

Selling Stuff

If you are looking for a side income or maybe a business that you can run from your home you might want to consider online retailing or eTailing....

The formula is simple:

1. Find a wholesale product to sell
2. Install a shopping cart
3. Start marketing!

There are many online businesses started this way. The advantage is that you don't have to pay for retail space. You can use a spare room in your house. You can buy items wholesale to sell and make a profit. A good percentage of ecommerce is done this way and it is no surprise. If you have the passion to start your own company this might be the way to go about doing it.



Do the research

I hate to say it but surfing the web for answers on the topics of wholesale products, drop shipping and ecommerce are full of scams and get rich schemes. So beware that it will take some time to research who you will want to partner with. Your due diligence here will pay off by not getting ripped off. Make sure the website has a phone number and then contact them to find out more.

Finding trustworthy suppliers will be tough but they are out there. It is just that the scam artists have thoroughly capitalized on the keywords you will be using to find your resources. By keeping this in mind you might want to consider digging deep in the search results and take notes about keywords that are associated with the ones you are using. It is like a maze sometimes trying to find answers on the web.

The more specific your search words are when researching the closer to the answer you will get.

It may be that you spend some time in the "real world" researching products that you have a passion for. Contact the manufacturer directly to see what requirements need to be met to be able to sell their product.

When you look at wholesale items you will probably find brokers for Chinese and Indonesian imports as well as warehouses brimming with stuff to get rid of. Most of it is undesirable so do not get discouraged. Eventually you will find the right

product. Just don't settle for anything for the sake of selling. that would be a mistake.

Inventory vs Drop ship

This ultimately will be your decision. The advantage of a drop ship relationship is that you do not have to inventory products. A customer comes to your website and orders something. You send the order to the supplier and the supplier does the fulfillment for you. That is practically a business running on autopilot especially if you have a shopping cart system geared for drop shipping. The problem is, and this happens from time to time, that there can be miscommunications with the supplier. Something is out of stock or you don't get a shipping confirmation. You can lose money if the customer gets upset and cancels the order.



To really establish full control you need to keep an inventory and do the shipping yourself. Another way is to keep your inventory warehoused somewhere that will do the fulfillment for you. In Scottsdale here, I found just such a place, a small company called Brandables in the Airpark. Their business is selling imprinted promotional products but they have space available to warehouse your stuff. They ship their own stuff to clients and they can ship your stuff too. This is a smart service for Brandables and an affordable solution for you the eTailer. If you are in the Scottsdale Airpark area, give Amanda a call at [Brandables](#)

(480) 951-8882 ext. 101.

Scale and Efficiency

Don't get too carried away with building a product catalog because you will get overwhelmed with work. I've seen newbie entrepreneurs literally shopping for products to sell and making too large of a selection. They assume that more choices are better. You really shouldn't be giving your customers too much to look at because then they will become overwhelmed.

Consider a simple grouping of products that has a simple message that is easy for your customers to understand and easy for you to control. Don't lose your focus.

Shopping Cart Systems



There are many choices to make when becoming an online retailer. How do you want to display your products? What will the sales tax be? What shipping methods will be used?

Consider budgeting for a third party cart system, merchant account and gateway. This could total anywhere between \$50 to \$200 per month depending on how elaborate the system is. There may also be startup fees. Remember you will need to reserve some money for advertising and products as well.

As mentioned before there are shopping cart systems that have built-in drop shipping such as [osCommerce](#). However, if you only have say 10 to 30 products a button-only cart system like [1shoppingcart](#) may be a better choice matched up with a website that has a content management system. [WordPress](#) is an example of a simple content management system that you can login to and update your products with a little cut and paste.

You may need help running your online store. Hiring an assistant to help with order processing would help free you up to concentrate on marketing. A young person with energy and some knowledge of HTML would be a plus. You might even find a web designer to help you.

For consultation on the ins and outs of eCommerce consider giving [Site Mechanix](#) a call.

Ahhh Marketing...

Besides finding the products to sell, marketing said products will be equally if not more difficult. If you have a niche with not too much competition you may have a great chance at success.



Do not rely on marketing solely on the web. Consider also traditional marketing methods like postcard campaigns and magazine ads. Print has a way of making things look more real than they are

especially if you find a good designer to help you. Combining web and print with a consistent message is a great way to hit the pavement running.

Get affiliates to help you sell products. Some cart systems have affiliate tracking built in. Even if your cart doesn't have affiliate tracking there are 3rd party systems that you can rent to bolster sales.

Don't forget [Google Adwords](#). Adwords are pay-per-click ads that will immediately steer traffic to your shopping cart. Best of all you can control your Adword spending any way you like just remember the less you spend the less exposure you get.

With your marketing hat on you should consider getting exposure anywhere you can get it. Produce video demonstrations and upload them on YouTube. Write and submit articles anywhere you can. Get involved with different groups either socially or online.

This is why you need passion for what you sell. If you don't believe in the products you are selling, you won't be effective in your marketing.

Conclusion

This is not at all a Get Rich Concept although you will run into many tempting offers during your research. Don't give in! Don't give money to someone promising you riches. Those are cheap promises to make.

Selling products online will not be easy. If it were everyone would be doing it. On the web it may look like everyone is doing it but there are a variety of successes and failures out there.

Just start light with your investment and test the waters. Do not get discouraged if sales are slow. It will take time for your marketing to catch on.

Make sure that you keep an open mind and be willing to make adjustments in the sales, marketing and fulfillment processes. You may want to seek advice from friends and experts about how your products are portrayed.

In the end you are in control.

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