

## Business Idea: Online Marketing Services as a Work-From-Home Opportunity

An overview of online marketing services as a potential business opportunity.

Offering online marketing services is certainly an opportunity to consider if you are interested in starting an internet business that will enable you to work from home. Internet business is booming, no doubt, and there are many people venturing into e-business who haven't a clue how to go about marketing on the internet. Online marketing services are not exclusive to e-business; they can also be beneficial to brick-and-mortar type retail or wholesale companies. Thus, there are many different target audiences to choose from when offering online marketing services. This enables you to identify and pursue a niche market.

There are a few things to do before launching an online marketing services company:

1. Familiarize yourself with online marketing services
2. Conduct market research to identify a niche market
3. Decide which online marketing services you will offer
4. Become an expert

The next phase of launching your online marketing services company involves:

1. Preparing your business plan and marketing plan
2. Developing your policies and service procedures
3. Marketing your online marketing services
4. Providing exceptional customer service
5. Building a base of repeat customers and referrals for your online marketing services

With the internet, it is easy to review online marketing services and to find out about your competition. A competitive analysis is essential to differentiating and positioning your online marketing services company. In your review of online marketing services, you will get some great ideas about what services you can offer and how to professionally present them.

Market research is the key to identifying a niche market to target for your online marketing services company. For instance, you may market your services only to attorneys, only to wholesale grocers, only to work-from-home moms, etc. With an online marketing services company, truly the world is your playground. However, by narrowing the scope of your target market by finding a niche to market to, your advertising will have a stronger impact as you can become known as an expert in online marketing services for whatever field or niche you choose to market to.

Once you have reviewed other online marketing services, analyzed your competition, and identified your target market, you are ready to decide which online marketing services you wish to offer. This is another opportunity to define a niche. For instance, you may offer only pay-per-click management services and you can position yourself as an expert in that area which can be credible if that is the only service you offer. You can also offer a whole menu of online marketing services with various mixes in package deals which can be appealing to clients.

Whichever online marketing services you choose to offer, if you are presenting yourself as an expert, make absolutely sure that you are one before you take on your first customer. The reputation of your online marketing services is at stake. If you present yourself as an expert in search engine optimization for instance, and you cannot achieve good ranking for your clients, your credibility will be lost and this can frequently result in your reputation being ruined via discussions about your company through online marketing and business forums.

Preparing your business plan and marketing plan should be a first-step before you launch your online marketing services business. Writing a business plan just makes sense because it helps you to put your ideas down on paper, to set your goals, to think through issues and to define your budget. Your marketing plan is equally important as it will serve to keep you focused on the important aspects of your online marketing services business. For suggestions about what should be included in a business plan and marketing plan, visit the website for the Small Business Administration. There you will find excellent guidance for business planning.

Policies and service procedures are important for two reasons. One, to protect your business; and two, to ensure that you provide excellent service to your customers and that they understand up front what your services entail. When marketing your online marketing services business online, you should at a minimum have a terms-of-use policy and a privacy policy. Through your terms of use, it is a good idea to disclose your policy regarding refund requests or your service guarantees as well as any limitations to your service.

Taking customer service a step further, your service policies will govern how you do business. Your systems will enable you to provide the services. Starting out, you don't necessarily need anything fancy, but as your company grows, automating some of your sales and service features is a good idea. An example of an automated customer service tool is an autoresponder that confirms you have received an order. Repeat customers will come to you if you offer excellent online marketing services.

It is easier to retain a customer than to get a new one, so always keep that in mind when working with your customers. Happy customers are also extremely valuable to an online marketing services company because they will refer you to their friends and associates. To encourage referrals, you may offer your customers some type of incentive (like a 10% discount) if they refer a new, buying client to you.

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