

WHAT EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT SELLING ON THE INTERNET



One of the most underutilized tools among salespeople in all sectors is the Internet. The purpose of this article is not to provide you with a lengthy diatribe about marketing on the Internet; instead, I would like to explain some fundamental truths that can make a profound difference in terms of your success or failure in the selling game. I have started roughly 10 Internet companies that generate millions of dollars per month and have done so for a long time. In the course of this work, I have attended seminars, hired consultants, read books, and done all sorts of things I believed I needed to do in order to be successful on the Internet. I believe that in just about every case, I wasted money. Very few people know how to make money on the Internet because everyone out there is trying to make money. The truth is that if you are dedicated to what you are doing, you can perform well on the Internet. There are plenty of people out there who will build you a website for \$300 or less. This is all you need to get started. I do not care if you are selling potatoes or real estate. The lessons I have learned can assist you with doing exceptionally well on the Internet. **1. Succeeding on the Internet is No Different than Succeeding Anywhere Else.** The first truth is that succeeding on the Internet is no different than succeeding anywhere else. People who succeed in business and sales typically have the ability to get the attention of people who are interested in buying. They do this using their own personal styles. They do this by educating consumers. They do this by staying in touch. They do this by consistently making better offers than their competitors. They do this by offering a wider selection of products. These are all business lessons, and the business lessons for succeeding on the Internet are the same as those you would follow if you were selling anywhere else. This is something that every sales professional needs to be aware of. For example, one of the most important aspects of sales is offering a wide selection. Selling on the Internet is no different than having a store. The wider your selection, the more options your customers have. Think of Internet companies like eBay and Amazon. In addition, successful Internet companies are able to consistently educate consumers and do so effectively. A salesperson who consistently educates his or her clients is likely to do far better than one who does not. An example of an Internet company that does a good job of educating consumers is Dell. The people who do well on the Internet are the same people who do well in any sales environment. The rules are literally the same in every single place where people compete to sell goods and services. What lots of people lead others to believe, however, is that the Internet is somehow different. This misconception is what makes people act differently when attempting to sell on the Internet and ultimately prevents many people from succeeding in Internet sales. **2. In Order to Succeed, You Just Need to Show Up.** One of the most incredible things about success in sales is that a substantial portion of the battle involves just showing up. If you show up at a prospect's door, you can often make the sale; if you show up on the Internet, you can often make the sale. The real key to success, then, is just showing up. Believe me, a lot of people fail to show up. When you show up, you provide people with the opportunity to purchase from you. In the early days of the Internet, lots of people did not show up, but a few did. A large number of people made a lot of money selling really stupid stuff on the Internet because they were the only ones selling anything, and people wanted to buy! One of the first successful Internet companies was an online store that sold Palm Pilots and accessories for them. Every salesperson and sales organization needs a website. You can talk about the product you sell on your website—or even just talk about yourself. People buy from individuals. You need to ensure that you have a website and a presence on the Internet. People want to read about you, and maintaining an online presence gives them the opportunity to do that. **3. You Cannot Trick Anyone—And Do Not Listen to Those Who Say You Can.** I love life and the many colorful characters that I come across on a consistent basis. In every interaction I have with a group of people, there are those who are honest and those who are dishonest. The ratio of those who play fair to those who do not depends upon the particular group I am involved with. When I go to Internet-marketing conferences with exhibitors, there are usually tons of exhibitors who believe they have "secret formulas" or other means by which to trick search engines, "convert" prospects at a higher rate than normal when they come to a website, and do all sorts of other things they claim can give an organization an extra edge in the marketing game. In fact, there are thousands of companies like this out there. One thing that really upsets me about a lot of this hype is that there are thousands of people who believe they can somehow win the Internet-marketing game by playing games. People will try all sorts of things in attempts to fool search engines. Others will listen to people with marketing tips that are meant to give them an unfair advantage. Personally, I do not believe there are any shortcuts whatsoever that work over the long term. For example, someone may figure out how to implement tricks that can fool search engines for a short time, but these tricks will likely only work for a short time because search engines are smart, and the people running them do not like to have their search engines fooled with. The goal of a good search engine is to always provide the people who use it with honest and unbiased information. Factors such as how long your site has been up, the usefulness of your information, and whether people enjoy your site and come back are some of the things that search engines ultimately believe are important. Trust me when I say that the best thing you can do is offer an honest service for a fair price and provide useful information in order to succeed. This is all you need to do. **4. Do Not Believe You Do Not Have to Work Hard—There is No Such Thing as Success Without Hard Work.** In order to succeed on the Internet, you need to work hard—very hard. There are some exceptions, but for the most part, the people who succeed on the Internet are those who work the hardest and do the best work. In the early days of the Internet, there were a few scattered success stories about people who did well without putting forth major effort. They were simply in the right place at the right time. You do not hear about this happening anymore because most people and businesses have presences on the Internet in some form or another. If you are going to succeed on the Internet, you need to work hard—and arguably harder than you would in any other communication medium. Why harder? Because everyone is trying to succeed on the Internet these days and moving away from printed media. More effort is being exerted on the Internet than anywhere else. This massive effort makes it more difficult to succeed in this space than in many other spheres. If you are competing on the Internet, you will need to work very, very hard. Do not be misled. **Conclusions** You could read an excellent book about marketing written 100 years ago, and the lessons you would learn from it would probably help you more than the lessons in most modern books written about the Internet today. I know this sounds crazy, but most of the modern scholarship on Internet sales deals with "quick fixes" and Internet-marketing gimmicks that may only work for a year or so. Longstanding marketing techniques are likely to work for you long after the effects of the gimmicks have worn off. When all is said and done, you need to remember that the Internet is simply another marketing medium. Study marketing, and you will do well in whatever you do on the Internet. Study the Internet, and you may, paradoxically, be led astray. *This article is sponsored by [AdvertisingCrossing](#).* Where can you find the most Internet Advertising jobs? [Click here](#).