# Vital Steps
# TO ONLINE
## PROFITS

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# Introduction

If you are going to start working online there is a number of advantages that you have over and above starting a brick-and-mortar business. In some ways the rules are very different in running and operating an online business. And in other ways, the rules are the same whether you're running an e-business or brick-and-mortar business.

The key to being successful in what is called either "internet marketing" or "information marketing" is to understand the basic structure of how this kind of business operates. Most entrepreneurs will tell you that it takes a long time to get a business started that will sustain itself over time.

With right tools and knowledge you can considerably shorten then time, find your place on the market and start generating consistent income. In fact this guide-book is prepared for that very reason.

Many people get started in Internet marketing, and are excited about the fact that they are able to generate income. They're excited when they are paid through a PayPal account without having to receive a paycheck.

However, those same individuals may be disappointed to find that in order to continue to receive that same income they will have to work constantly. That is the difficulty in understanding what it takes to generate income that continues to flow into their accounts without them having to work all of the time.

So, lets see what an e-business really means and what it doesn't. For example, making a sale here another one there by selling some digital products doesn't constitute an online business automatically.
We could probably call it "internet marketing" or "online marketing".

But it takes a system to create the framework that allows our income to come constantly, without having to be present for every minute of its generation. This is where the term e-business differs from the other terms.

An e-business is built when there is a sustainable competitive advantage that eventually becomes recurring income. That recurring income is generated without the creator or owner having to work constantly, and be present for every dollar that is made.

To sum it up: the fact that an individual can produce income or cash flow, doesn't mean that they have an "e-business". Without this understanding, you could easily stop short of doing what is necessary to have something that will last over time.

If you need to work for every dollar that comes into your account, you will be eventually burn out. While your market position might be sustainable; while there may not be many competitors, you have a limited capacity to work. No one can work 24 hours a day and seven days a week. No one can go years without ever taking sick days. And if an individual has any relationships with family or friends, it is unlikely that they could go years without ever seeing any of them, right?

The point here is to learn doing business in such a way that doesn't require your constant presence, not like in a 9-to-5 working mode. I'm sure you wouldn't mind to take a free day whenever you need it, right? So, let's move on to our *Vital Steps to Online Profits* and see how to build your Internet marketing campaign into an e-business!

And by the way, at our [VSProfits.com](VSProfits.com) website, you can find out more on what is needed to build "structures" that will automate your online business, but for now, let's see "the whole picture" of doing successful business via internet.

Just as a brick-and-mortar businesses will have a structure that has managers, employees and suppliers, an e-business will have the very same kind of structure.

# Vital Step Number One: Build a List

The single most important step in your e-business will be your ability to build and grow a list of people that you can contact without effort. You have probably heard in passing, that "the money is in the list". You probably also heard a correction or caveat to this, that the money is actually in the relationship you have with the people on your list. Both of these are correct statements.

However, even understanding these principles will not bring you to a sustainable income. There are a couple of factors that you need to understand at the outset of list building. First, your structures must be systematic. In other words, those people that join your mailing list should be part of a process that is continual in your business.

You will have a continual drop-off effect on your mailing list. You will have those that will grow disinterested in hearing from you. And you will have those who decide that your information is not worthwhile to them. You should be building your list continually so that you're replacing these people constantly over time.

While many people understand how to get prospects onto their list, most don't understand how to do it so that it happens consistently and predictably in terms of the number of people who are going to come on and fall off. So as you seek to put the technology in place in order to help you to build your list, think about how your system has to include ways to grow this list constantly.

The technical part of building a list is rather easy. On your website you will need a form for an autoresponder. People that come to your site will enter

their name and e-mail address into your form and they will be placed into an e-mail database that you will have access to.

In order to do this you will need to choose a company that will store e-mail addresses. There are a number of companies that are well known for this. You will probably notice that each one of them has certain features for the price that's being offered. Candidly, you do not want to spend a lot of time trying to figure out which features are best for you at the beginning of your business. Find one reputable company for your list building and e-mail marketing. Make sure that their monthly fee is within your budget and then leave it at that.

# Vital Step Number One Expanded: Why You Need a List

The discussion of this section started out with a very important principle. <u>Your list building must be systematic</u>. If it is not systematic, it will be another aspect of your business that you will need to "do" in order for it to benefit your lifestyle. <u>The key is to put structures in place so that it happens without your presence</u>.

It's now necessary to talk about why having a list is important to your e-business. The easiest person to sell to is someone who is already familiar with how you do business as well is your products and services.  When you build a list, you establish a way to contact your customers and interested prospects in order to build relationships with them. You also hope to establish a two-way dialogue.

This dialogue is important because you can use it to find out how well you're doing for your customer. In other words, you may think that you're giving good customer service, but you don't know what your customers think in general. Being able to send an e-mail to contact them and ask them a question is vital to your being able to use their feedback in improving your products and services.

Your mailing list also makes it easy to follow up with future offers. <u>If you have to depend on new customers</u> to find your website and offers in order for you to generate an income, <u>you will spend lots of money and resources in order to generate your income</u>. However, if you use an e-mail list to send offers to those

with whom you have built a relationship, you will be creating the kind of

system that will help you to leverage the work that you did and money you spent to acquire them as a customer.

The key to understanding the benefit of list building takes the two pieces that have been just spelled out for you. First, the list itself is a system of being able to connect with and sell to existing customers. Secondly, you must build systems that automate the process of growing this list.

Once you automate the process of growing the list, you will find that your income can grow steadily. Without doing this, you may be subject to the forces that dictate that new people on your list will only replace those that drop-off.

# Vital Step Number Two: Using WordPress as Your Website Builder

Obviously if you are going to be operating an e-business, you need to build at least one website. Of course you can choose to have a website created for you, even if you choose to maintain it yourself. However, to be successful in any e-business your website will need constant updating.

If you choose a difficult software program to use to create your website, it will be difficult for you to find the time to make changes to quickly react to market conditions. If you have a web designer, it will be expensive for you to call this person daily, weekly or a regularly in order to have changes made to your website.

Therefore, when you are starting your e-business <u>it is important for you to choose a software platform that will be easy for you to update</u>, whenever you sense that you need to do so. The best software program to use in this respect would be WordPress. WordPress is easy to update and easy to customize.



Now, that does not mean that you should do all of the customization yourself.

However, when you have changes that you need to make on your website to

communicate accurate information to your site visitors, WordPress will fit in nicely to your plans.

WordPress is considered to be open source software. That means that the software is basically free to use, and updatable by software professionals. Software professionals provide WordPress users with two different kinds of customization. Users can customize the look of their website using WordPress themes.

WordPress themes can be purchased or acquired free on the Internet. A WordPress user with a basic knowledge of the program can quickly change the look of their entire website by activating different themes until they find the look that they want.

As you get started in your e-business, it may be a good idea for you to choose free themes until you know how you want your website to look for the sake of your visitors. Once you have a good idea of what you're website needs to look like and do, then you'll want to invest in a paid theme.

One of the benefits of working with a WordPress theme is that it is universally understood among web designers. You can very easily hire a web designer to take over your design and to give it a fresh look. If for some reason the relationship you have with the designer does not work to your satisfaction, you will be able then to find a replacement designer very easily.

The second way a WordPress installation can be customized is its functionality. Because WordPress can be configured by software designers to do different things that want to achieve on any one installation. WordPress can be customized with what are called plugins.

Plugins are software patches that can easily be added to WordPress by an end user, to change its functionality or extend it. For example, a WordPress website can be turned into a paid membership site with the use of a plugin. Or a WordPress installation can be turned into a social network with the use of a WordPress plugin.

WordPress can be changed to accommodate different advertising layouts, and different reading formats. It can also be extended to give advanced statistics, and to ward off would be attackers. The WordPress plugin system makes the software a valuable asset to you as e-business owner.

Once you and/or your staff learn how WordPress works, you will then be able to extend that knowledge into your next project. If you are scaling your activity to build multiple sites, everything that you learn from one WordPress site carries over to the other. It is an excellent platform to quickly build and tear down sites if needed.

The other thing that WordPress allows you to do effectively is to build sites for different purposes. If you want to build a website specifically for getting users to opt into your website, you can do that very easily.

If you want to build a website specifically for the purpose of displaying specific information, such as a countdown clock, WordPress will allow you to do this. The flexibility of the plugin system makes using the software the single most effective choice that you can make as you are starting out your journey in e-business.

# Vital Step Number Three: Pick a Niche Market

When you begin your e-business, it will be tempting to think that you want to be the next Amazon.com, eBay.com, or Walmart. While it is good to have big goals in your e-business, you probably will want to think differently than just being big.

It has been said about Internet marketing that "the riches are in the niches". That means that the more that you can narrow down your focus, and build a solid loyal following with people that are rabid about your products and services then you will be able to establish the sustainable competitive advantage that has been discussed.

Getting involved in a niche means that you will develop specialized knowledge of your customers, the market, the competition and the trends so that you will be able to navigate market conditions easily. If you were selling everything to everybody, it would be difficult for you to interpret market conditions in a way that would tell you what to do in your business.

Niche marketing is finding a specific market where you can compete and that people are already buying products and services that you can sell very easily. It is counterintuitive to think that you want to go into markets where there is already competition and that products are already selling.

Many new e-business owners ask the question, "If there is already competition where will I fit in?" "How can I enter a market where there are already people

selling?" "Won't that mean that people would never come to my site and buy anything, if they already can get what they need on other sites?"

It actually works just the opposite when you think about niche marketing. Of course, you don't want to take a niche that is overcrowded with businesses that are already providing solutions. But, when you began to develop a deep relationship with customers and prospects, as well as a deep knowledge of how to serve the people in your market you will not have to worry about competition.

E-business owners need only look to their local library to understand this concept (Or a local bookstore will do). Take a look at any subject that you would want to research. Take gardening for example. How many different kinds of books are there on gardening? You could probably find a great number of them at either your bookstore or local library.

Then narrow down your focus. Choose a subject such as container gardening. How many different kinds of books are there one container gardening? You'll probably find a great number of them.

If you were to open each one of these books on container gardening, you would find that the authors each have their own take on how it can be done effectively. In fact, each different author probably has their own "secrets" that they're spelling out to their readers in their book.

Taking this concept, you can take great comfort in the fact that just because there are already products and services in your market, there is always room for one more that teaches something new and innovative.

In addition to this, there is always room for another voice that can explain a concept in a way that is understandable for a certain group of people. In other words, the writing style or communication style of the author can make a difference in terms of their connection to the buyer.

Therefore, there is room for you within your market niche. What you must do is find a subject, where there are people buying products and that you have some either knowledge or passion in that will help you to keep current and provide good information. There is always a question as to whether or not a

new e-business owner should follow their passion or whether or not they should follow their skilled area.

The initial question to ask is probably not about either knowledge or skills. The first question to ask is whether or not the niche that you are considering already has people who were willing to make purchases.

One of the indications that a niche has enough buyers in it is that there is a magazine directed to those who are interested in it. Another indication may be that there are websites that have been created in order to reach this particular market.

But what are you looking for in the magazines or on the website? You are looking for existing advertising. If advertisers are involved in promoting themselves in the magazine or they are involved in promoting themselves on certain websites, you can bet that there is profit to be made in that market. In other words, you need to find a profitable market.

One of the easiest ways to figure out if there's a profitable market for you as an e-business owner is to look at whether or not information products have been created. You can find this information on the websites like Clickbank.com, Jvzoo.com and several other ones.

Clickbank.com is a well known and time proved marketplace for digital products so we will use it for illustration purposes further on. Although it does not cover the entire market, new, intermediate and experienced information product creators use Clickbank (CB) as their payment processor and marketplace. The reason that CB is so widely known is because it makes things easy for product creators who want to find affiliates to promote their products.

Therefore, in this stage of your e-business journey, you should make use of the CB marketplace as a source of research. What you will do is delve deeply into the statistics to find out whether or not there are products in the niches that you are considering. And you will also determine whether or not it is a market worth pursuing. Typically, if it is a market worth pursuing you will find some products already selling.

If you seek product in the CB marketplace that are achieving both popularity and sales, this is an indication that there is money to be made in the market and that you may be able to find a suitable place there. If there are no products selling, you may want to consider looking at another market, in order to start your e-business. The absence of any products is probably an indication that there isn't much money to be made selling information to the people that visit websites in this market.

As you're going through this process start keeping a list of markets and niches that have potential profit in them. Every so often, stop keeping your list and rank your choices based on the statistics that you are finding in CB. For markets that have high popularity and high sales, consider those markets first. If you find those markets to be too competitive continue to move down your list until you find one that is worth your time.

It is at this point that you want to consider which market you have an interest in pursuing. Start with the list that you have created based on potential profit. Look at those in which you would be able to see yourself writing, researching, and informing others about what's going on in it. <u>If the subject matter does not interest you, you will not be able to create interesting content</u> to attract people to your e-business. The best way to be interesting to people who would be your potential buyers, is to be interested.

What do you determine in a market that has money and one that you would be interested in? Try if possible to consider which market you would be best suited for. Which market do you have a good rapport with some of the people that you would find in it?

Which market do you have some knowledge of what is happening in it? Which market do you know the most about or have the most experience working in it? Which market do you feel that you can't adequately explain things to new people?

Going through this exercise will help you to determine a niche market that you will be able to be successful in. You will not ever find a suitable market that will be absent of any competition. Therefore, you want to enter one that has a moderate amount of competition, while at the same time you are able to compete in due to your interest and skill.

# Vital Step Number Four: Find Something to Sell to Your Niche

Having already done the research in the Clickbank marketplace, you will be already in a good position to figure out what to sell to your market. Before you begin to think about creating your own product, it is a good idea for you to begin learning the process of sales with an affiliate product.

Find an appropriate information product in the CB marketplace. You'll be looking for something that you know has already sold well and will attract the attention of buyers that come to your site. The other thing that the product will help you to do, is to focus your message and attention on getting site visitors that you know will be interested in the product.

There will be a number of products for you to be able to market to the people in your niche, once you have successfully marketed one affiliate product. But it is best to start with one that you know will sell. This will help you to see the results fast and adjust your sales process according to the number of interested buyers coming to your site.

Choosing a less than popular product, may not give you the information you need to make changes to your sales process when they're needed. Your site visitors could be reacting to the product itself but not necessarily buying it.

# Vital Step Number Five:
# Keyword Research

Once you have picked a niche and a market you will then need to determine what keywords are necessary to use in order to attract the people that will buy your product. The keyword research process involves both paid advertising and search engine marketing. Whether you choose to attract buyers through a paid process (Adwords) or a search process (SEO), being precise with your keyword research will be an important part of building your e-business.

The keyword research process starts by determining what keywords interested internet users are already searching. You will use various keyword information tools from the large search engines including Google, Yahoo and Bing.

You will focus your attention primarily on Google.com's search engine tools because it is the most used search engine website in the world. What will you be looking for when you use these tools?

You will be looking for a suitable place to either put your advertising, or your content to attract people to your website to buy the products that you are marketing. You want to try to find those keywords that lead to the most profitable website visitor.

Part of what you will be doing is deciding on whether or not a keyword is a "research keyword" or a "buying keyword". In most cases, when you're looking
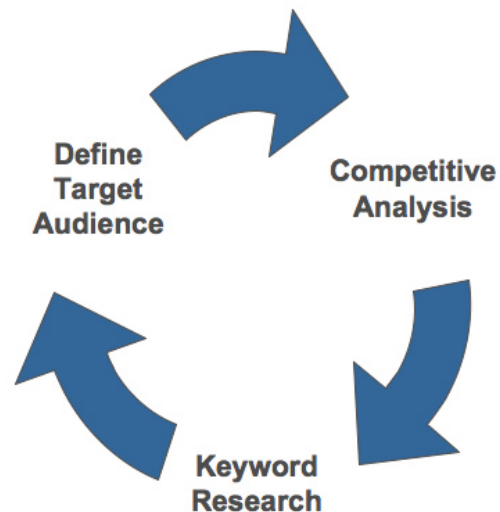
to profit from selling information products, you want to bring as many buyers as you can. That means you want to find the keywords that people would be typing into the search engine when they were <u>already predisposed</u> to make a purchase.

On the other hand, you do not want to create content or put advertising on keywords that people would be using when they're in the research process. It is not an appropriate use of your resources and could waste time when you could otherwise be generating revenue that would help you to scale your efforts.

"Buying keyword" phrases tend to have more than one word and tend to be specific about a particular product or service. Often buying keywords are stated in the form of questions. For instance often when buyers are ready to find a particular product or service, they will type the phrase "where can I find..." Or in some cases they may type in the word "cheap" or "cheapest" before their actual subject. There are many indications in the way a keyword is typed that a person is ready to buy, and you want to spend your time building attraction mechanisms on those keywords.

# Vital Step Number Six: Opt in Page

As you were reading the previous section, you may have felt that to give up on people in the research process is missing an opportunity. And to some degree, you are correct. The question is what will you do when interested individuals come to your website and they are not ready to purchase a product?

One of the first things that you'll need to do is to create an opt-in page. An opt-in page allows you to collect names and e-mail addresses of interested individuals before they leave your website. As was discussed earlier this is a key feature in your list building process.

This is how you will make use of those visitors that you attract that are in the research phase. Of course, they aren't ready to buy from you, but you do not want to waste the opportunity gained by having attracted them to your site. Therefore, you will offer them something of value, that they would be happy to exchange their contact details and information for.

Typically, the opt-in website code is given to you by the e-mail database company that you choose to work with. It is a simple cut and paste operation. When you're using a WordPress site, simply gather the code given to you by your autoresponder company and place it someplace that your visitors will clearly be able to see.

One of the best things to offer on your opt-in page is an audio/video interview with an expert in your market. As you get more experienced in working in this particular niche, you will be able to develop relationships with people that would be happy to have you interview them. You would be giving them more exposure, and access to people that they would not have met otherwise.

This also comes back to one of the reasons why you want to work in a niche where you already have some knowledge, experience and even relationships.

This will put you at a head start in terms of being able to attract new visitors to your site and prospective buyers into your marketing funnel.

# Vital Step Number Seven: Video Content

Whether you attract people through research keywords or buying keywords, you want them to come to your site as interested visitors. In today's fast paced world, with iPads, Tablet PCs and smart phones, it's difficult to attract visitors to your site and your web presence through within content. While people still do lots of reading, many are not interested in long articles or long explanations.



They're interested in getting the understanding quickly and easily to be able to move on to use the knowledge they've gained to better their life in some way. Text requires people to have to imagine what a process or product looks like and how it would fit into their lives. Therefore, when they see lots of text to read they may not necessarily use it to make a determination to come to your website.

However, people are interested in video content now more than ever. Video allows site visitors to see and understand what something would look like in their own lives. They are easily able to make the determination as to whether or not something is worth their time by seeing it being demonstrated.

The other thing that video content does is give site visitors a sense for who is talking to them. It allows them to connect with individuals creating the content. Video is probably one of the most potent weapons that you will have in developing a following of people who like your products and services.

In order to develop a sustainable competitive advantage, you will need people who are fans of yours, and not just customers. Video gives you that

opportunity, in the same way that movies do for actors, actresses and celebrities. In effect, video allows you to be the star of a show that you create.

Therefore, you should use video content liberally. And you should use it on the keywords that you find helpful to attract the kind of people interested in your products or services. When you combine the keyword research that you do with video content, you will begin to attract the kind of buyer who is ready to make purchases and in some sense already presold.

Video creators typically use the website YouTube.com to display their videos. This is an ideal website to use because it stores the actual video and allows you to share it on social media websites. Of course feel free to consider Facebook Live as another alternative video tool. For simplicity though let me focus on YouTube.

YouTube is versatile in what it allows you the video creator to do and is also a place online that certain individuals go to seek information. In fact YouTube.com is considered to be the second most used search engine in the world. That means that you should have your content on YouTube to attract site visitors to your web presence.

What typically stops new e-business owners from creating video, is that they feel as if they don't know what they are going to say. Actually figuring out what to say in your video is the easy part. If you think about what attracts a visitor to your site when you create video, it will be easy for you to come up with topics.  You will be able to spell out in your video what viewers should do.

The best course of action to determine what you should be doing in your video is actually the key to creating any content. When you're looking to attract people to your website you want to solve their problems. What kind of problems do you want to solve? You want to try to find the problems that people have indicated that they need to solve based on the phrases that they're typing in to the search engines. This of course, comes back to your keyword research.

Once you have found the problems that people have type into the search engines, you should add to this list by finding knowledgeable professionals in

the market or niche. The question that you want to ask these individuals is, "what are the most frequently asked questions in your profession?"

And then follow up with another question. Ask the question, "What should be the most frequently asked questions in your market?" When a knowledgeable professional answers these questions you will then know what to create your videos about.

It is the hope that the more time that you spend in a market or niche, the more you are able to answer these questions and to create the video yourself. If you are first starting out your e-business, and you don't know the answers to these questions, you'll want to get experts to answer them for you.

More often than not, you can get individuals to answer these questions based on giving them exposure to new customers and clients for them. This is can be accomplished through an audio and/or visual interview.

Search engine company Google.com (now Alphabet) has created hangouts that can be used for this purpose. A hangout is a video live stream with up to 10 individuals having a conversation. You can use this medium to put experts together to answer some of the most frequently asked questions that there are in your niche.

The good thing about Google hangout is that the content created in them is automatically uploaded to YouTube.com. Therefore, depending on what your subject matter your conversation with professionals can easily be found. And by strategically placing a link back to your website, interested individuals will know that they can find more of this information on your website.

This will be of interest to individuals finding either pages where they can buy products and services, or opt in pages where they can get information on till they are ready to buy. Although you can create content in a text form, images or audio, video is now one of the most effective ways to attract the kind of individual that you want to come to your website.

There is one thing to note here, however; YouTube is also a social network. One of the things that you can do to encourage people to come to your site is to make sure to watch for people who comment on your video. Make sure that you are vigilant in order to answer them. This will make for the building of

solid relationships even before a person is interested in buying a particular product or service from you.

# Conclusion

Following the steps in this document will give you a solid start to building your e-business. What has been listed here are more than "steps" to take. These are actual trends. The fundamentals mentioned in this book will help you both now and in the future of your e-business.

You may ask the question as to whether or not WordPress or YouTube will be around in the next 5 to 10 years. That is actually an excellent question. What you'll have to do, is undertake them now as if they will. As you build your e-business remember that you are building systems based on foundational principles. Video is one of those principles. Website building is another, just as is list-building, keyword research, picking a niche and deciding on a product.

The progression of building your business starts with understanding that in each different area you need to build systems that allow you to scale your business. What you don't want to do is to operate your business as if it were a job. You do not want to generate income where you are responsible for every aspect of what happens. Think about how you can automate things so that each structure you build frees you instead of tying you down.

It's nice to see you reaching up to here in this book, congratulations! Now, if you'd like to learn more on how to install Wordpress sites, how to "play" with plugins and themes, Opt In pages, how to do some SEO for your site, how to set system in place to automate everything, - check out my VSProfits System. This is where I show you step by step how & what to do next.

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