



Online Business

Building The Foundation

By Joe Jackson

Online Business – Building The Foundation

Brought to you by:

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Basic needs

Make A Plan

Have a plan – whether you use it or not!

And in reality all you need do is *follow your plan...*

Turn your plan into a list of daily tasks and do those daily tasks – **every single day**.

Spend at least one hour dedicated to learning something new about growing your business (generating traffic, marketing, product creation, content creation).

Spend at least one hour dedicated to writing about what you just learned. Use what you wrote as a chapter topic or sub-topic for a book you're writing, for a blog post, for a webpage, an email message, publish to social media (post, video, podcast), etc.

Choosing Your Niche

The very first thing you must do – once you decide to start a business – is figure out what *niche* your business will occupy.

There is a large variety of niches you can operate in and in time you might expand your business to include a number of those niches.

However, at first you'll be wise to focus on one niche *and in only one specialized area of that one niche...*

The truth is that if you try to branch out into more than one marketing area at a time you won't be able to focus on what it takes to succeed.

AND – the ability to focus is a real key to traveling your path to success.

Probably the simplest way to choose a niche is to first have a look at those activities you're most skilled at and the hobbies you enjoy doing most.

If you choose to go that route you need a list of those activities and hobbies. So take some time to

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create your list – and make it as long as possible.

Once you have your list go through it and number each item in position of importance. I recommend you rate the items two ways. One way is the amount of enjoyment you get when you perform the activity and the other way is your level of skill at performing the activity.

I would use a different color pen or pencil (or highlighting) for the two rating exercises.

If you end up with some items rated with both colors and high in importance *you just might want to concentrate on those items.*

Your next task is to identify the niche each item occupies and research each to determine if it has a marketing value.

In other words, are people selling products that relate to those items and is there a high demand for those products?

You want to make your niche selection within the largest areas of marketing activity.

Don't worry about competition. You'll find the more competition the greater opportunity a niche can provide.

(If you position yourself correctly.)

Product

With your selected niche in mind it's time to decide what product you'll market.

...And there are some important considerations when it comes to deciding on your product.

What type of product will you market?

There are four categories for you to keep in mind when selecting your initial product.

Those are:

- Physical
- Digital
- Affiliate
- Personal

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I started my entrepreneurial journey marketing physical affiliate products. Now I have business activities in all four of the above categories.

But I added each new category *only after focusing on AND setting up* the previous category so that it ran smoothly – with little to no need for personal input.

The availability of product is huge.

The fastest way to start building your business is by marketing an affiliate product. That is a product that some other marketer created.

You sell the product on a commission basis.

The main pro in marketing an affiliate product is that you don't require the time to create the product yourself. You only need to market it and normally the product creator has also designed the sales materials you need to perform the marketing effort.

Those marketing materials often include sales letters/pages, banners and a collection of email swipes that sell the product for you.

The product owner also takes care of payment collection, product packaging, product delivery, and customer complaints and returns.

So all you deal with is actually getting the marketing message in front of your potential customers.

When it comes to marketing an affiliate product the only real consideration is the percentage of the commission you'll receive for each sale.

Physical product sales normally earn commissions of lower than 15% while a digital product commission often falls into the 50% to even 100% range.

(In certain situations the commission soars above 100% when the product owner knows that future promotions to the customer will result in eventual proven profit.)

For that reason the highest affiliate commission incomes come your way when you market digital products.

After you enjoy some experience you'll likely turn your thoughts to creating products of your own.

When you have your own product you're considered an expert in your niche and you command the

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highest profits because every product you sell brings you 100% of the profit.

Having your own product also allows you to attract an army of affiliates that sell your product for you. This magnifies your visibility *and* helps explode your customer base. (And serves to build your business to new levels.)

Product demand

Before you make your final decision on a product make sure there's a high enough demand for that product – or for products that relate to the subject of the product.

If nobody wants what you have to sell there's no justification in trying to sell it...

There's always a cost to marketing any product. That cost comes in dollars out-of-pocket or in time spent.

Never absorb either cost beyond what it takes to verify if marketing a particular product will bring a future profit.

Product quality

One very important step in deciding on a product is to verify the quality of that product.

Try it out. Use it yourself. Make sure the product not only does what the marketing says it does but also does it very well.

If it doesn't do what it's supposed to do – if this is a product that you would not use **from now on** – *why would you even attempt to pawn it off on others?*

If it's a product that does everything promised why would you NOT share it with everyone you think can benefit by using it?

Availability of related products

Another thing to look for is a wide selection of products that relate to your main product.

You want to gather a list of affiliate products that you'll market in the future.

Relying on only one product **WILL NOT** let you *grow your business*!

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But if you have a line of products that you market to your lists again and again you'll find the success you seek – as long as your product's quality fits the criteria I talked about above.

This line of products include affiliate products, personally created products and products you market through partnerships with other entrepreneurs – such as joint venture (JV) activities.

Product marketing competition

I mentioned earlier that competition is a good thing.

I say that firstly because when you find your niche if you see a lot of competition in that niche you get one of those warm fuzzy feelings that you'll enjoy success when you market in that niche.

Secondly, because of the opportunity for learning that competition offers.

The more competition you have the harder it is to establish yourself in the niche it's true. But the idea is to separate yourself from that competition that you do face.

The way you manage this separation depends on the way you approach the niche.

If you start with affiliate products your approach must be different than if you create your own product.

Most marketers in the niche will be affiliate marketers. Because of that, you're marketing the exact same products as many of your competitors.

In that case the separation you seek lies in the way you present yourself to your potential customers. You must convince them that you are the ONLY person for them to buy the product from.

To do that first study your competitor's marketing techniques. Subscribe to their mailing lists and study the emails they send out. Immerse yourself in their websites and social media presences.

Learn all you can about how they present their products. Identify holes in their techniques.

And then fill those holes.

Your marketing technique will be different after you create your own product.

First of all, your product presentation in itself will differ from the presentations of your competitors. That places you in a position all by yourself.

You still want to study your competitor's marketing. That gives you ideas that you can adapt to your own activities.

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And you still want to present yourself as THE ONLY reasonable place to buy niche-related product from.

The more your audience views you as a step ahead of all the other marketers in your niche the more success you'll have.

Website

A major marketing technique you'll see in business opportunity offers is that:

You don't need a website to make money online...

And it's true – **BUT...**

(Bet you felt that one coming at you, eh?)

But owning online real estate (a website) shows that you're serious about your business.

It's also true that you don't have to pay for getting your website hosted. But here again there's a caveat.

If you use free website hosting *you won't be viewed as a professional...*

And potential customers won't place much value on your product when they consider you an amateur.

That said, some would-be entrepreneurs have small budgets to start their businesses. And that means they must cut expenses where they can.

If you find yourself in this position you can start with a free hosting company.

A simple online search will bring up a huge list of companies that offer free hosting. Be aware that “free” in this case means that they'll normally place their own advertising on your site.

That suits the purpose of distracting your visitors away from your content and toward the hosting company's offers.

If your content is interesting enough you'll get enough conversions to start your business on the free site.

But my advise is that you *move to a competent and reliable paid host as soon as your business income permits.*

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Your business will thank you for it.

I've used a few hosting companies over the years with both good and poor experiences. The company I've had the most pleasant relationship with is Namecheap. I also purchase my domain identities from them.

Autoresponder

You'll hear it – and you'll hear it a lot...

“The money is in the list!”

There's truth in that statement. But not the whole truth...

The fact is that you can have a list with 5,000 subscribers and if they have no interest in the product that you market – or in the way you present yourself – that list will be useless to you.

But if you have a list of 500 subscribers and those subscribers buy your products – you enjoy a lucrative income.

So...

Eventually you'll want to build a following (a list of subscribers) of your own. Just put in the effort to make that a list of *buying* followers.

How do you do that?

In today's environment it's vital to build a trusting relationship with the people who join you. They need to see you as a real person – and they need those warm fuzzies that show them you're a person who wants to help them.

A person who has their best interests at heart.

You can't get that done by only trying to sell stuff to them. If you do that they'll quickly walk away and you'll never hear from them again.

The way I do that (and I can't say that my way will work for you) is to share stories, jokes, and historical oddities with my lists. The body of a typical message that I send out rarely mentions a product at all. I usually reserve the postscript for product information.

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My readers don't even have to look at that P.S. If they don't wish to.

Of course, you need to find a way to connect with your followers that suits you.

To contact your lists you'll most likely use an autoresponder. Those things can get costly but fortunately [Aweber](#) just opened a program that offers free accounts for lists up to 500 members strong.

(Remember what I said about a 500 subscriber list above?)

Aweber is one of the largest autoresponder companies out there. And that is my affiliate link above.

By the time you've grown a list of 500 *buying subscribers* your business should easily afford the autoresponder fees for larger lists.

So [Aweber](#) is another tool you can use free of charge while you build your foundation so it's solid.

Delivery

How you deliver your sold product is an important consideration.

If you're marketing affiliate products delivery isn't something you need worry about as the product vendor will handle the process of getting the product to the customer – along with providing customer services.

Once you start marketing your own products delivery is something you'll deal with.

The first consideration (in my opinion) is the capacity of the delivery platform you use.

If the popularity of your product suddenly takes off you'll want a process with the ability to handle the load. A volume of orders that overload the system crashes your server – not a good thing.

For this reason you want a designated server for your deliveries. Shared server hosting just won't satisfy your needs.

Most especially if your product is digital. Customers buying digital products online today expect to receive that product immediately. If the server crashes and they don't get their product within minutes you and/or your payment processor will be flooded with complaints.

And your account could be shut down or at least placed on hold.

Again – not a good thing.

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The method I prefer for delivering a paid digital product is to upload it to a page on one of my websites and have my payment processor send a download link along with the payment receipt. That way the customer simply clicks the link for immediate access to the product.

That keeps my customers satisfied and a satisfied customer gets in the habit of coming back for more product from you in the future.

When I offer a product for free in return for contact information I normally have my autoresponder send an email with the download link immediately after the optin.

And, since you're reading this book, you're aware that I mention on the optin page that the product is delivered by email. That helps convince the customer to provide a valid address so he gets the product.

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Marketing techniques/Traffic Generation

Three things that absolutely EVERY entrepreneur wants for his business are *traffic, leads, and sales...*

There is **no exception**.

Spend at least 2 hours each day dedicated to driving traffic to your offers.

Spend time dedicated to responding to email messages and building relationships with your customers and partners.

There are two ways to get traffic. Those are free traffic generation and paid traffic generation – earn it or buy it...

Free traffic generation is a misleading term as it actually does cost you. The difference in the two is that you spend your time to drive “free traffic” to your offers.

To drive paid traffic to those offers you actually buy advertising to attract your visitors. (*That means money-out-of-pocket up front.*)

Dedicate a determined percentage of every sale and/or commission to buying traffic. Two good sources for paid traffic are Udimi and Traffic For Me.

(Just make sure you research the vendors before you decide to buy. Check out their success stats and read through their previous customer's evaluations. You want to research toward a high confident level in the vendor you select.)

The list of platforms available for your traffic generation activities is extensive but I'll discuss a few popular options below.

Blog Posting

Blogging can be both free and paid traffic generation methods.

When you own the blog you publish articles that contain links to your offers or you place those links in sidebars. People who are interested in the offer you present click the link for more information. This is a free traffic generation method.

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Another technique for driving free traffic is guest blogging. For that you write an article that relates to the subject matter of another blogger's blog site and submit that article to the blog's owner for publication. In return for the content that owner lets you add your bio information at the end of your article so any of his readers can visit your site for more content if interested.

Paid traffic blogging includes buying post space from other bloggers and exchanging ads with other bloggers. (When exchanging ads you're paying the other blogger with space on your blog.)

You can get a free blogging account at wordpress.com or at blogger.com.

It's important to understand that you want to get away from those platforms quickly and move to a blogging platform that you can maintain under your own domain address.

When you use a free blogging account you never have full control of the content that appears on those webpages.

That gives an unprofessional appearance and can lead to professional suicide.

You'll also soon find that the actual owners of these platforms run their own marketing offers on your pages. (like I said – you have no control).

The very first thing you *absolutely MUST* remember about every single bit of content that you create is that if it isn't highly valuable and highly useful to the person you want to see it – it's *completely useless*.

A useful blog post should be at least 500 words long.

Google doesn't give much value to anything under 1000 words – and that number keeps moving upward. Keep in mind that the greater value Google gives to your content the larger number of visitors it sends to that content.

Make sure what you post is informative, highly interesting, and easy to absorb.

Classified Ads

You can post classified ads inexpensively – or free...

This type of ad is available online, on television, radio, and in newspapers.

There's also the potential for your ad to appear either locally or internationally.

Don't expect a classified ad to bring in customers in large numbers. When you advertise on these ad

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platforms you're placing your ad in front of more people who aren't interested in what you offer than people who are interested.

For that reason the response from classifieds is always low.

The most known classified platform was Craigslist last I heard but there are many more available.

Since the focus of this book is online a simple web search for “online classified ads” (with or without the quotations) will get you an extensive list.

Facebook

Not long ago Facebook was an ideal place for marketers to advertise their websites and offers.

Now? Not so much.

It's still a good platform for advertising simply because of the number of people who spend so much of their time there.

Two things to be aware of when placing offers on Facebook:

Facebook wants to make money from your advertising activities.

Facebook *DOES NOT* want people leaving its site.

Rather than you posting your ads for free in your timeline Facebook would much rather sell you its ad space – and it wants to control where people go when they click on your ad.

So recently Facebook started “ghosting” people's posts when they include offsite web addresses.

What that means is that when you start putting your website URL in a post Facebook will blank it out so nobody but you actually sees the post. The action simply banishes you from other eyes and wastes the time you take to create the post.

Because of that I suggest you do what I'm doing with this book. I intend to post it in the file section of various marketing groups on Facebook. Then I'll let people know where it is and that they're welcome to a free copy.

Facebook won't have a problem with me posting the webpage address in my posts *because* that address will be a Facebook URL – they'll happily show that post to people.

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If you check the end of this book you'll find a resources section that includes my website URLs – which Facebook can't see...

...At least for now.

Forum Posting

Forums are communities of people who share an interest and there's a forum for most every possible subject that exists.

Posting on forums is one of my favorite methods for getting my offers in front of online business-minded people at no cost.

This technique doesn't work anywhere near as well as it used to but I do still see a trickle of traffic from the forums that I frequent.

The key to this method is to spend some time commenting on threads with information that is relevant and also adds value to the conversation.

Find a forum that lets you use a signature file where you can display your links. When people see you truly want to help them solve problems they'll come to trust you and they'll start visiting your site through those signature links.

Solo Ads

Solo ads are excellent for getting fast traffic to your offers – *if you know how to use them*.

This is a paid method and if you don't know what you're doing you stand to lose a lot of money when using it.

Keep in mind that the solo ad market has a lot of scammers and it's your responsibility to identify – *and avoid* – the vendors who have no integrity.

Solo ad vendors maintain large lists of people who are interested in offers that relate to specific subjects such as business opportunities, make money online, network marketing, and personal improvement. There are vendors who cater to the physical product market such as toys, kitchen appliances, and sporting goods too.

You place an order with a solo ad vendor for a pre-determined number of clicks to your offer. The vendor sends out an email to his list.

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The email copy can be yours or something the vendor provides. Sometimes it's best to let the vendor send his copy as he knows his list members and what they'll respond to the best.

The main drawback to the vendor's copy is that you don't see it unless you happen to be on his list. So you have no idea how related that copy is to the subject of your offer.

A couple of credible solo platforms are Traffic For Me and Udimi. A lot of good vendors on those sites but *it is still* your responsibility to validate the vendor you choose.

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Payment Solutions

One thing that's a must when you're marketing products is that you have a payment collection process.

When you market affiliate products the product owner normally handles payment collection. However, even then, you need a way for that owner to pay your commissions.

Sometimes vendors who manage affiliate accounts have an option to deposit your commissions directly into your bank account. (If you're comfortable with giving them your bank account information.) But that is not always the case and the decision as to how to pay out commissions is made by the product owner.

For your own products you have a number of options to choose from for your online business and every one of them has its own rules that you must adhere to.

The simplest path is to list your product on an affiliate network.

Clickbank, JV Zoo, and Warrior + are the most popular for digital products. (Clickbank now lists physical products also.)

There are many options for physical products. The one I'm most familiar with is CJ (formerly Commission Junction). A search for “affiliate networks for physical products” gets you a list of nearly 13-million results.

You have an obligation to study and know the rules no matter which way you decide to go.

If you don't learn the rules – and you violate them – your payment processor ***will shut down your account!*** And they'll very likely do that with NO advanced notice.

This rules thing applies to many other membership platforms in addition to payment processors.

Learn and follow the rules.

Keep in mind that **he who does not listen has to feel!**

Amazon Pays

I haven't used Amazon Pays as yet. I have been considering putting this method to use.

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With millions of customers already used to paying through the Amazon processor, making it available can't be a totally bad idea.

Your ability to make use of Amazon Pays depends largely on the type of product (or service) you wish to market. Look up “Amazon Pays restrictions” and you'll find a long list of products that violate the terms of service.

If your product falls into one of the restricted categories Amazon Pays is not an option for your business.

PayPal

I've had two accounts with PayPal for many years – one personal and one business. Those accounts were convenient for completing purchases and sales over most of those years.

Thing is, a while back the PayPal company sold.

And suddenly PayPal became inconvenient for merchants to collect payment for products and services. They began freezing accounts – and basically stealing money from legitimate vendors.

Due to that activity I no longer leave a large balance in my PayPal accounts. I make it a habit to transfer funds out often – and not to let them exceed \$500.00. That way I don't risk heavy losses.

I still use PayPal to purchase products when I can. But when it comes to collecting payment for products that I sell I now lean toward using a Stripe account.

Stripe

As I mentioned above, I now tend to use Stripe for my payment processor. I started migrating my product lines over to Stripe recently in reaction to the flurry of PayPal account siezures.

Founded in 2010 as a payment processing service for online merchants Stripe works well for me so far.

Other Payment Processors

A search for “online payment processors” gets you a huge list.

I recommend that you have a look at what's available to you. Select a few of your options and do some solid research into each one to make sure it feels right for your situation.

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Part of your research should include checking out the processor's terms and restrictions to be sure you can comply with them.

AND – check out all the complaints (along with positive reviews) you can find for each service. In the final selection it's important that you have a comfortable feeling toward the service you choose.

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Ramping Up

Re-invest

A sad statistic is that around 95% of the people who start an online business fail during the first year. And over 50% of those who survive the first year close up shop in the second year.

There are a number of reasons why that is. Many of those failures are a result of disillusionment in my opinion.

Many people fall for the false promises of a so-called guru in the internet marketing industry – are led to the belief that instant riches await if they just plunk their money down – then they find out that success requires time and effort and they simply give up.

Many of those who actually do see some initial success blow their profits on personal items and celebrations and end up with no financial means to fund their ongoing business operations.

If you do start an online business I suggest that you set a budget for that business.

Commit to a specific percent of your profits that you'll give back to your business and use to pay the business' bills, fund your business education, and spend toward marketing for your business.

And I personally recommend that you make that specific commitment a minimum of 100% in the beginning.

When you' put *everything* back into the business you greatly increase your chance at the success you desire.

Rinse & Repeat

Once you learn the techniques that work for your business success is a simple matter of performing those same methods over and over.

This feels boring – repeating the same tasks on a daily basis – but the fact is if they work, they work.

Initially you're in a sprint to find out what works. Once you know that you settle in for the marathon of making it work.

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And once you know what works your next objective is to ramp up your business efforts.

When you take a method that works and double your efforts and focus on that method you basically double your business profits from that method.

When you realize how well that works it becomes easy to triple and then quadruple your efforts.

Each time you start an effort you get it working smoothly, rinse and repeat, then magnify the effort.

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In Conclusion

Lay your foundation on rock – not sand. How long do you want your structure to last?

You can't successfully build a business if you don't first lay a solid basic foundation.

The basics never change...

In this book I talked about what you need to accomplish if you want to start an online business – and grow that business into a successful venture.

I talked about how to begin moving that growth beyond the basics.

Now it's up to you to lay your foundation and erect the structure. If you don't perform the work – or partner with someone who will – your business idea will sink into the depths of *never had a chance...*

With the ever changing environment of online business the path to constructing your enduring structure must include an ongoing study and implementation of business techniques.

If you have any questions feel free to send them my way. I'll certainly share the answers that I have and seek to find the answers I don't have.

This ends the start of our journey. I look forward to mentoring you along your future entrepreneurial path.

To begin, have a look at the resources in the next section.

Here's to your success, Joe Jackson

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Resources

1) Other books by Joe Jackson:

<http://joejackson.info>

[Traffic Generation: 11 Ways To Grow Your List](#)

[Measure And Chart Your Successes In Life](#)

[Quickly Create The Product Inside You](#)

[Networking To Leverage For Business Growth](#)

[Copywriting Basics – Persuasion And The Art Of Fueling The Buyer's Urge](#)

2) More product creation training:

[How to Write a Book in Less than 24 Hours](#)

3) Useful free tools:

[Building a list and more](#)

[Check duplicate content](#)

[Keyword research](#)

[Google Keyword Planner](#)

[Automatic triggers from app to app](#)

4) Paid Marketing Tools:

[Software and books for traffic, leads, and sales at deeply discounted prices](#)

Joe's streams of income:

[Business Training And Tools](#)

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[Lead Generation](#)

[More Lead Generation](#)

[Success In Life](#)

[Camping Gear](#)

[RC Construction Toys](#)

[Remote Control Toys](#)

[Pest Control Products](#)