

Support Layers

Many website owners depend too much on their web masters or web designers. They should consider pooling a larger amount of resources to better secure their investment in the web.

Above all you should plan and budget for failure. Too many business owners approach the web like a candy machine. They think that they will get exactly what they want from the web with little effort. The harsh reality is that the web is as vast as it is complicated.

When you stick money into *this* candy machine you may not get anything at all. That is the risk you take. Embrace it! Try different ways of accomplishing what you want until you get the right combination.

Failure Contingency



A good friend reminded me of a quote by Thomas Edison in regards to inventing the light bulb;
“I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.”

People often forget about what it takes to achieve success and its cost. You only need to succeed once, but it takes a lot to get there.

The perception of making money online is that it is easy. All you need to do is build a website, add a cart system, get a merchant account, do a little marketing and BOOM! you got an online business that just rakes in the money.

Wow! Really? Gee, if it is that simple, shouldn’t everyone be doing this? The sad truth is a lot of people are racing to the internet to make money, but few ever do. So if you are planning an online business, a good strategy would be to include failure. For example, if your web designer suggests a cart system for your website, be prepared to spend time and money on its integration to find out later that it didn’t live up to your expectations. You won’t know until you are months into it that a feature that you were depending on becomes less than advertised. Or maybe you come across something that is better.

Your first try at building a commerce website won’t be a complete failure if you realize that you learned what not to do. You just learned what your *real* business needs are. You could only know this by getting into it and perhaps getting a little

bloody. You don't have to stick with the first cart system. Try something better with new eyes.

There are many components to put together with an online business. You may find that your merchant account fees are too high. Your payment gateway might not have a support number, only an email form that you have to wait weeks for an answer. There are many dead ends to hit. All you have to do is back out and try something else.

If anything gets in the way of making money, you as a business owner have to fix it. Otherwise you are stuck with a broken system that doesn't produce to your expectations. You may have to cut loses in order to move forward. The longer you wait the more it costs you in lost revenue.

Support is your Business Life Line

Your web hosting company has a support number. If it doesn't, get a different web hosting company that does. Remember, that if you call them, they can only help you with questions regarding website hosting. That is what they do.



Your web hosting company can probably help you with domain name registration questions as well. However, you can not expect them to answer questions about why your cart system doesn't work, especially if they did not install it for you. Many website owners depend heavily on their web designers or webmasters for everything that has to do with the web. Not only is that a huge burden for your web person it is impractical.

There are many different disciplines involved in online commerce. Most web designers do not know how to deal with programming and why should they? They are designers. So you also need to seek talented programmers.

So a web designer is your support line for web graphics and helps your business look good. A programmer is your support line for making things function on your website. This is a valuable support line to have when something stops working on your website or cart system.

The more specialties you have working for you in concert with one another the more insurance you will have for success.

Take for example a Flash expert as a support line. This person helps you build more interactivity for your website. Flash is a specialty that not all designers or programmers are able to incorporate for you.

A copy writer for your website's content is an excellent support line because that same content can be re-purposed in many different ways. You depend on your copy writer to build confidence with your readers.

Your web marketing specialist is also an important support line independent from your web designer and programmer. You get the best from each specialty. If one falters, replace them with someone who is more capable.

So you can see the value in having multiple support lines and not insisting that any one person is an expert in all things for the web. It just isn't practical.

Redundancy

Aircraft control systems have in most cases, a quadruple redundancy so that if the first, second and third systems fail, there is still one more system available to steer the aircraft to safety. Hopefully you will never have to use the fourth! That's good insurance. So wouldn't that be a good idea for your online business? Plan for failure by having duplicate resources.



Designers come and go and programmers come and go. Many of them are flaky and that doesn't help your bottom line does it? It is good to have resources that you can depend on, but don't stop looking because you have a great one now. Have some extra resources in the wings on a side project or go ahead and build some redundancy,.. like a second site. Didn't anyone see the movie "Contact"?

Yes a duplicate site! Why not? If something goes wrong with one you can easily redirect traffic to the other while the problem gets fixed. Both can be working at the same time for more exposure. It is very much like having a twin engine shopping site.

Last Word

This advice comes to you from someone who has been in the trenches of online commerce for more than 10 years. I find that the more people you have working with you, the better chance your ideas become reality and the bumps in the road are more bearable.

There is nothing easy about online commerce. Anyone that tells you that it is would be looking to sell you something. You as a business owner have to keep control.

Do not expect your web designer to run your online business for you. You would be leaving your business in the hands of someone else. If you do, I hope this is someone you trust and are paying well.

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