BACKGROUND ON BUSINESS

Using The Web To Jump-Start Your Business

(NAPSA)—The U.S. Small Business Administration estimates that more than 580,000 small businesses will start up this year. Unfortunately, about 576,000 small businesses will fail during that same time period. So how can entrepreneurs hedge the odds in their favor? One way is to start a Web-based business or take your current business online.

Internet businesses sell merchandise, services, information and most anything a traditional brick-and-mortar business can sell—but often with a smaller operating cost because they only conduct business online. Brandon Lewis, president of StoresOnline, offers these tips to help online entrepreneurs make the most out of their companies:

Know Your Audience

A common online marketing mistake is to try to target too many audiences. There are 938 million users on the Internet. Marketing to all of those eyeballs is simply not effective and can be very costly. If your target customer group is women ages 14-27, it does you no good to spend time and money marketing your site to men ages 55-90. Take the time to find your customer and then customize your approach to people who actually search for and therefore want to buy your product or service.

Build A Second Site

A second common mistake is to have just one e-commerce Web site. Instead, you should build several sites that appropriately customize your sales approach to different audiences. This allows you to effectively sell the same product to different target groups using unique

Having separate English and foreign language Web sites can help Internet-based businesses reach more consumers.

messaging, design and tone. One way to do this is by building a second site in a different language. The site can more easily be searched by customers according to their language-specific search terms and can help increase your revenue.

Get Specific

Try to avoid marketing dissimilar products on the same site. This will let you take advantage of the way Web users tend to search. People shop on the Internet by looking for specific items or categories of items. Selling tools and bedspreads on the same site will lower your search engine rankings and cause you to lose sales. Instead, start off selling one type of product and sell it well. You can always branch out in the future.

More free tips about how to build an effective Web-based business and information about free seminars for entrepreneurs and small business owners are available by visiting www.storesonline pro.com/jumpstart.