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## THE BASICS OF STARTING AN ONLINE BUSINESS (PART 2)

There is much more to starting an online business than just having a product to sell and setting up a website. In order to turn this into a profitable business, you have to reach the customers. This means that you have to rank high in the search engines - at least in the top 20. If you are wondering why this is so, just think of the many times you searched for something on the Internet. How often did you continue pages the first two screens of results? If you are like most searchers, if you don't find what you are looking for in the first two pages, you try another search term. The words you write have a direct impact on how successful your online business will be. You have to be aware of keyword search optimization so that the major search engines will pick up your site. You can submit to the search engines for free, but the words you write will determine your ranking. When you have an online business, you can make money while you sleep. Your store is open 24 hours a day with customers from all over the world visiting and making purchases. Therefore, you need to have a secure way of paying for the products so that customers can use their credit cards and feel safe about doing so. Buying by credit card is the only way to be sure of getting your money online. If you sell products, ship them to the customers and wait to get your money by check or money order, you are running the risk of not getting paid at all or of receiving fraudulent checks. There are many businesses online that will process the credit card payments for a low monthly fee, which means you don't have to set up a merchant account of your own. PayPal and CCNow are two examples of these sites. You have to consider how you will get the products to the customers. Shipping charges are quite expensive, so you can add more to the cost of the product and offer free shipping to entice more customers to buy. Another option is to have shipping charges added to the total cost that the customer has to pay, but you must have this printed right on your website. Customers need to know this right up front.

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