvin:

Could you describe to us exactly what you sell, how do you do it, who are your target customers, how soon you turned in a profit and the size of your business (this can include the staff force, annual revenue, profits, etc).

Ovi:

I sell all kinds of virtual packages from e-book covers to membership cards. I even designed logos for a few of my clients. My target customers are the creators of different electronic products that want to properly market and sell their products online.

The hardest period was in the beginning. I had to work hard to get new clients. But now, the word of mouth plays its role really well. Now I get lots of new clients simply from the referral of my satisfied clients. :)

Even if AbsoluteCovers.com is still young, it's already a profitable business. I had started AbsoluteCovers in 2002, September and considering the exponential growth, I'll soon have to hire some designers to work with during heavy workloads.

Melvin:

I'm glad that your business is doing so well. So, how much time do you spend on average per week on this web site? Do you outsource or automate any tasks so as to free up your time? And if yes, whose service and what tools do you use?

Ovi:

I spend a lot of time with this business. The drawback with services is that they represent a linear source of income... meaning that you somehow earn how much you work.

Right now, I'm working with an old friend of mine on an e-book that will teach people how to reach their dreams interviewing others.

As for automation, I can do some programming myself so I've made some scripts that automate some of my tasks (auto responders, link exchanges). However, I really believe that a personal touch helps a lot online.

Melvin:

Why do you think you have achieved the kind of success you are enjoying right now? What did you do right that so many others have failed?

Ovi:

I guess that success has to do with knowing how to fulfill your customer's needs and making them happy. If you check my website you'll see that I like to give before I ask for anything in return. I learned a long time ago that the Universe always pays its debts, so whenever you give something, unconditionally, you just lend something to the Universe. And that's a good investment.

Melvin:

Now, that's a good one. An investment to the Universe. I like that.

What have been your biggest mistakes, challenges and regrets, if any?

Ovi:

Actually, I consider all these aspects as learning experiences.

This way there are no failures, mistakes, etc. The only regret is that I haven't started this business earlier.

Melvin:

Besides making money from providing services, how else do you make money from your existing customer base? I mean we all talk about multiple streams of income, right?

Ovi:

Most of my clients are repeat customers so they have a great value for me. I respect them and I don't like to oversell them. Right now, I'm not promoting any affiliate program.

Melvin:

I'm sure our readers would like to know this. From your experience, what do you think would be the common mistakes 'newbies' make in the online world?

Ovi:

The biggest mistake is to choose a bad mentor. If you follow someone giving you bad advice, you're in trouble and may I say out of business. Also there are a lot of newbies that wait too long, read too many books, always looking for the missing secret and they never take the first step.

I think that the real secret online is that there is no secret. Use your common sense and start doing business. When you have to make a decision, always put yourself into your customer's shoes. Sell like you would like to be sold to, and do things the way you would like things to be done to you.

Melvin:

Great advice Ovi. Thanks again for your time. As a parting gift to our readers, what advice do you have for people venturing into online business providing services?

Ovi:

Always keep in mind that your client is your gold mine and treat them with respect. Sure, there are some customers that are difficult to work with, sure there are some guys that don't always respect the law, but remember, the bad part only makes the good part look better because of the contrasts.

In the beginning you'll have to work for lower prices, but later, when you have an impressive portfolio, things will become much better for you.

Melvin:

Ovi, I must say that you have some interesting principles and philosophies that a lot of people could use. Thanks again for your time and I wish you all the best!

COPYCAT BUSINESS #6 – DAILY TIPS / JOKES / QUOTES / ETC

I'm sure you have come across websites where the main page has a form for you to sign up for a FREE tip (joke, quote, whatever) of the day kind of stuff. Its purpose is to get you to SIGN-UP!

Since it's free, and people sure could use a joke or tip everyday, a lot of people will sign-up. You can get hundreds of thousands of subscribers. And just what do you do with this list?

Make money of course! In every email that you send out for the tip of the day, you can have ads placed on it. Normally it's at the top, middle, and bottom. Just how much is the advertising space sold for?

That depends on how many subscribers you have. Say for example you have 200,000 subscribers whereby you send out a joke to them EVERY DAY! And in daily email that you send out, you are getting on average \$500 in advertising income. $\$500 \times 365\text{days} = \$182,500$. And guess what, everything is done using auto-responder, fully automated. That's like a money minting machine. ☺

Nuts 'n Bolts

➤ Auto-responder

You need to have an automated auto-responder system. Obviously you do not want to send out email everyday, 365 days in a year.

The Goodies

A very interesting business model. Simple to set-up and most of the materials for your free tips, quotes, jokes and so on are available FREE on the Internet. You just need to search for those information.

The Baddies

Time! In order to build up your subscribers to such a huge list takes time. Lots of time.

Tips, tips and tips

If you like to scour the Internet for useful information and tips, then this can be something you can consider, but be prepared for the long drought before you can actually sell advertising space.

Ideas for this model include having a marketing tip of the day, software tip of the day, software tip of the day, etc.

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Jason Gracia

Motivation123.com

Melvin:

Hi Jason! Thanks for taking time off from your busy schedule to have this interview with us. To get our readers acquainted with you, perhaps you could give us a brief introduction of your background.

Jason:

Melvin, I'd like to begin by thanking you for this opportunity to share my experiences with your readers. Prior to beginning Motivation123 I was working towards a marketing degree at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. At the same time I was helping a local sports complex with their marketing program.

Melvin:

I understand that you currently owns the website, Motivation123.com that sends out weekly motivation newsletters to subscribers. How did you conceive the idea for this website? Was it a 'light bulb' kind of moment or something else?

Jason:

Great question. The idea had always been in my mind. I knew that I would be following this direction in one form or another. Whether it was helping the students at the sports complex or guiding a fellow employee through changes in their life, I found the most joy in helping others improve their lives through motivation.

Successful Web sites ran in the family. After two months out of college I decided to follow in their footsteps and bring my passion to the Web. It has been an amazing ride ever since.

Melvin:

Could you describe to us exactly what you sell, how do you do it, who are your target customers, how soon you turned in a profit and the size of your business (this can include the staff force, annual revenue, profits, etc.).

Jason:

Currently I am offering my latest book for sale, *Motivated in Minutes*. It is a handbook for those in search of a better life, containing over 1,000 tips and ideas covering motivation, goals, and attitude. We offer the book exclusively through Motivation123.com.

Along with the book, we also offer advertising through our newsletter. With a circulation of over 30,000 in just under two years organizations are able to reach a healthy base of consumers.

When it comes to motivation, our target market covers the gamut. In one way or another, every living human being is endlessly seeking more happiness, success, and true meaning in life. Through motivation we are able to equip these individuals with the tools they need to succeed.

We turned a profit after six months of operating the Web site. Currently, we are estimating annual revenues at \$50,000 gross finishing our second year in business.

The company includes myself and my assistant, Tracy Hill.

Melvin:

So, how much time do you spend on average per week on this website, including preparing the materials for your email? Do you outsource or automate any tasks so as to free up your time? And if yes, whose service and what tools do you use?

Jason:

I spend an average of five hours per week on site maintenance and writing the newsletter. We use Sparklist for our newsletter service. Aside from this company, and hosting and online service, we do not use outside sources.

Melvin:

In your opinion, what do you think are the pros and cons of having a business model like yours?

Jason:

I believe the greatest pro is also the greatest con. Ease of entry makes the Internet the perfect place to bring an idea to a massive audience for a small expense. Many individuals have a great concept to share with others, but their lack of funds and experience make it impossible to proceed. The Internet has allowed thousands of people to do what they have always wanted to do; run their own show.

This, of course, brings about the biggest drawback to Internet businesses. Gaining credibility is much more difficult due to the ease of entry. If you have basic knowledge of the Web and \$20 you can start an Internet company that stands shoulder to shoulder with every other organization online. Although gaining trust and respect on the Web is more difficult, the positives far outweigh the drawbacks of online commerce.

Melvin:

Why do you think you have achieved the kind of success you are enjoying right now? What did you do right that so many others have failed?

Jason:

Right from the start I created the site with ease of use and high search engine rankings in mind. Today we enjoy a #1 ranking in Google and Yahoo for the search word 'motivation.' This has helped us grow rapidly and reach a broad audience.

Aside from the concrete steps taken to ensure high visibility and quality, the site continues to evolve because I love the work. I have no doubt that I will be involved in the motivation industry for the rest of my life. We each have a purpose, something meaningful to life for. Luckily I have found my calling early in life.

Melvin:

What have been your biggest mistakes, challenges and regrets, if any?

Jason:

My only regret is not starting sooner. Time is the scarcest of resources, and in the end the only wish I'll have is to receive more time doing what I love.

Melvin:

Besides making money from promoting affiliate products in your newsletter, how else do you make money from your existing subscriber base? I mean we all talk about multiple streams of income, right?

Jason:

Aside from selling our book and newsletter advertising, affiliates sales make up the final income source.

Melvin:

I'm sure our readers would like to know this. From your experience, what do you think would be the common mistakes 'newbies' make in on online business?

Jason:

There are so many facets to running a successful site that it is difficult to name only one area of concern. I would have to say that building a strong base is vital. This includes writing articles, visiting forums, submitting to search engines...doing all of the ground work to create a strong foundation.

I also believe that in order for anyone to be successful on the Net, or in any business, they have to enjoy it. If you don't love what you are doing, you'll never be great. Because of the numbers of businesses online, you have to be great to make it.

If I could offer only one common mistake, it would have to be offering products that are not in high demand. Too many entrepreneurs offer services and products that they love, but not enough other people share their enthusiasm. Your market must reach millions if you are to succeed.

Melvin:

Thanks again for your time, Jason. As a parting gift to our reader, what advice do you have for people venturing into providing daily or weekly newsletter for free?

Jason:

Find a topic that is universal and close to your heart. There is no other way to enjoy success online.

Melvin:

Truly agree. I hope that you will continue to motivate more people in your business. All the BEST!

COPYCAT BUSINESS #7 – DROP SHIPPING

If you are someone who prefers the 'real' stuff, meaning products that you can actually HOLD with your hands, then drop-shipping is an option for you. Yes, there are people who think that selling software and e-Books are not 'real'. It's okay.

Drop-shipping is like having a shop where you have your products on display. But your shop is not a brick 'n mortar shop. It's an online store.

Someone visits your store, browse through your product range, and buy the things they want. An email of the order will be sent to you and you'll have to contact your supplier to send (or better known as drop-ship) the products to your customer, using YOUR company name.

Nuts 'n Bolts

➤ Online Store

You can create your own website suing a normal web host, and drive traffic to your store. Otherwise, the better alternative would be to join an online shopping mall like Yahoo! Shopping, whereby they have built in traffic, online store, payment processing, shopping cart and so on.

In fact everything you need to operate an online store can be found at those established malls. This way you save time and money.

The Goodies

You are selling 'real' products. And if you are using an online mall, you have ready traffic.

Because you are using a drop-shipper, you need not worry about handling and shipping.

The Baddies

Trying to differentiate yourself from the hundreds, if not thousands of online store.. Profit margin is not as profitable as selling services or information products.

Trying to find which drop-shipper works best for you, and finding the right products to sell.

Tips, tips and tips

Find your niche. Just because everyone is selling vcds and computers doesn't mean you have to do the same. Find something unique that has a market for it and you have a winner there.

Knowing what to sell is half the battle won. One of the BEST sites if you want to find out more on DropShipping is [Chris Malta's DropShipDirectory](#).

Interview Stories courtesy of Internet-Business-Success-Stories.com

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Dave & Debbie Harber

[LasVegas-Chips.com](#)

Melvin:

Hi, Dave! Thanks for taking time off from your busy schedule to have this interview with us. To get our readers acquainted with you, perhaps you could give us a brief introduction of your background.

Dave:

I grew up in the Philadelphia area and moved to Las Vegas in the mid 80's. For the lack of anything better to do I became a casino craps (dice) dealer. About this time I bought my first computer and signed up with CompuServe to be able to send e-mail to a friend back east. This was my first introduction to the online world. In 1993 I decided I had had enough of the casinos and went back to school (UNLV) to get a degree in computer science. I can clearly remember the day that I got to see beyond the CompuServe horizon into the "World Wide Web". Life's never been the same.

Melvin:

I understand that you currently own the web site, <http://www.weddingchips.com> and <http://www.lasvegas-chips.com>. What are these sites all about? How did you conceive the idea for it? Was it a 'light bulb' kind of moment or something else?

Dave:

Actually, Melvin, <http://www.weddingchips.com> is just one of our sites and a relatively new one at that. Our main site that first went up back in October of '95 is <http://www.lasvegas-chips.com>. Our other two "larger" sites are <http://www.casinochipbinder.com> and <http://www.newcasinochips.com>. We also operate a half dozen or so mini-sites such as <http://www.ozzychips.com> and <http://www.kidrockchips.com>.

Our sites are all based around casino chips. We were the first collectible casino chip site on the web so that has given us a degree of preeminence within our industry. The site is actually the result of a homework assignment in a class that I was taking. To learn basic HTML code we were to construct a three page site on anything of our choosing. I had casually collected casino chips over the years we had lived in Vegas so I thought I'd incorporate my collection into this site.

A lot of things began to fall into place at this point. I found a CompuServe forum based on casino collectibles and I also stumbled onto the "organized" hobby of chip collecting. I discovered there was a National chip collectors club that put out a quarterly magazine. However there was no online casino chip presence of any kind. My business and commercial site were born. Our first month we did \$200 in sales, fourteen months later we crossed the

\$10,000/month threshold. Almost eight years and over 19,000 orders later we're still at it.

Melvin:

That's an awful lot of sites that you own! :)

Could you describe to us exactly what you sell, who are your target customers?

Dave:

There are two types of chips that we sell: collectible casino chips and custom chips. We also sell the supplies necessary to house and catalog a person's collection. With the first group of chips we have defined our niche to be Nevada Limited Edition Casino Chips.

These are released by the casinos in very limited quantities (generally 100 to 3,000) to commemorate an event, holiday or person. We started out offering every type of chip we could find: House Chips (regular everyday chips used on the gaming tables), obsolete chips (from casinos that are closed), roulette chips (used just on roulette games), no cash value chips (used in tournaments) and souvenir chips.

However all this did was make us too large and our business and our lives completely unmanageable. We did not attain real "success" till we narrowed our focus and really defined our niche.

As for the second group of chips, when our daughter was born we were in a stationary store looking at birth announcements. Then it hit me... I raced home and contacted the President of one of the chip manufacturers and told him my idea of having a birth announcement chip made. He loved the idea and our daughter's chip was made. Over the years we made chips for our friends and relatives and they were always a hit. Finally we decided to pursue the Wedding Favor market about a year and a half ago as we have determined that our chips are the "perfect Las Vegas wedding favor".

We have several target markets, some very small, some quite large. The bulk of our business comes from a group of only about 1,000 people who collect the chips that we specialize in, Nevada limited edition casino chips. Our chip binder site has a little bit larger market because any type of chip can be stored within them.

Our mini-sites target a fairly large base of fans of specific celebrities who have been commemorated on chips. For our custom chips, the Las Vegas wedding market is HUGE with over 125,000 weddings taking place in our city each year.

Melvin:

How does your business work? As in how do you generate profits, market it, drive traffic and so on.

Dave:

About half of our orders come through the web site's shopping cart. The other half of our sales are from our "standing order" customers and from orders that originate through our site but are placed through the phone, mail or fax. Once we receive an order it is pulled, invoiced and shipped. For our custom chips we are the link between the customer and the manufacturer. We take the order, submit it to the manufacturer, receive & post the artwork, help the customers with their artwork revisions and accessories needed to display their chip, do the billing and deliver the finished product.

Melvin:

So, where does majority of your traffic comes from? (is it Search Engines, PPCs, e-zine advertising, referrals from other sites or how?)

Dave:

The majority comes through repeat customers who have book marked our site. We also rank fairly well in the Search Engines and we utilize the most popular pay-per-click engines (Overture, LookSmart, Google Adwords and Ah-Ha) for some very targeted key words. We sponsor several portal sites with banner ads and use paid advertising in offline publications.

We send out a bimonthly e-mail newsletter to 1,300 collectors. We probably get the most credibility from writing an article directly pertaining to our niche that appears in a quarterly magazine for the 3,500 members of the National Chip Collectors Club. This article's byline generates traffic to our site and brings visitors to us absolutely free (other than the time it takes to write the article).

Melvin:

Do you try to collect your visitors' e-mail addresses? If yes, what are you doing to grow your list?

Dave:

There are two places on our homepage where we will try to collect an e-mail address. Up at the top we offer a "Free Test Drive" to anyone that has never ordered before. This puts them into our eight-piece auto responder sequence and allows them to request a free casino chip valued at \$10.00.

We also urge visitors to sign up for our biweekly "Chequelist" newsletter that keeps them abreast of all the newly released casino chips. At this point we're not doing anything to actively grow our list other than driving targeted traffic to our sites and making it easy for them to sign up.

Melvin:

And with this list, what do you do with it?

Dave:

I send out an HTML graphics-laden e-mail twice a month. Within each mail I show a few of the newest releases and post a link to a page within our site. Within this page we list all the newly added items, a time sensitive special offer and usually a free chip that they will receive with a minimum order. We find that out of our list of 1,300 we will get about half to click through to the page and about 5%-7% of those will place an order within 48 hours of receiving the newsletter.

Melvin:

Sure is interesting. Did it take you long to turn in a profit? And roughly what's the size of your business (this can include the staff force, annual revenue, profits, etc), if you don't mind.

Dave:

We were in the black at the one-year mark of being in business. In the last eight years we have sold just about \$1.7 million of chips and supplies with monthly sales between \$18,000 and \$30,000. By the time the dust settles and all the expenses are paid, our take home profits are about 25% to 30% of our sales. While we have had employees in the past but we now operate the business between my wife, Debbie and myself.

Melvin:

So, how much time do you spend on average per week on this web site? Do you outsource or automate any tasks so as to free up your time? And if yes, whose service and what tools do you use?

Dave:

I probably spend 10 to 15 hours each week maintaining the web sites. We automate several things. We use Get Response for our auto responder sequencing and bCentral for our newsletter. Both services automatically allow sign-ups, removals and handle bounces.

We use the Oracle Small Business Suite to handle our everyday duties of running our business: invoicing orders, paying bills, emailing customers, banking and merchant account charges. We have found this service to be a HUGE time saver as both Debbie and I can be online within Oracle at the same time from our home or from our laptops if we are away from the office.

We use Mailloop to send out personalized emails to bridal leads and to the daily list of customers whose orders were shipped. Virtual Cart is our third party shopping cart and we are very pleased with their service.

Lastly, I frequently use and love a program called shortcuts that allows me to enter a block of pre-typed text with just a few key strokes. Other things that have made our lives easier are the leasing of a digital copy machine and a postal meter.

Melvin:

I use ShortKeys myself too, Dave.

Why do you think you have achieved the kind of success you are enjoying right now? What did you do right that so many others have failed?

Dave:

Hard work, being in the right place at the right time, perseverance, keeping an open mind, being very conscious to customer service and trying new things.

Probably the biggest thing though that I do that my competitors do not is to tap into the Internet marketing gurus. I have spent thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours reading e-books, listening to audio tapes and attending seminars. I have found that many business owners will scoff at spending \$2,000 for tuition, airfare and hotel to attend an out of town seminar. However, I have discovered that just one or two ideas taken from a seminar will pay you back many times over for many years to come. I have attended five major seminars and every single one has paid off handsomely.

One of my favorite gurus explains that there is no such thing as an Internet marketing magic bullet but rather it is a culmination of fitting many pieces together from many different mentors from many different perspectives. When these pieces all fall together and into place is when online success is achieved. I have found this to be very true with our business.

Melvin:

What achievement have you made that you are most proud of?

Dave:

Without a doubt my greatest achievement and that which I am most proud of is my family: my daughter, Alexi and my wife.

From a business standpoint, each day I am proud that we have found a way to forge our way in this world, to support ourselves with something that we built from the ground up. I was proud when I quit my job, I was proud when Debbie quit hers. I'm proud of the way that we treat our customers and how we have established our honesty, integrity and earned respect within the casino chip industry. I'm proud when a customer takes the time to write us a kind note that they are pleased with our service.

Melvin:

What have been your biggest mistakes, challenges and regrets, if any?

Dave:

The biggest mistake we made was getting too "wide" and too large. At one time we literally sold anything and everything related to casino collectibles. We got real busy and we had some impressive sales (as high as \$50,000 one month) but everything around us was falling apart because all we did was work. At any given time we would have about 60 to 80 orders in house. Our turnaround time and customer service were horrible. Debbie and I never spent quality time together. We were both stressed out of our minds. No matter how hard we worked we were never caught up. While more money was coming in, more was also going out because we had to hire employees and others to complete work that we couldn't.

Melvin:

If you had a chance to do it all over again, what would you have done differently?

Dave:

Having the benefit of "Monday morning quarterbacking" I would have definitely made some different inventory decisions. There was a chip that I had quite a few of, so I blew them out at \$6.00 each. They are now worth \$80 a piece. A chip set I originally sold for \$24 is now worth over \$500.00. I would have bought more of the winners and a lot less of the "dogs". Besides inventory though, I would have narrowed and focused on my niche sooner. Most importantly I wouldn't have waited four years till I tapped into the marketing gurus and began learning how to more effectively & efficiently run my business.

Melvin:

Besides making money from what you mentioned above, how else do you make money from your existing customer base? I mean we all talk about multiple streams of income, right?

Dave:

We cross market our sites. If you come to me to have a custom chip made I'm going to tell you all about chip collecting and why it is such a great hobby. If you come to us as a chip collector I'm going to encourage you to have a custom chip made to commemorate a special event in your life. I'll tell you

about our binders and why you should use them to store your collection. I recommend the books and software that we sell. I joint venture with other non-competitive companies that can offer something of value to my customer base.

Melvin:

That is indeed very smart to cross market your different products.

I'm sure our readers would like to know this. From your experience, what do you think would be the common mistakes 'newbies' make in on online business?

Dave:

I would think the biggest mistake would be to not target your niche or to try to market to too large of a niche. This was a mistake we made when starting and I see it fairly frequently when I help other newbies get their sites off the ground. I think the other thing would be the reluctance to spend money on improving your site, services and tools to run your business and marketing materials to learn how to get and convert hungry, targeted traffic.

Melvin:

In your opinion, what would be the pros and cons of running a business model like yours?

Dave:

The cons of running a collectibles business are that the margins are relatively small and you are dealing with a physical product that must be acquired and shipped. The inventory is limited in quantity, sometimes difficult to acquire and often you can't get what you need.

There is a growth ceiling in that you will only be able to get so large because of the limited amount of inventory and a small base of customers. Lastly, running a collectibles business is very time consuming.

The pros are being able to work from our home and being able to be with my family. In our case our inventory is "liquid". At any given time I can return my inventory to a casino and get the full face value of the chip. This is a

tremendous advantage over other collectibles such as sports cards or comic books. Chips are small, they are easy to store and easy to ship. I have many repeat customers who over the years have grown to be more like friends than customers. The best part and the biggest pro is that I get to earn a living from my hobby. Not many can make that claim.

Melvin:

Thanks again for your time. As a parting gift to our reader, what advice do you have for people venturing into businesses like yours?

Dave:

To venture into the collectibles field I would encourage people to start out selling on eBay and see if selling this type of business is for them. I'd tell them to tap into the gurus who really helped me: Jay Abraham, Corey Rudl, Marlon Sanders, Dan Kennedy and Jonathan Mizel.

I'd encourage them to network not only within their own industry but within the Internet marketing realm. Take action and actually get started. It's so easy to fall into a trap of reading the guru's e-books, searching for the (nonexistent) "magic Internet bullet" and convincing themselves that they are laying the foundation yet never actually starting anything. I have heard the phrase "paralysis by analysis" and believe it fits many new marketers.

Build your opt-in list for there really is gold within it. Be prepared to fall on your face. I've learned a lot more from my failures than my successes. Read the Internet marketing forums like Anthony Blake's site (<http://www.ablake.net/forum>). Ask questions.

Lastly, know your web sites metrics. Compute your value per visitor, your conversion rate, your average order and your visitor target acquisition cost. Establish a baseline and then test everything and watch what happens to your numbers.

In short: work hard, work smart, find a niche that you can dominate, offer awesome customer service, provide value, make it a habit to over-deliver and remember that if you help others get what they want, you in turn will get what you want.

Melvin:

Thanks Dave. I sure learned a lot today. Wishing you success!

Recommended resources for DropShipping:

[Chris Malta's DropShipDirectory.](#)

COPYCAT BUSINESS #8 – RESOURCE CENTER

Have you ever felt frustrated searching for certain information on the Internet? You go through heaps and heaps of information in those millions of websites. I'm sure you know how frustrating that can be. Having to assemble bits and pieces of information from here and there.

Imagine how nice it would be if you could just go to this website, and whatever information relating to your subject is found there. Makes your life easier, doesn't it.

You could do just that. Make other people's life easier, by searching and organizing information for them, so everything is at their finger tips, right just at your website.

This business model fuels the believe that people do not like to be sold. They prefer you to provide them with plenty of information before they make an 'informed' decision to buy.

Nuts 'n Bolts

➤ Auto-responder

What on earth do you need an auto responder for if you are just providing information? You don't have to have it. But it would be a good idea to capture your visitor's email address. You can do wonders with it.

➤ Affiliate programs

No, not starting your own affiliate program. But registering for a few good affiliate programs that you can promote at your website would be good.

The Goodies

If you can provide lots of excellent information at your website, people will be flooding there. Not only that, you will find that other websites are more willing to link to you as compared to just a website with a sales letter.

Recommendation by your visitors to your website will also bring in the traffic. Word of mouth advertising is the best.

You could earn income by selling adverting space on your website, as well as earning commissions from promoting affiliate programs.

If you have your own product, that's even better. You get to keep the full amount of the sale rather than having to split with someone.

The Baddies

You need time and effort to build up your database of information. Don't expect to put in crappy stuff and think that you can get away with it. You need QUALITY information. And this will take time to build.

And after building it, you need to take the effort to maintain it so that the information reflects current development and trends.

Tips, tips and tips

If you like searching and compiling information on a particular subject, this would be a good idea. However, don't fall into the trap of trying to build a website for 'everyone'. It just does not work that way.

Select as niche a topic as possible instead of competing with the likes of Amazon, Yahoo and so on.

Other ideas for your themed website can be related to fitness, Internet marketing, e-Books, sports, etc.

Interview Stories courtesy of Internet-Business-Success-Stories.com

This is just one of the many interview stories available to members of Internet-Business-Success-Stories.com For more of them, please visit us at Internet-Business-Success-Stories.com

Jennifer Stewart

[Write101.com](http://www.write101.com)

Melvin:

Hi Jennifer! Thanks for taking time off from your busy schedule to have this interview with us. To get our readers acquainted with you, perhaps you could give us a brief introduction of your background.

Jennifer:

Hi Melvin, my pleasure :)

I spent over 20 years as a high school English and History teacher ... the change really started one day during my long service leave ... I was sitting in the dentist's chair having root canal treatment when it occurred to me that at this time I would normally be teaching my year nine class (15 year olds). When I realized that I'd rather be sitting where I was than in front of a class, I knew it was time to look for something new!

After leaving teaching, I spent six months doing all the things that teacher's dream of doing when they're busy preparing lessons and marking assignments, but then I was bored. So I decided I'd put all my experiences and resources to some use and I wrote a series of writing tutorials.

Melvin:

I understand that you currently own the website, <http://www.write101.com>. What is this site all about? How did you conceive the idea for this website? Was it a 'light bulb' kind of moment or something else?

Jennifer:

Yes, this is my site and it's been online since 1998. After I'd written my course, I sold it by running ads in newspapers. But advertising in national papers was expensive, so I decided if I had a website, I could just list the URL in the ad and then put all the information about the course on the site. Which is what I did.

Melvin:

Good move I would say. Very ingenious.

Could you describe to us exactly what you sell, and who are your target customers?

Jennifer:

I started the site originally to sell my course - and I was targeting people who'd missed out on basic language skills when they were at school, adults who wanted a refresher course and students who needed some extra help with their writing.

Melvin:

How does your business work? As in how do you generate profits, market it, drive traffic and so on.

Jennifer:

I decided to make my site a resource for people who were interested in improving their writing skills - whether it was writing for profit or just for pleasure. So I started writing articles about all aspects of writing and I posted these on my site and then listed it as a resource in writing directories.

I read early on that a newsletter was a great vehicle for keeping in touch with prospective clients and customers, so I started sending out a weekly newsletter of writing tips. (This now goes out to over 6,100 loyal subscribers from every continent ... except Antarctica!)

I listed my site with all the major search engines - and can still remember getting an email about this new engine with the funny name "Google". They were asking for people to submit their sites, I did and now if you enter a search for "how to write well" you'll find my site in the first three places out of more than 6 million pages!

People who have affiliate programs for writing-related products regularly approach me, and I check these carefully before I associate my site with them. I make regular profits from the three or four programs I promote and have always received positive feedback from people who've bought the products.

Businesses develop in ways you never expect and you always have to be ready to seize any opportunities that present themselves. Once I started sending out the newsletter, I built up a core of friends who would regularly send me comments about items I'd presented or send suggestions for future topics ... It wasn't long before a couple of people started asking me to help them write sales letters, to edit their websites or to help word the opening pages of novels ... Hey presto! I was offering writing services. Now a large part of my work involves writing for clients from all over the world.

Melvin:

Sure is interesting. Did it take you long to turn in a profit? And roughly what's the size of your business (this can include the staff force, annual revenue, profits, etc), if you don't mind.

Jennifer:

Because I was able to send my course by email, I saved a great deal on printing, packaging and posting costs once I went online, so the money I saved there paid for setting up my site. As a result, the business was paying its way from the first couple of months.

I also spent weeks (no, months!) learning how to create a website, so this saved my money on web design costs. This is definitely a one-woman show!

Melvin:

So, how much time do you spend on average per week on this website? Do you outsource or automate any tasks so as to free up your time? And if yes, whose service and what tools do you use?

Jennifer:

When I started, I was online 7 days a week, most weeks. That was because I was a complete novice ... my computer experience up until that point in time had consisted of "Load game!" so you can imagine all the learning I had to do.

Now, I'm more disciplined and I only work Monday to Friday. I answer emails when I first go online, then I work on anything I have to do for clients, and then I spend time writing my newsletters.

Because writing is such an individual task, it's difficult to automate ... I do use an editing program for my "first run" through documents. StyleWriter is a program designed in the UK (but available in different versions to suit all forms of English). This alerts me to all the errors and language patterns I've added. This is also one of the programs I'm affiliated with - I think it's always good to be using programs I'm promoting :) <http://www.write101.com/stylewriter.htm>

Melvin:

Very true, Jennifer. A lot of people blindly promote affiliate programs purely for profits, without first knowing the quality of the products that they are promoting.

Why do you think you have achieved the kind of success you are enjoying right now? What did you do right that so many others have failed?

Jennifer:

I was fortunate in that I had the time to devote to "playing" with the Internet and different programs when I first went online. I couldn't have done this if I'd been working full time.

I also persisted with what I was doing - success hasn't been instant. It takes time to establish a presence on the web (just as it does in any business). Potential clients have to know your business will still be around next week, next month and next year!

I've always made it a rule to answer every email request for help I receive, so I spend a lot of my time doing searches for information people have asked for and writing answers for them. This is my way of building a good reputation on the web. Word of mouth referrals work as well on the Internet as they do in your local neighborhood.

Melvin:

What have been your biggest mistakes, challenges and regrets, if any?

Jennifer:

Aargh! So many mistakes and challenges ... but not many regrets!

Most of my mistakes have been due to inexperience and to my technologically-challenged nature! When I started sending out my newsletter, I had no idea

how to do something as basic as cut and paste ... so I used to type each newsletter individually! I didn't know about mailing lists ... but once my subscribers numbered more than 20, I learnt!

Melvin:

LOL...we all learnt the hard way, through our own experiences.

Besides making money from what you mentioned above, how else do you make money from your existing customer base? I mean we all talk about multiple streams of income, right?

Jennifer:

My income comes from writing for clients, selling affiliate products and selling my tutorials. My original market is now the smallest component of my income!

Melvin:

I'm sure our readers would like to know this. From your experience, what do you think would be the common mistakes 'newbies' make in on online business?

Jennifer:

Probably expecting that an Internet business is different from an offline business. It's not. You still have to offer quality service and products; you still have to put in time and effort; you still have to be friendly and polite to all your customers: the good, the bad and the ugly!

Melvin:

In your opinion, what would be the pros and cons of running a business model like yours?

Jennifer:

You need to have a way of supporting yourself while you establish yourself online. My husband provided that support for me - and the deal is that my business will be able to support us both from now on.

The benefits are all those that come from starting something from scratch and building it into a respected entity. Working your own hours is great. (I remember reading that when you have your own business you can work any 80 hours a week you want!)

You have no one to blame but yourself when things go wrong - but that also means you have total control over your own destiny.

Melvin:

Thanks again for your time. As a parting gift to our reader, what advice do you have for people venturing into businesses like yours?

Jennifer:

Research your market, do your homework before you commit yourself to anything and don't expect to lie on the beach and make millions ... it just doesn't work that way in real life :)

But above all, have fun - it's very rewarding to create something form nothing and watch it grow.

Melvin:

How true Jennifer. Thanks again for sharing with us. I wish you all the best!

COPYCAT BUSINESS #9 – MEMBERSHIP SITES

Would the idea of making residual income interest you? I'm sure it does. This business model allows you to earn residual income.

You are basically selling access to your membership site for a fee. It can be a one-time fee for lifetime membership, or it can be a monthly or annual membership subscription.

Just what do you provide at your website that warrants people to pay you a subscription to access it? Useful and unique information that you can't find anywhere else on the Internet. This is what I call 'privileged information'.

Nuts 'n Bolts

Password protected members' area

You need to restrict access to your member's area. After all, you do not want to discredit your site by allowing non-members to access those 'privileged information'.

And if you are selling annual or monthly subscriptions, then you may want to change the password monthly or annually.

The Goodies

Residual income of course!

The Baddies

In order to charge monthly or yearly subscriptions, you need to have constant update of information. Or else there's no reason why would someone wants to pay you every month.

This may take some maintenance work as compared to a direct sales website. But then maintenance work is minimal.

Tips, tips and tips

What kind of topic would people be interested in to pay for access to membership sites? Some that comes to my mind includes online dating, stock market information, local housing information, Internet marketing and so on.

Internet-Business-Success-Stories.com is an example of a membership site. It offers a weekly interview with people who are successfully making a living online. You will learn how they did it, what's their strategies, their tips for you, how you can avoid their mistakes, how they came up with their product idea, how they market it, and heaps of information that can help you in your business.

Also, members will have access to a private vault that contains e-Books and software that I have bought the resale rights to. And this is constantly updated. To find out more information on Internet-Business-Success-Stories.com, please [CLICK HERE](#).

CONCLUSION

Phew! We've gone through nine chapters already. Was that fast or not.

So, what now? Good question. First you need to find out which business model suits you. This is very important. If you are still not sure, I suggest that you find out more information by subscribing to our membership site and read more of the interviews to get a better feel.

'BETTER BE LATE THAN WRONG'

Take your time to know what you want.

Selected your business model? Good.

Now, find a target market. And LISTEN to what they want. How do you do that? This is where your passion comes in. Not before you select your business model.

If your interest is in dogs, then hang around places where dog lovers would normally gather such as chat rooms and forums. And LISTEN (yes, you can actually hear them) to what they have to say. Are there any problems that dog lovers face constantly? What kind of questions do they normally ask?

From listening to all these clues, you can find a product that the market WANTS (which is the one that can solve their problems).

You have a business model in mind, a product that the market wants, next you need to identify your back-end. Something that your customers would like to have in addition to your product. You'll be earning commissions promoting this product to your customers.

Some final words...

A few traits that will help you in your life and business:

Integrity

When you say something, MEAN it! Your reputation is EVERYTHING. Always deliver more than you promised, and soon your customers will keep on coming back.

Perseverance

The Internet is not a get rich quick platform. It takes WORK and effort. It's okay to struggle a bit, but don't give up.

Do you know why a lot of people give up and say the Internet does not work? It's because there are lots of websites with over hyped promises of easy money and instant riches. They bought those stuffs, tried once and BUMP!, fell down hard. Ouch!

My advice, WAKE UP! Only a handful will strike rich the first time. The rest of us have to go through the grind first. But then, it's worth it. Do not give up easily.

You need to persevere.

Good work ethics

Treat this as a BUSINESS! It is a business. A lot of people come in to dabble their hands in Internet businesses, doing it half heartedly, without commitment, goal, planning, etc.....expecting to make money. Give me a break.

Build it like a business and your business will help build your family.

Humble

Maybe you have been online for a few years, and here comes a newbie asking for help. Please help him / her. Better a friend than an enemy.

What goes around comes around. Do not bad mouth or discredit other people. You will only lose your reputation. Remember, the wise will leave a fire, not flame it.

Enough said. I hope that you've gained something from this manual. If you have any comments or questions, please email me at:

TheRambler@MelvinNg.com

Looking for inspiration? Product ideas? Marketing Secrets? Success Secrets? Find out how by [CLICKING HERE](#).

Now, for the last and final part. Some of you who are reading this book are just starting out. You might have realized this by now, or you might not have - the road to building your own Internet business can be pretty rough and lonely sometimes. If you ever need any help, just let me know and I'll try my best to assist you. Let me make this clear, I'm not an expert. What I do know I'll share willingly, what I don't know I can point you to the right places or people to seek advice from.

If you need to be accountable to someone in order to be more productive in your business, you can email me too. I won't be looking over your shoulder everyday and tell you what you should do. But I'll definitely give you a wake-up call once in a while to keep you in check if you want.

In other words, just email me, whether it's to announce your goal, just wanted to say hi, have some ideas to share, or just ANYTHING. You will be most welcome, unless your name is SPAM (then get lost).

Highly Recommended:

If you've been struggling with developing your own product to market on the Internet, then Willie Crawford's seminar materials on **HOW-TO Quickly Create and Market Your Own Outrageously Profitable Products Online** is for you.

[Click here to find out more!](#)

WOULD YOU LIKE TO READ MORE SUCCESS STORIES FOR FREE?

Yes, I have compiled a series of interviews for my subscribers to download for FREE. To download your FREE copy, head on to Internet-Business-Success-Stories.com and register yourself in the subscribe box. You will also be subscribed to my fortnightly newsletter titled "**Mel's Ramblings**", in other words, my informal newsletter.

The Oxford dictionary defines 'ramblings' as 'wander in one's talk, not keeping to the subject'

Yeah, I wanted to keep it informal. And I didn't want to stick to one particular area of Internet business or marketing. After all, life's not just about Internet marketing.

Basically I will ramble about the weather, the birds, trees, etc. No, I won't. Just kidding, *grin*. I will 'share' things with you as I would with a friend. In fact I will treat you, my subscriber, as a friend.

We will talk about anything, from the latest development on Internet business, reviews on useful tools, tips on how to make your online life easier, my own experiences (both ups and downs), anything. Sometimes, if I do find a very inspiring story (although non-Internet related), I will share it with you too.

In fact I may even throw in the occasional interview story for you to enjoy (but don't hope for it too often).

What you won't find is advertisement from other websites (you can be assured my rambles will be partial and honest) and blatant promotion on some lousy products (even if they were to bribe me with 90% commission) is a BIG NO-NO. You have my word on that.

On the odd occasion that I make my recommendation, you will know that it's a worthy product.

Let's be frank upfront. I'm just human. Some of the things I do or say you might not agree. That's fine with me. In fact I welcome your feedback and suggestions. If you do like my informal style, you are most welcome to keep on subscribing to my newsletter. Heck, you can even contribute your masterpieces, and if it does get published, you will get the deserved credit.

But if you do not like my style, don't worry, just click on the unsubscribe link anytime (located at the bottom of every newsletter), and I'll be gone within the twinkle of an eye. No grudge, no offence. That's life. I can't please everybody and you can't like everyone.

So, click here to head on to Internet-Business-Success-Stories.com now to subscribe.

Whatever it may be, I do hope that you will at least give both of us a chance to 'know' each other and learn from. Looking forward to ramble on with you. See you in my next issue of "**Mel's Ramblings**".

Sincerely,

Melvin Ng

MelvinNg.com

'The home of Mel's Ramblings'

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Internet-Business-Success-Stories.com

'Real People Making Real Money'

JVMarketing.net

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Just two referral sales to Internet-Business-Success-Stories.com will more than pay back your membership fees.

RESOURCE ROLODEX

Domain Registration

[Name Cheap](#) – One of the more popular domain registration service provider but most important of all, it's VERY AFFORDABLE and RELIABLE.

Web Hosting

[DayanaHost](#) – If you are looking for a AFFORDABLE web host, I highly recommend them, especially for mini sites.

[iPowerWeb](#) - Reasonable pricing for the features that they offer. One of the top web-host around.

[Host4Profit](#) – I would recommend them purely for the many features that come with this hosting package, among others a web-based autoresponder, access to one of the best private marketing forum and a members's only area which have tons of ebooks, reports, scripts, etc.

[SiteBuildIt](#) – One of the more complete package. A must check-out.

Web & Graphic Designing

[Absolute Covers](#) – Ovi's services is highly recommended. Very fast and professional.

Merchant Account / Payment Processor

[ClickBank](#) – One of the most popular payment processor for intangible products and services.

[GloBill](#) – Recommended if you need recurring billing or operating membership sites. They also have an automated password management system in place to help you manage your members' protected area.

[2CheckOut](#) – Charges a lower rate than the other two merchants, but they do not have affiliate tracking.

AutoResponder

[ListWarrior.com](#) – This autoresponder comes FREE with your [Host4Profit](#) hosting plan.

[ABAScripts](#) – If you just dread committing to monthly payments, Bill's scripts are for you.

[AutoResponsePlus](#) – Has received rave reviews from users.

Ad-Tracking Software

[Ad-Tracking-Software.com](#) – Get your FREE guide to ad-tracking written by Harvey Segal

Affiliate Tracking Software

[Best-Affiliate-Tracking-Software.com](#) – Get your complete review of affiliate tracking software.

JV Marketing

[JVMarketing.net](#) – Get your step-by-step guide to JV profits.

MYIB (Mind Your Internet Business) Forum

[MYIB Forum](#) - Forum on developing your OWN Internet business; from product creation to business model development and JV marketing.