

Is Your Online Storefront Open For Business?

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**Is Your Online Storefront Open For Business?**

**By Chee Wee**

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Keeping your website online 24/7 is one of the keys to ecommerce success!

When you advertise online, what is the next worst thing that can happen besides getting little response?

Imagine spending \$5,000 on a permission-based email marketing campaign that generated an excellent 10% response – sending you an avalanche of targeted prospects. But your website goes down exactly at that very moment!

This is a scenario that most online marketers experience at least once in their marketing career. I went through it a few times in recent months due to bad service from my previous web hosting provider.

What exactly does your business lose when your website goes down?

Loss #1: Sales

Take your total annual sales and divide it by 8,760 hours in a year and you will arrive at the sales volume lost per hour of downtime.

For example, if your business generated sales of \$100,000 online last year and your website goes down for 18 hours, you would have lost sales worth at least \$205.48!

This figure will be even larger if you exclude non-working days.

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### Loss #2: Advertising Dollars

If your website goes down after a major marketing campaign, it is almost certain that you will lose every dollar invested. When your potential customers cannot access your website immediately after they click to it, don't expect them to try 24 hours later.

### Loss #3: Goodwill

If your website is down often or your visitors frequently have trouble accessing it, they lose faith in your business

credibility. In this highly competitive online market, your customers can easily become your competitors' customers!

What can you do to prevent your website from failing you? Here are some practical tips.

#### Tip #1: You Get What You Pay For

If you pay \$9.95 monthly for your web hosting package, you're not likely to get first-class technical support. Don't expect your hosting provider to have support staff available to take your call after office hours.

They will probably take 12–48 hours to restore your site – if you manage to get through their online support system – which probably would be down too.

#### Tip #2: You Need Live Phone Support

Use a hosting provider who have real support staff available 24/7 to take your phone call anytime.

Don't be fooled by some hosting companies who say they have phone support when it is actually just a "Leave a message after the beep tone" voicemail option.

Before I switched to my existing hosting provider, I didn't get much of a support from my previous hosting company.

Each time my site went down (due to their faulty systems), they took 30 hours to get it back on. I was pissed. And worst, it usually happened after a successful marketing campaign!

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So I decided to invest a little more into a hosting provider who would provide better customer service. I surfed extensively for good hosting packages and checked out comments on several web hosting forums.

Finally I decided to switch to Hostway:

<http://www.internetmarketingfocus.com> o.cgi?l=hostway

What impressed me was their live phone support. During initial site setup, I telephoned them a few times at midnight and they had real live staff picking up the phone and attending to my requests!

And I'm not even paying them big bucks. I'm only paying a little more than my previous provider. Is it worth it?

Yes! The amount I spend with them is only a fraction of the income my site generates when it is online 99.9% of the time!

### Tip # 3: Look At The Fine Print

One of the factors that you must consider when buying a hosting package is their uptime guarantee.

The difference between 95.0% and 99.0% uptime is 14.6 days in a year. Never go for uptime guarantees of less than 99.0%.

For a list of good hosting providers, go to

<http://www.internetmarketingfocus.com/links.php?op=viewlink&cid=6>

My personal favorite is Hostway:

<http://www.internetmarketingfocus.com> o.cgi?l=hostway

### Tip #4: Monitor Your Server

Don't expect your hosting provider or your visitors to tell you that your site is down. Be the first person to know!

My site is continuously monitored by QwkMon monitoring service 24/7. Whenever my site is down, they send me an email immediately. They can also contact me via my cellular phone.

I can then quickly call Hostway's phone support staff and get my site restored – though after I moved to Hostway, I haven't had the need to do that yet. Their uptime is excellent!

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Here is a list of monitoring services that you can consider:

<http://www.qwkmon.com> (my favorite!)  
<http://www.internetseer.com>  
<http://www.netmechanic.com/monitor.htm>  
<http://www.serverrat.com>  
<http://www.websitepulse.com>  
<http://www.siteprobe.com>  
<http://www.nfiniteweb.com> ools.html  
<http://www.alertra.com>

If you're serious about marketing your products and services online, make sure your online storefront is always open for business!

Chee Wee is a widely-published marketing consultant. He helps small and medium-size businesses to market successfully online. Learn how a startup site gets over 200 million pageviews monthly without spending a penny on advertising. For FREE info, email him at

<mailto:publicity@internetmarketingfocus.com>

### **Sell Your Product Online**

**By Marsh Uele**

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Marsh Uele

In today's business world, if you're not selling your product online, you're losing sales. If you have a product, make money online by selling online. There are simple ways to make money online.

Make sure your site is professional and easily navigable if you want to make money online. If you have a lot of product, a search feature is a necessity in order for you to make money online. If you have only one or two products, you can use a payment method such as PayPal to make money online. However, if you showcase more product in order to make money online, you'll want to open a merchant account to handle credit card payments. Some merchant accounts will also offer free features, all helping you to make money online. To keep from violating credit card rules, make sure that for Internet sales, you have an Internet account.

Consider paying affiliates to help you make money online. Affiliates are online "word of mouth" referrals and can increase the amount of money you make online. They link to your site from theirs, and all of their traffic becomes your traffic, increasing the likelihood of making money online. When it comes to making money online, affiliate marketing is a no-lose for the merchant, because commission is paid only on sales.

## Is Your Online Storefront Open For Business?

Consider making money online by selling your product through an eBay storefront. Bidding on items has become a hot way to make money online. Having your own storefront ensures that buyers can find you easily because your product is in one place. Through your storefront, you can make reports, track traffic and sales, and receive advertising through eBay. You can try a storefront for 30 days free, making it an attractive offer to make money online.

Marsh Uele is the editor of

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