

How to Handle Your Internet Marketing Start-Up Costs

Gail Buckley

www.PLRContentSource.com

When Internet marketers are polled about their biggest frustrations, you can always count on the newcomers to list start-up costs as one of their top concerns.

It's a valid one, too – because unless you know exactly what you want to do and the best way to get there (which newbies don't), you could end up spending a small fortune and have nothing to show for it.

There are many reasons why people are so anxious about start-up costs. One is because when many people go into Internet Marketing, they're already at a place of desperation.

Another reason is that friends and family are skeptical and uninformed about online marketing, so they're carefully watching you spend money and reminding you of how long you've been waiting for a return on that investment.

You need to have a plan going in. It doesn't mean you have to know exactly what you want to do yet, but there are minimal preparations you can make before you end up with less money than you came in with.

There Are Options for Starting 100% Free

It's a myth that you have to “spend money to make money” with Internet marketing. Some people say this because they have something to sell and they want you to buy it.

That said, you don't want to be so tight with your money that you prevent yourself from growing a formidable business the right way. Have a nice balance of common sense here.

Understand that you'll eventually want to put some money on the table if you want to take this seriously. If you're just playing online and thrilled when a dollar happens to come into your PayPal, then that's fun and you can continue that – but that's not considered a true entrepreneurial spirit.

If you're in a dire financial situation and you have to make this work, but don't have a penny to your name, then you'll be happy to hear there are options for you.

Here are a few examples:

- Kindle publishing – 100% free
- Affiliate marketing on Squidoo, Zujava, Hub Pages, Bubblews, etc. – 100% free
- Offering services – 100% free

Now those may not be the exact things you planned on doing online for the long haul, but if you want it bad enough, you'll get started however you can, get some money coming in, and then morph that into something you do want to do.

There are no excuses for procrastinating and waiting until you have mega bucks to invest.

The Right Time to Take on This Kind of Commitment

Sometimes, you don't have a choice. You get a pink slip from your boss or you end up with a medical disability and you're floundering from home wondering if those “envelope stuffing” offers in the back of a magazine are really viable.

Fortunately, Internet marketing can work for you in a pinch – but you have to use common sense, shop smart, and work off of a plan. You can't just log on and buy everything on a whim hoping for some push button magic moneymaker.

It doesn't work like that.

If you have a choice, then the right time to commit to an Internet marketing career is after you have taken some time to educate yourself about the business – and saved up a bit of investment money that you can use.

You want to have some time to develop your business, and that means you need time to:

- Educate yourself about the industry
- Research who you can trust and build relationships with them
- Create products
- Provide services
- Learn the technical ins and outs of the business
- Implement courses that you buy
- Answer emails and handle customer support

This could be before you leave for work each day, on your lunch hour or after work and on weekends. Or, it could be a fulltime gig for you if you're retired or unemployed with a savings.

Why are we talking about the time commitment? Because if you don't have time, then it becomes a money problem. You'll start trying to throw money at anything that can pay off fast for you.

Knowing What Kind of Costs You Can Expect

How much do you need to save up? What will you be buying? Let's go over some options for newbies and what you might need to pay for as an online marketer if you're finished with or don't plan to take the free route.

- Courses

If you're not educated about online marketing, then you may want to buy courses that teach you what you need to know. For example, if you want to publish on Kindle, then you might buy Kindling or another Kindle course that shows you the ropes.

There's plenty of free information online, but it's a convenience to get content that's organized and more detailed from people who have experienced success in a particular area.

Courses range from free or low cost (\$7) to mid-range \$37-97 courses to those that are priced in the thousands of dollars range. There are boiler rooms where sales people will call you based off of a low investment you make – and pressure you into maxing out your credit cards because you won't want to pass up on this fantastic offer.

- Domain name(s)

Domain names will be a necessity for certain things. You need to be in control of your business. It's great to use sites like Squidoo to make affiliate sales, for example, but you might wake up tomorrow and find that your entire account has been locked.

That won't happen when you have your own domain. And domains are one of your cheapest investments that provide you with a certain amount of authority in your niche.

Some domains, such as dot info domains, are less than \$2 per year. Others, like the most popular dot com addresses, are only around \$11 a year – but even then you can usually find a monthly coupon code to cut that in half or more.

- Website hosting

Hosting is what keeps your site live and online. You can get hosting for one site, or unlimited domains. It too is dirt cheap – but it's a monthly payment of anywhere from \$4.99 to \$11 a month, depending on which service and plan you use.

- Advertising and traffic

Some marketers never pay for traffic and others only use paid traffic. You can go either route, or a combination of the two. Free traffic can be generated from sites like Twitter, Google Plus, Facebook, etc.

Paid traffic can be found using solo ads, AdWords campaigns, and other avenues. Costs can vary – and you can do things on a small scale (like send a solo ad to a small list) and then grow it over time.

- Tools

There are tons of tools you're going to encounter on a regular basis when you're a new Internet marketer. In fact, many of the courses you take will make it sound like you won't succeed unless you buy the tools.

You're going to have to be discriminating. Consider what you really need versus what's a luxury item as you're starting off on this journey. Keyword tools are a good example of this.

You can pay hundreds of dollars for some top-notch keyword tools. You can also use free keyword tools that get you started. They may not provide as much in-depth detail as the paid ones, but that's okay – it's enough to get you rolling.

Email autoresponders are another option. You can use free tools like MailChimp if money's truly an issue. Or, you can use Aweber's \$1 first month trial option and then pay \$19.95 a month after that.

- Graphics

You're going to want graphics for your website (a minisite package, for example). Those will include the background, header, footer, and even eBook cover graphics if you put out your own info product.

- Services

As your business grows, or whenever you encounter something you don't know how to do, you'll need funds to outsource to someone else. You might outsource technical tasks – or time sucking tasks like writing.

Prioritizing Your Spending

There are a million opportunities being thrown in the faces of newbie marketers. You'll be told by everyone that you have to have certain courses, tools, and other items.

You have to prioritize what you want to spend money on according to what's most important - and in what order. For example, you don't want to spend money on a domain until you know what kind of business you want to operate.

Make a list of items you really think you need and items you want, and then put them in order of importance based on timeliness – at what point in your career do you need to have them?

You may not know this right away, but as you educate yourself about Internet marketing, you'll have a better idea of when to invest money. Also, make sure you stick to a budget.

Don't let experienced marketers with hard-selling boiler rooms pressure you into charging up your credit cards or getting into debt. You should save up for what you need and then pay it without anchoring yourself down in debt.

Make sure that as you begin profiting, you start re-investing some of those earnings back into your business. You want to keep up the momentum and put your efforts on track to grow your success.

Alternative Options to Help You Move Forward

Partnering with people to get ahead faster is one way you can cut costs and increase your productivity. You really need to be careful about who you partner with, though.

Find someone who has opposite talents of what you have. For example, if you can write well, and someone else can handle technical tasks, that might make a great pairing.

Barter with others to get what you need and want when you're just getting started. If you see a course that you want, but you don't have the cash, why not contact the owner and see if they need anything you have to offer?

If you can write, offer some free pages of content in exchange for a copy. If you can do graphics, provide them with a free minisite or ecover as an exchange. Don't be too proud to make an offer to help build your business.

As you start growing your business, remember that speed and satisfaction aren't the same things. You might find ways of profiting fast, but that doesn't mean you're going to be happy with that business model for the long-term.

Be willing to reevaluate your business model over time as you start making money and have the means to branch out and do something that will truly make you content.



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