

A Roadmap to Success: How to Sell Online Effectively



volume 3

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Do you have your own business? Have you tried to sell your products online without much success? If the answer to both of these questions is “yes” then you are not alone. While there are millions of creative entrepreneurs online today, many of them are struggling to find success selling their products and millions of others are just simply staying out of the online space because setting up, running, and managing current ecommerce solutions is difficult and intimidating.

We’re going to try to help alleviate some of those challenges and ease the anxiety of selling online by providing you with a clear roadmap and the keys to selling online effectively.

Here's Some Good News!

There are 2 billion people in the world today that have access to the Internet compared with only 360 million people just 10 years ago. That’s means that 1/3 of the world’s population is online and is growing by almost 2 million new users every month.



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With that type of growth in new users across the globe, there is a huge opportunity to expand your potential customer base from just your local community to the entire world. In addition, there are many other benefits to sharing your products online including:

- Your customers can shop 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, even while you're sleeping.
- Your loyal customers can share your information with their network in many places very easily.
- It is much more cost effective than a traditional brick and mortar store or booth at an event.
- We said it earlier, but the potential customer reach is exponential and worldwide.

Now that we've convinced you to start your online business, let's look into what it takes and how you can effectively embark on this adventurous journey. Although there are a lot of things that you will need to consider in order to effectively sell online, you can easily do so by following a clear roadmap that we've outlined in this

eBook. We have built the roadmap around 5 key areas to show you a clear path to help you achieve the ultimate success you are aiming for.

1. [Selling: The Things You Need To Get Started](#)
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3. [Connecting: Promoting You and Your Business Through Social Media](#)
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Selling: The Things You Need To Get Started

Chapter 1 by Courtney Dirks

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You've made the decision that you want to take your hobby to the next level and start your own small business, so what now? Getting started can be overwhelming, but with the proper guidance, your voyage will be much smoother. Here are a few matters you should consider before you set out on the path of pursuing your passion:

- Which [online venue](#) do you plan to sell from?
- Do you have the [money](#) to get started?
- What are you going to [name](#) of your business?
- Do you have the proper [licensing](#)?
- How do you plan to [brand](#) your business?
- How are you going to [price your products](#)?
- Are you prepared to [photograph](#) your products?
- Who's your target buyer? Do you plan to sell directly or via [wholesale or consignment](#)?



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- What policies are you going to set and how would you like to be portrayed as a seller?
- How will you manage your time once you start your business?
- Which communities do you plan to get involved with?
- How are you going to package your products?
- Have you considered how to ship your products?
- How are you going to manage your inventory?

These topics are just the tip of the iceberg...but as most of us know, success often comes when preparation meets opportunity.

Related Articles

- [Get Your Creative Business Started by Focusing on 3 Areas](#)
- [Vendor Binders: Top 5 Mistakes Online Shop Owners Make](#)
- [Goals for Your Online Art & Craft Business](#)
- [Product Tags and Labels: How They Can Help You Sell More](#)
- [Top 10 Tips for Writing a Killer "About" Page](#)
- [Etiquette: Dos and Don'ts of the Arts and Craft Community](#)



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Blogging: Building Your Community and Your Brand

Chapter 2 by Jason Dirks

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Have you ever asked yourself "what is a blog?" or "why do I need a blog?" or "how can a blog help my business?" We all have or will ask these questions at some point and so we thought we'd answer for you here.

What is a blog?

The term "blog" comes from "web log" which can best be described as an online journal and it truly is the best thing you can do for your business. In the last 24 hours over 42,000 blogs have been added to the "Blogosphere," adding to the worldwide count that now exceeds 126 million blogs. Blogging has taken the world by storm and is no longer reserved for personal journals and newspaper columnists. The reason...It's super easy to get started and it is incredibly effective for growing your community and customer base.

Why do I need a blog?

If you want to be successful online, it is an essential part of your online toolkit. Especially if you're a creative entrepreneur like an artist, photographer,



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crafter, musician, author and the many others where customers want to hear the story behind your work and the process of creation. A blog gives you just that... the platform to share your story about your products and the process you go through to create such unique pieces of work.

How can a blog help my business?

We will be honest, it takes some effort to maintain a blog, but it's definitely worth it! We like to think say that a blog gives everyone a voice and the platform to **SHARE** and you can see how a blog can help your business in these 5 important and effective ways:

- **S**tory: A blog gives you an online platform to share your story about your products and the process you go through to create such unique pieces of work to build your brand.
- **H**elp: A blog gives you the ability to help your community by connecting with one another and sharing information and ideas.

- **Audience:** A blog gives you the opportunity to reach a wider audience and connect personally with your customers and fellow creatives to build a larger network and grow your business.
- **Reach:** A blog give you access to more customers and partners so you can easily share information around the world.
- **Educate:** A blog gives you the ability to teach others about your work and share your knowledge so we all learn from each other and grow together.

How can Meylah help me?

It has become very easy (and FREE) to create your own blog these days and Meylah has the solution for you. The only thing you need is your own creative thoughts, an internet connection and you're all set. The key is embracing the direct relationship between your community and your sales. We believe in the relationship between community and sales and it's exactly the reason why Meylah created a platform experience that integrates community building and selling as the core



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purpose so as you build your community, you're also selling to them in one integrated place.

We also found though our own research, that across any online venue or platform, the people with good design and media skills sold their products way more frequently while the people with poor online skills sink to the bottom quickly. We don't believe it should be an instant strike against a great artist or crafter if they don't have experience writing HTML or using Photoshop so we created our own templates that are built to enforce good design behavior, minimizing the competitive disadvantages and making it easy for anyone to present their work in a beautiful and optimized format that puts the focus on their work, not on how well they use software.

Related Resources

- [Your Blog...Where Should You Start?](#)
- [Tell Me More: How Blogging Boosts Creative Businesses](#)
- [Create Your Blog: The Nuts and Bolts of a Good Blog Post](#)
- [Creating an Editorial Calendar for Your Blog](#)
- [5 Steps for Blog Success](#)
- [Building Awareness to Grow Your Community](#)
- [Branding You: 5 Ways to Build a Community](#)



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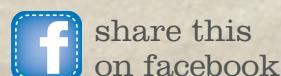
Photo credit: [Rosaura Ochoa](#)

Social media...have you embraced it in your business? It is not a fad and social media tools like [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Flickr](#) have changed the way we all communicate.

And, social media is not just for personal use, it has even become a top priority to help build and grow businesses.

We sincerely believe social media is a fantastic medium to help all creative entrepreneurs nurture relationships and become more efficient in their businesses. The key is understanding that social media is a process...it's just like building any great relationship, it takes time, effort, passion and honesty. I'm sure every one of us would love to have success overnight, but most of the time it just isn't that easy. Success is built with dedication and passion and although we may see overnight success, a long term approach is usually more effective.

The key to social media and the main purpose is connecting! Embrace social media to connect with your local community or with those across the globe that share a similar interest. It will open your eyes to new ideas and areas to explore, it will open your doors to new customers and audiences, and it will open your heart to new friends and causes to help one another.



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Here are some **SIMPLE** steps to follow to help take some of the edge off the social media confusion and ensure your social media efforts are built for long-term success.

1. **S**tart Slow: Get used to one social media tool at a time so you can get comfortable first and find your rhythm before spreading yourself too thin and getting burned out.
2. **I**nform with Good Content: Use the communication channel to be useful to others and if you find something useful, then share it with your community. Sharing the weather will not add significant value to those that are following you.
3. **M**ake it Short and Sweet: Long explanations may often lose readers so summarize your points and cover the topics quickly.
4. **P**romote Others: Find ways to share and talk about others that provide value to your audience
5. **L**isten and Respond: Keep the channels of

communication always humming so you can innovate and adapt to your customers and the market.

6. **E**nsure Consistency and Honesty: Consistency builds networks and honesty will always win in the long run so make this a top priority.

Related Resources

- [Get Started with Social Media](#)
- [7 Smart Ways to Juggle Social Media](#)
- [Five Social Media Mistakes You're Probably Making](#)
- [5 Ways to Harness the Power of Social Media for Art Marketing](#)
- [Find Your Flock on Facebook: 10 Tips From a Community Manager](#)
- [8 Ways to Build Your Brand on Twitter](#)
- [Community Building Strategy Series: Connecting Inside Flickr](#)



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Sometimes we get so caught up in creating our products and making the push to market and promote them that we forget to put emphasis on our most important assets, our customers! When it comes down to it, they are our bread and butter and we can't survive without them. So, with that said, we need to pay homage to how we can make them happy and keep them that way. We really believe it all boils down to providing them with three things: Value, Quality, and Great Customer Service.

Adding Value

As we continue to battle the recession, customers desire value for their dollar now more than ever. With that said; your job is to understand your customers' problems and figure out ways that you can benefit them in some way and at a fair price. Once you've proven your value and begin to build relationships with your customers, they will become advocates for your business and will provide you with future opportunities to provide value, either for them or for the people they have referred to you.



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Quality

How do your products compare to your competitors? Do they stand the test of time or will they fall apart after a few uses? Making products or providing services without defects is essential for your success and ensuring this quality is critical once they've been sold. Do the words "100% customer satisfaction guaranteed" resonate with you? What quality assurances are you providing to your customer to make them feel secure if something should go wrong?

Customer Service

Selling requires much more than a great product or service with good presentation, it requires you and the customer service you provide. Do you check in with your customers? Do you listen to them and react to their feedback? Do you show that you care and that you are adaptable to their needs? Are you thankful for their business? Working daily toward building customer trust, satisfaction, and loyalty will pay off in the long run, resulting in referrals and repeat business!

Always remember that there is a fine balance between promoting your work and providing quality value to your customers to keep them coming back. Never forget your customers - their happiness will bring you happiness!.

Related Resources

- [5 Reasons to Respond to Your Customers](#)
- [Handmade Sellers: 10 Ways to Please Your Customers](#)
- [Surveys: The Importance of Listening to your Customers](#)
- [The ABC's of Choosing Your Customers](#)
- [The ABC's of Responding to Customer Complaints](#)
- [5 Ways to Retain Your Customers](#)
- [How To Make Handmade Thank-You Notes](#)



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Evolving: Taking Your Business To the Next Level

Chapter 5 by Jason Dirks

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Taking your business to the next level doesn't necessarily mean increasing your sales. Yes of course that's something we all want, but taking your business to the next level means reaching out and building your community, teaching and sharing your skills, partnering with a fellow entrepreneur, adapting your existing product or creating a new product for a different market.

You may be familiar with the concept that you've truly mastered something once you are able to pass that knowledge on to someone else. Sharing your expertise gives you the opportunity to take your business to the next level and can even be profitable for you. Teaching classes, [writing books](#), or [creating tutorials](#) can provide you with [additional revenue streams](#) that may have never occurred to you when you set out on the journey to start your business. These opportunities are great because they challenge you personally and keep you at the [top of your game](#), preventing you from getting bored of doing the same things over and over again, day in and day out.



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Reaching out to your community and exploring new opportunities with others will open your business up to new ideas for products, better ways to attract customers and ultimately a chance to [help and support one another](#).

As your business grows, you will need to continually evolve, innovate and adapt. Keeping a positive attitude and continuing your personal education within your trade is critically important. And, reacting to your customers needs while monitoring and adjusting to trends in the market will enable you to scale your business to withstand the test of time.

Related Resources

- [The Importance of Learning and Teaching](#)
- [8 Tips to Write a Tutorial to Get You Noticed](#)
- [3 Big Reasons to Write an eBook](#)
- [Creating eBooks: How They Can Help You Succeed](#)
- [5 Steps to Writing a Winning eBook](#)
- [5 Ways to Add New Revenue Streams to Your Business](#)



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Contributors

Ram Dutt, an engineer by profession who comes from a family of musicians and artists. He sees his own passion for music and art in his nine year old son, who has already inspired many with his art and has led Ram to foster creativity in many others. Ram and his family live in Seattle, which is full of life, energy and an enthusiastic creative community.

Jason Dirks, a business management consultant by day and a passionate outdoor photographer by night (or any other hour he can get outside and take pictures)! He and his wife live in beautiful Seattle, which provides the ideal landscape for his photographic interests: wildlife and nature, travel, sports and adventure.

Courtney Dirks, a recent escapee of the corporate world with a background in commercial real estate, communications, and sales. She began alleviating her stress at work through creating handmade jewelry. After bouncing around the west coast for years, she settled in Seattle and has found great joy traveling, playing sports and interacting with the local creative community.

Stay Tuned...

We hope this eBook has helped alleviate some of the challenges you've faced and eased your anxiety for selling online. We are devoted to the creative community to provide the best solutions for individuals to learn, share and support each other's business growth online and we wish you the best of luck in your quest for online selling success and stay tuned for future eBooks from Meylah!

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Our Values

- Be Committed to Helping Each Other
- Live and Breathe Creativity
- Smile and Have Fun
- Show Passion in All That You Do
- Give Before You Take

- Together We Create a Great Experience
- Foster Dynamic Learning
- Be Humble and Honest
- Do More with Less
- Embrace Change

About Meylah

Meylah is a social commerce platform devoted to the creative community. Meylah enables creative entrepreneurs such as artists, handmade crafters, photographers and many others to easily sell their products and services using personalized blog-powered storefronts with integrated marketing and business tools.

Using Meylah, creative entrepreneurs are able to:

1. Build their brand and share the story of their work through a personalized blog
2. Sell their products and services with a customized storefront
3. Connect and build their community and customer base through integrated social media channels
4. Share or sell their knowledge with an online tutorial creation tool called [Byte-Szye Learning](#)
5. Effectively manage their business all-in-one-place with innovative administration tools



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