Surefire Profit System

Module 2: Starting Your Business

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION **1**

WHAT AN ONLINE BUSINESS IS **2**

MASTER YOUR DOMAIN **4**

REGISTERING A DOMAIN 4
HOSTING A DOMAIN 7
ACTION STEPS 10

SET UP YOUR AUTORESPONDER **12**

WHAT'S AN AUTORESPONDER? 12
AUTORESPONDER SERVICES 13
SETTING UP AWEBER 14
ACTION STEPS 16

SET YOURSELF UP TO GET PAID **17**

OPENING A PAYPAL ACCOUNT 17
OPENING A CLICKBANK ACCOUNT 19
ACTION STEPS 22

SET UP THE EASY SALES APP SOFTWARE **23**

6.0 WRAPPING UP **24**

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Introduction

Running an online business has a lot in common with running an offline business. Both require you to do the basic "setup" stuff to get the business ready to bring in revenue, and to keep that revenue coming in over time.

The difference in the online world is that there are lots of new concepts to deal with.

If you're under 30 years old, most of these concepts probably aren't new to, even if you have no direct experience with them.

If you're older than that, some of the concepts can sound like Greek, or black magic. They're not actually mysterious, but there's a new lingo to learn, and new way of thinking to get used to.

That's why the "tech stuff" and online business setup activities are such a roadblock for so many people. It's like facing a mountain you have to climb before you can see what's beyond it.

This module will help. I've written it in plain English so I can introduce the terms and concepts you need to know…and only those. You don't have to know everything, or be a technical wizard. All you need are some basic knowledge and skills to get things set up and keep them humming along.

I'm going to show you how to get a website up and running. If you haven't done that before, rest easy—it's easier than you think.

I'm also going to show you how to integrate the basic components you'll need to sell products online and build your base for future sales. That means understanding payment processors and autoresponders.

Finally, I'm going to show you how to install the Surefire Profit System software, which brings all of the components of your business together in one place so you can manage the business process easily.

By the time you're done, you'll have most of the technical knowledge you need to get your online business presence up and running.

Read on…

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What an Online Business Is

Before I get into the specifics of setting up your business, let me take away all of the mystery surrounding doing business online.

When people are new to Internet marketing, they often get overwhelmed with all of the new terminology they need to know. That's a shame, because most of that terminology really obscures the fact that online business is exactly what it sounds like—it's doing business online.

That means you probably understand more about it than you think you do! Consider what doing business (any kind of business) means:

- You sell a product or service
- To people who want it
- You take payment from them
- You give them customer service after the sale
- You probably try to sell to them again in the future

Okay, all of the mystery is now gone. Online business is doing exactly the same things, but via a different sales channel—the web instead of a physical store in a mall, or on Main Street.

Because it's a different sales channel, you need to understand the various things that let you use that channel. When it comes to online business, that means understanding some technical components that have to do with the World Wide Web.

At the most basic level, you probably already know what a *web browser* is. That's going to be very much like the shopping mall where your store is located. If you can bring up a browser on your computer and navigate to a website, you're already part of the way toward understanding online business.

Now you have to know how to get a spot in the mall, how to present your products to customers, how to setup your cash register so they can buy what you're selling, and how to manage it all so you come out ahead financially.

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That's what the rest of this module will show you how to do. Frankly, some of this stuff is a little premature since you don't have a product idea yet, but that's okay. Understand the basics now, then loop back when the time comes to get your specific business set up.

Master Your Domain

When you do business online, you need a *website*. You could probably get away without having one in some cases, but for what I'm teaching you, you need your own site.

That means you need to understand a little more about how the web works so you can carve out your little corner of it. Consider it the starting piece of the technical puzzle.

Registering a Domain

The web is made up of websites that have *web pages*. Those pages are on web servers somewhere (more on that later). But the pages do no good for anyone if people can't find them. So you need to give them a publicly accessible place to live, which is called a *domain*. Here's an example of one:

Google.com

That's the domain for the popular search engine, Google. That company owns that domain—they "bought" it. To be more accurate, they lease it for a period of time from a *domain registrar*. You can do the same thing. All you have to do is find a domain name that nobody else is leasing, and pay the fee to lease it.

I use NameCheap as my registrar. They have a good user interface and they'll charge you around $10 per year for a domain. That's about as cheap as you'll find anywhere. You can search for available domains right on their home page:



Broadly speaking, you have two options when you buy a domain:

- You can buy a new domain name for each product you sell, or
- You can buy a single domain name and sell of your products there

I recommend the second option. Buy a domain for your overall business, which could be your business name, or even your actual name. That will help brand you as an expert. For example, I registered DerrickVanDyke.com.

Note that my domain ends in *.com*. You can also lease a .net or .biz domain. But a .com looks more professional and if someone types in your domain name from memory, they will most likely enter the .com by default.

Remember, that domain is going to be the publicly accessible entry point for your website. Once you have the domain for your site, you can sell products there from folders on your site, and you can give people *links* to those folders. For example, I might sell product at my site from a link (called a *URL*) like this:

http://www.DerrickVanDyke.com/wpmobile

Someone could enter that address in his web browser and to the page on my site that talks about that particular product.

Without getting too technical, here's what each part of that link means in English:

- The **http://** part tells the browser that it should use the hypertext transfer protocol to access a file. That's really all you need to know about that.

- The **www** part tells the browser that it's heading to a web page. Remember, web pages are just files on your web server that are written in a language browsers can translate into information you can see and read.

- The **DerrickVanDyke.com** part tells the browser that the page is in my little corner of the web, so it needs to go there to find it.

- The **/wpmobile** part tells the browser to hit the wpmobile folder at my site and display what's there. Since there's no particular page specified in the link, the web server assumes it should send back the contents of the *index.htm* file. It's "serving up" that page, which is where the term *web server* comes from—a web server serves up web pages.

I also could use affiliate link cloaking software to create links like this:

http://www.DerrickVanDyke.com/recommends/blogbank

That link might not be a physical location on my web server. Instead, some magic happens behind the scenes to redirect that link to physical place that I don't want the public to be able to get to directly.

I'll talk more about this stuff later in the course so you can know how to set up your files and links.

Now, let's say the domain name for my full name was already taken. Not a problem. I'd just have to find another one. Maybe DvanDyke.com or DerrickRecommends.com would have been available.

Hosting a Domain

Your website is a bunch of files. Those files are typically written in a language called HTML, which stands for *hypertext markup language*. Here's a simple example of what HTML looks like:

```
<html>
<head>
<title>My First Page</title>
</head>
<body>
Hello, World!
</body>
</html>
```

HTML is made up of *tags*, which is actually a confusing term, because each "tag" has what's called a *start tag* and an *end tag*, like this:

```
<html></html>
```

The stuff between the tags is typically what shows up on your web page. The tags just tell your browser how to display that content.

You don't have to be an HTML expert to have your own website. All you need to know is that web pages are files in a particular format that browsers can understand. You have to put those files on a web server somewhere so other people can get to them with their browsers.

Your *hosting account* lets you pay a fee (typically monthly) to reserve space on a webs server and put your website files there.

When you're first starting out, you can get by with a basic hosting package. Most hosting services in the $25-30 range have more than you need. When you start building membership sites or you're getting more traffic than your site can handle, you can always upgrade.

Whatever you do, don't fall into the free hosting trap. You get what you pay for. If you don't want your site to go down twice a month or deal with distracting banners on your website, then avoid free hosting at all cost.

A quick warning here about GoDaddy, which is a popular domain registrar that also offers hosting…I strongly advise against it for three reasons:

1. **Their terms of service state that if your site gets even one spam complaint, they have the right to completely disable your domain.** This happened to a friend of mine not long ago. He lost over $10,000 over a 3-week period because GoDaddy does not

offer phone support and he had to straighten the whole thing out via email.

2. **Their servers do not support affiliate link cloaking software.** This tool will be an extremely important component of your business in the long run

3. **Their user interface is horrible.** It's difficult to navigate and filled with annoying banner ads.

Here's a good, reliable (and fairly cheap) hosting company:

http://www.HostGator.com

I recommend the **Baby** package (about $8/month) because you can host unlimited domains. The **Hatchling** package only gives you one domain.



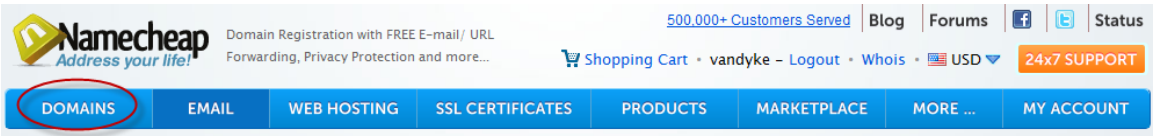
Although Host Gator will offer to sell you a domain, I don't recommend it because they will have control over your domain. And if you ever decided to move your domain for some reason, you may have trouble transferring it to a new registrar.

Your hosting account is actually "connected" to your domain name through your domain registrar. The connection is through a system called *DNS*. In a nutshell, servers on the Internet find it each through a name service which translates DerrickVanDyke.com (or whatever your domain is) into a physical web server address on the world wide web network of servers.

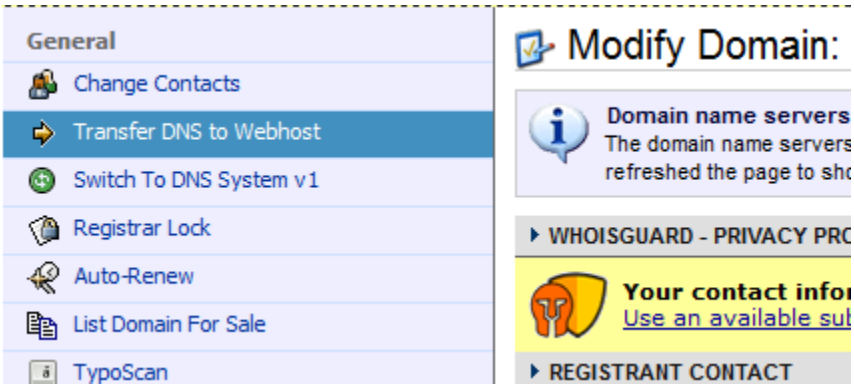
To make the connection happen, you have to tell your domain registrar which name servers to point to at your hosting company. Your hosting company will send you an email with those name servers when you sign up for your new account. The name server addresses will look something like this:

- NS1.HOSTGATOR.COM
- NS2.HOSTGATOR.COM

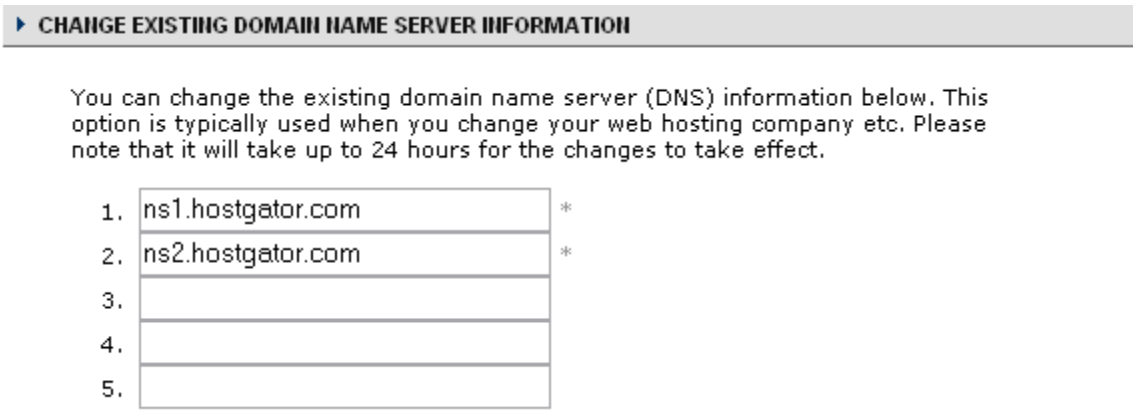
When you get that email, you'll need to go back to NameCheap and log in to your account. Click **Domains** > Manage Domains from the top menu:



Then click on your domain name and click **Transfer DNS to Webhost** on the left-hand menu:



You will see a form like the one below, but it will be empty. Copy and paste your name servers (in order of ns1 and ns2) from the email you received into the form:



Your name servers may differ from what I just showed you. For example, they could be ns1.hostgator5.com and ns2.hostgator5.com. But regardless of the exact details of the names, you'll typically get two name servers to fill in to point your domain to the name server at your hosting company.

Action Steps

To summarize, there are four steps you need to take to set up your domain and hosting:

- **Step 1: Choose a domain name.** I recommend choosing a single domain for your online business presence. That could be your personal name or your business name. You can use the search tool at NameCheap to find one that's available.

- **Step 2: Register your domain name.** If you don't have an account at NameCheap, you'll be prompted to create one. Click the **Express Checkout** button and then choose to pay by credit card or funds in your account. If you buy a lot of domains, you can deposit money through PayPal into your NameCheap account for faster checkout. For now, just pay by credit card and move onto the next step.

- **Step 3: Set up your hosting account.** Use a relatively inexpensive (but not free) hosting company like HostGator. Their basic **Baby** package should be fine.

- **Step 4: Update DNS at your registrar.** HostGator (or any other hosting company you choose) will send you an email telling you which name servers to point to. All you have to do is log into your NameCheap account and enter the right server information. It could take 1-3 days for the DNS information to update, so don't let that worry you.

Once you have your domain online, and your hosting account is ready for you to upload files, it's time to sign up for some other things that will let you build your actual website. The first is an autoresponder service.

Set Up Your Autoresponder

Selling downloadable information products from a website is a great way to make money with very little overhead. But the key to making long-term profits is to make additional follow-up sales to people who buy from you.

To do that, you need an email mailing list. That's why you need an autoresponder.

What's An Autoresponder?

Fancy term, simple idea. An *autoresponder* is software that lets you

- Maintain an email mailing list, typically containing first names and email addresses for subscribers, but perhaps including additional information (like a phone number or mailing address)
- Send out emails automatically on a schedule you specify to people who sign up for an email mailing list
- Send out *broadcast* emails at any time you want, unrelated to the automatically scheduled emails you set up in your autoresponder

You've probably been to a website and signed up for a mailing list. Or maybe you signed up for a free report or something else free, and ended up on the mailing list. You probably provided your first name and email address. Then sometime later, possibly right away, you got an email that starts like this:

```
Hi [your name],

Welcome to the list...
```

They got your name from the online form you filled out to join their list, or to get their freebie. Having your name let them *personalize* their email message to you, meaning they included your name.

The interesting thing is that they didn't have to write that email just for you. They set it up in their autoresponder account ahead of time, and scheduled it to be sent to you immediately when you joined the list. In

other words, they wrote one email that might get personalized and sent to thousands of people.

That's the power of an autoresponder.

Autoresponder Services

You can buy your own autoresponder and run it on your computer or on your web server, but I don't recommend it. It's a setup headache, and it usually isn't as reliable as signing up for an autoresponder service.

Your autoresponder will be the lifeline of your business. So don't settle for a cheap system. I can't stress enough how important it is to use a quality autoresponder service that gets mail delivered.

I'm an expert programmer. So I could easily set up my own autoresponder system. In fact, I used to own a service that I built from scratch called *MailListPro* and it was very successful for a while.

But the industry changed and it became nearly impossible for me to maintain relationships with ISPs and get the mail delivered for my clients. So I eventually shut it down.

Now I send all my mail through Aweber. Here's why...

I have done extensive research and testing in this area so I know what I'm talking about. It's all about deliverability.

Aweber has a full-time staff of people who constantly monitor the millions of emails that get sent every day and maintain relationships with the major ISPs (AOL, Yahoo, Google, MSN, etc.).

What that means is that your mail gets delivered. Period.

If you try to send mail from your own server or use a free autoresponder service (and I'm not exaggerating when I say this), you'll be lucky if 50% of your mail gets through to its destination. And that means your sales will be at most half of what they would be if more of your email go delivered!

I use a system called *Delivery Monitor* ($79 a month) to monitor my mailings. I have tested both Aweber and GetResponse and both services have excellent delivery rates (90-99%). But Aweber is always the highest.

Higher delivery rates means more money in your pocket. And for under $20 a month, you can't go wrong.

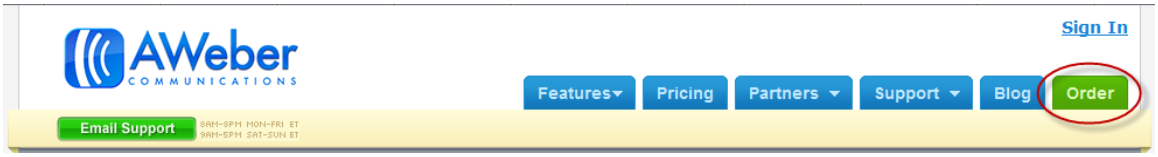
I have used and tested other popular autoresponder services and when it comes to delivery, Aweber beats them all. I also prefer Aweber's user interface because it's much easier and more intuitive to use.

Aweber is also the first choice for most successful Internet marketers (just look at the unsubscribe link at the bottom of the emails you receive). They have been around since online marketing started and they have perfected their email delivery system.

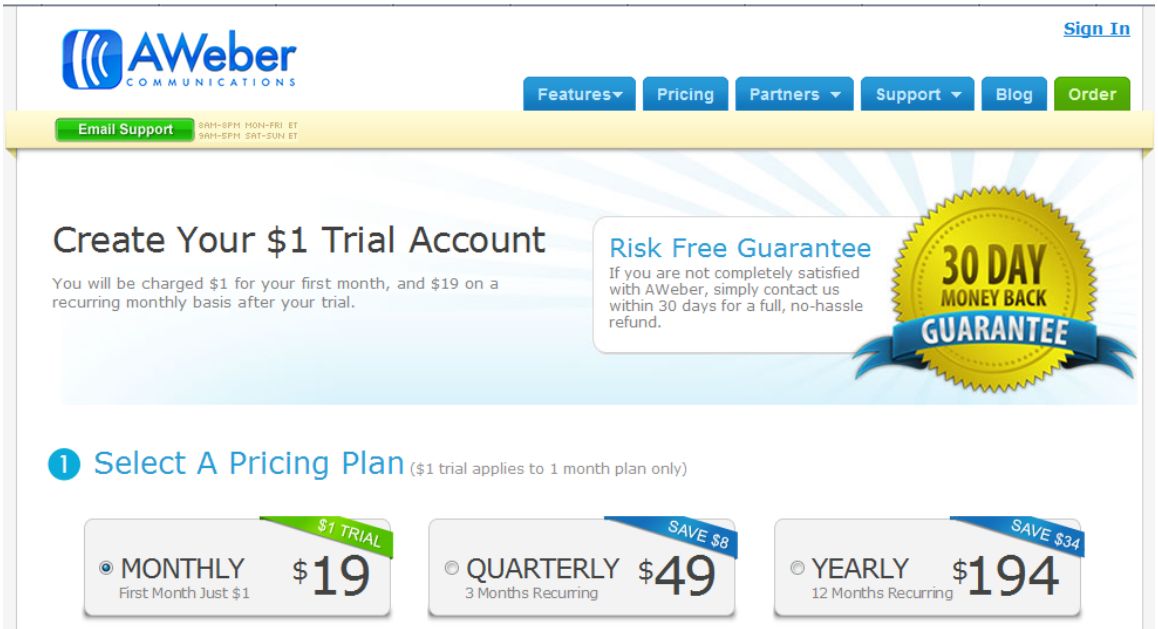
Setting up Aweber

Aweber is a fantastic system that will let you do just about anything you could imagine doing with an autoresponder. There's power to spare. But the basics of signing up for an account are simple enough for a kid to understand.

Start by clicking the Order link on the Aweber home page:



That takes you to the order page:



Subscribers	Monthly
0 - 500	$19
501 - 2,500	$29
2,501 - 5,000	$49
5,001 - 10,000	$69
10,001 - 25,000	$149
25,000 +	Contact Us

Every Aweber account includes unlimited lists and unlimited messages to your lists. You'll get 500 subscribers for the base rate you pay, but you'll pay more as you get more subscribers than that (see the prices to the right).

Paying more is the bad news, but the good news is that a larger list should mean larger revenue for you.

Your biggest decision point at the beginning is whether to get billed by the month, by the quarter (every three months) or by the year. The second two options save you some pretty good money, so if you have the cash, it's smart to sign up for a year at a time. You'll save almost two months of fees that way.

Once you have your account, you'll just need to use it. Aweber makes it easy, and I'll show you various aspects of using your account at appropriate points later in the course.

Some of the important features I will show you how to use at Aweber include:

- Creating separate lists for prospects, customers, and affiliates
- Automatically removing customers from a prospect list when they are added to a customer list

- Following up with your prospects, customers and affiliates automatically

- Delivering “unexpected bonuses” to your customers to reduce refunds and set them up for another sale

Spend some time getting used to the Aweber interface and reporting tools. If you have any questions, check the extensive knowledge base in the support section. If you can’t find your answer there, you can submit a support ticket, chat with a representative, or even call Aweber’s customer support phone number. They’re very helpful.

I’ll cover all the details about opt-in forms and squeeze pages later in the course, so don’t worry about that yet.

Action Steps

To summarize, there are two steps to get your autoresponder service account:

- **Step 1: Decide your billing period.** I recommend signing up for a year at a time, if you have the cash to do that.

- **Step 2: Sign up for your Aweber account.** Fill out the simple form on the order page and you’ll be up and running in minutes.

When you have your autoresponder account, you’ll be ready to integrate email opt-in forms into your web pages where they make sense. I’ll talk more about that when the time comes.

For now, you need one more technical component that will let you take credit card payments online.

Set Yourself Up To Get Paid

It's possible to do business online and not accept credit card payments, but it makes life very difficult. It also cuts your sales off at the knees, because many people buying online, especially in the niches related to Internet marketing, want the convenience of paying with a credit card. If that convenience isn't there, they might not buy.

Not only that, but you also want to get paid for any commissions you can earn by promoting other people's products as an affiliate.

Fortunately, there's an easy way to kill both of those birds with one stone. All you have to do is open two free accounts with two different companies.

Opening A PayPal Account

PayPal is a great tool for accepting payments online. It costs nothing to open an account, and you'll be able to accept payments with all major credit cards and PayPal (naturally).



If you don't have a PayPal account already, you'll need to sign up for one, but it's free and easy to do. You'll see a **Sign up** link on the home page in the **Get paid online** section.

Then you'll have a fundamental decision to make...which type of account do you want? PayPal gives you three options:

- A **Personal** account
- A **Premier** account
- A **Business** account

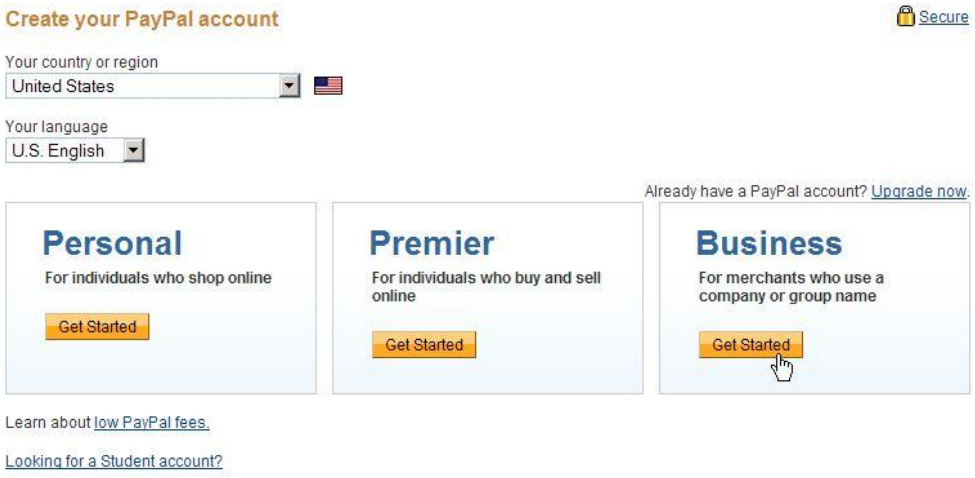
All three account types are free to set up. Using a personal account isn't an option, because it won't allow you to accept credit cards. But what about the other two?

A premier account lets you accept credit card payments, but I recommend a business account for two reasons:

1. It lets you operate under a business name, which looks more professional

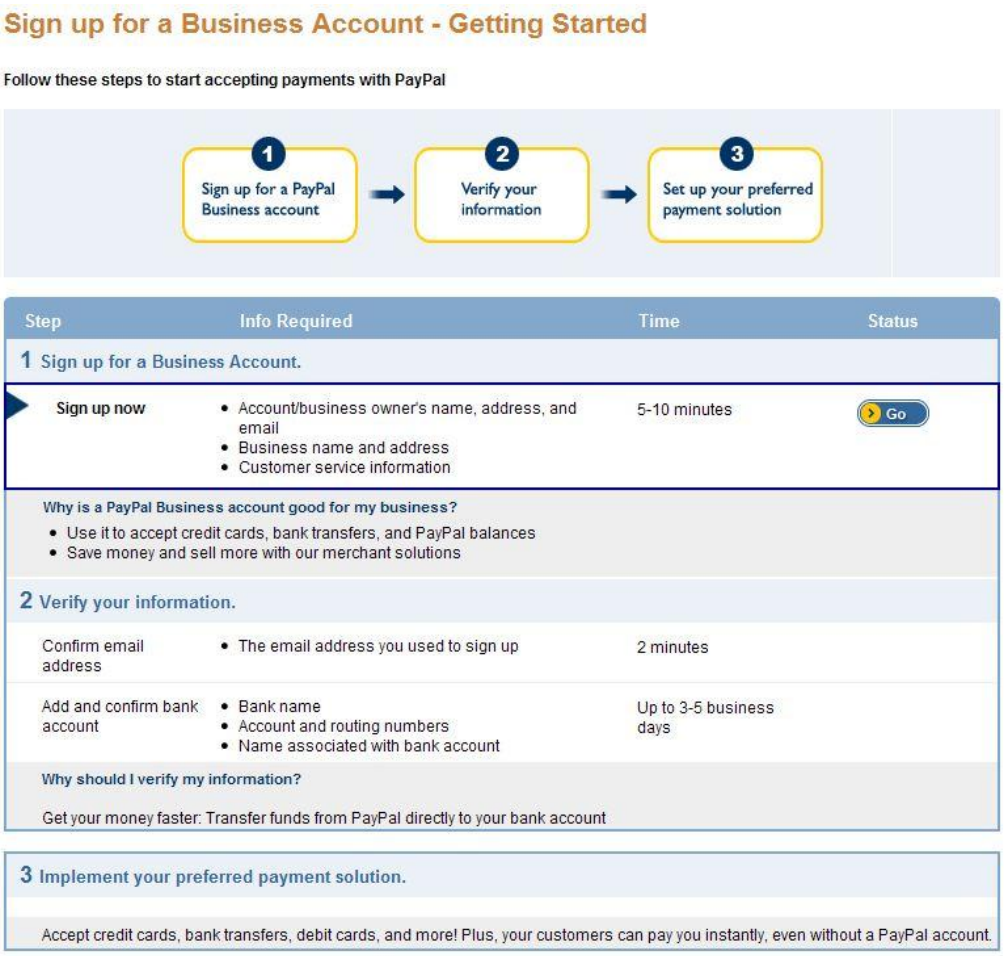
2. It lets people who do not have PayPal accounts pay you by credit card, which is likely to get you more sales

So choose a business account when you're prompted to pick an account type, and you'll be on your way:



Next you'll need to choose what PayPal calls your payment solution. There are several different solutions available, but the **Website Payments Standard** option works for most people. It lets PayPal host your payment page, and makes setting up payment buttons a breeze. You can upgrade later if you need to.

Even though the PayPal sign-up process is easy to follow, it is a little strange. After you've made the decisions I just described, and clicked the appropriate buttons along the way, you're going to have to do it again when you get to the official setup wizard page:



The good news is that you've already done the think you need to do. Now you just have to fill out the forms PayPal asks you fill out. Their setup wizard tells what information you'll need (your business name and address, your bank information, etc.) so it's very easy to follow.

Once you have your account set up, you'll be ready to put PayPal payment buttons on your website sales pages, if you choose to use PayPal as your primary payment processor.

Opening A ClickBank Account

ClickBank is a third-party payment processor, much like PayPal is, and they'll let you accept credit card payments as well as PayPal payments. But you'll want to sign up for both. Why? For two primary reasons:

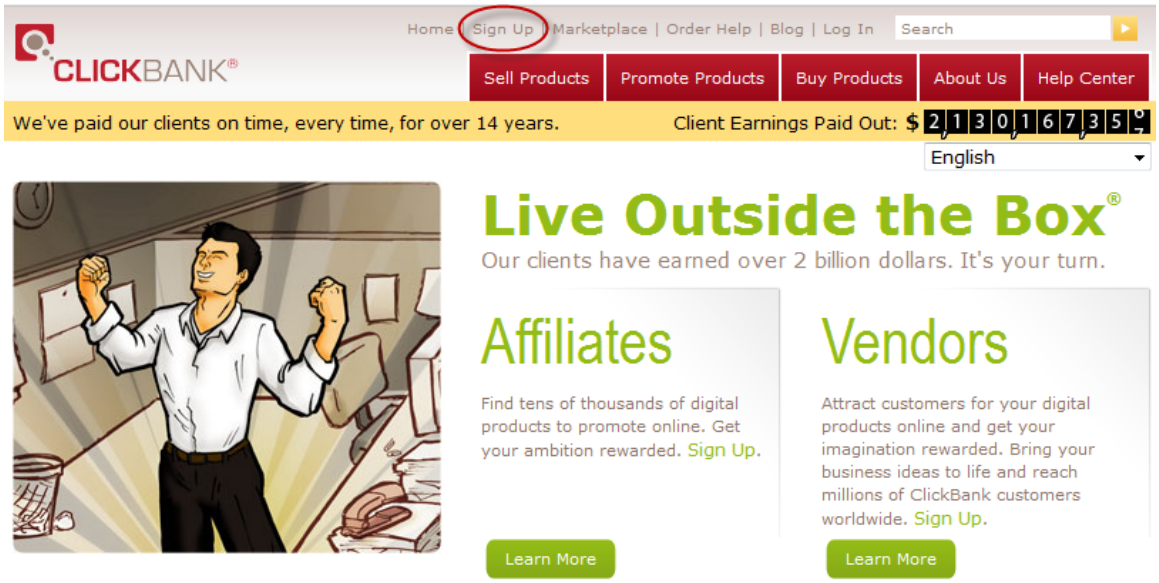
- **Some merchants pay commissions by PayPal, so it's good to have a PayPal account for your business.** This just makes it convenient for virtually any product creator to pay you, which is a smart business decision.

- **ClickBank also lets you sell your own product.** When it comes time to sell your own product or service, you'll probably want to become a ClickBank *publisher*, meaning you'll have the right to sell your product and let ClickBank accept credit card payments on your behalf. I'll talk about setting that up when the time comes. But the first step is opening a free ClickBank account, so you're setting up for success later by doing that now.

- **ClickBank also handles your affiliate program for you for free.** It's just included in your publisher account, meaning ClickBank will process payments for you, calculate the commissions you owe and to which affiliates, and cut the checks to them automatically. You don't have to touch a thing. This will become very important later on.

The ClickBank Marketplace has well over 10,000 products at this point, and anybody who signs up for a free ClickBank account can promote those products as an affiliate…which earns that person commissions paid automatically by ClickBank every two weeks.

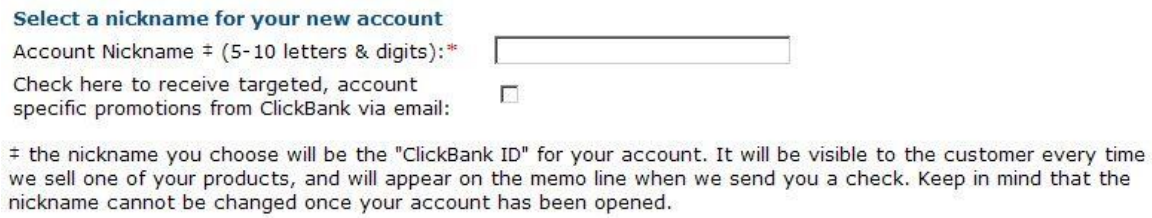
Signing up for an account couldn't be easier. You'll find the sign-up page on the **Promote Products** tab on the home page:



That takes you the simple sign-up form where you'll need to give ClickBank three types of very important information:

- **Information about where to send your paychecks.** This can be your personal information or your business information.
- **Your contact information.** This should be you, or perhaps somebody working for you who's in charge of handling contact with partners like ClickBank.
- **Your ClickBank nickname.** This requires a little explanation…

Your ClickBank nickname is your ClickBank ID. It's 5-10 letters and digits. It's a unique identifier for your account, and you can't change it once you've chosen it. All you have to do is type in your choice, and ClickBank will tell you if it's available:



When you sign up, ClickBank will send you a confirmation email with your login information (your ID and randomly generated password), so file that away for future reference.

That's all there is to it. Now you can promote any product in the ClickBank Marketplace and get the commission percentage the product seller chooses to pay. And you're ready to become a ClickBank publisher when the time comes.

Action Steps

To summarize, there are three steps to set yourself up to take online credit card payments:

- **Step 1: Choose your PayPal account type.** I recommend a business account, which won't cost you a dime, lets you take credit card payments, and lets you do business with a business name.

- **Step 2: Sign up for your free PayPal account.** Follow the wizard and fill out the forms. It should take you less than 15 minutes. You'll have to wait a few days for PayPal to confirm your bank information, but you should be up and running within a week at the outside.

- **Step 3: Sign up for your free ClickBank account.** Fill out the business and contact information form, and choose your account nickname.

Now you're all set to do business online, including getting paid, which is what really counts. All that's left to do is to add the component that'll make completing your setup—and managing your business—easy.

Set up the Easy Sales App Software

Running an online business is easier than running an offline business in a lot of ways. You typically don't have to deal with inventory, a physical store, employees, and a bunch of other things that can make an offline business a pain in the neck.

But that doesn't mean you'll have absolutely no work to do. You'll need to build your website, change it when it needs changing, get your affiliate program set up, get traffic to your site, etc.

That's where the Easy Sales App software can make life a lot easier. Throughout the course, I'll show you how to use the software to help you do certain tasks. But the first step is setting up the system so you can process orders and track affiliate sales.

You'll find all the necessary setup videos inside the software interface. Once you're set up, you'll be ready to follow along as I show you how to use it in future modules.

6.0 Wrapping Up

You could say that what you've done in this module is "grunt work". I won't argue. But it's stuff you need to do in order to get your business going, so there's no use avoiding it.

Fortunately, everything I've described here is easy and inexpensive. You could start from scratch, spend less than $25, and have your online web presence established within a week. There's more work to be done before you're ready to start making money, but most of the infrastructure is in place to make that additional work as easy as it can be.

I hope this brief module has convinced you of two things:

- The "technical stuff" is nothing to be afraid of—it's just new to a lot of people
- Once you actually get into it, the things that looked so intimidating or confusing before…aren't really that way at all

First, I showed you how to buy a domain (remember NameCheap) and get hosting for it (remember HostGator), so you can set up your actual website.

Next, I showed you how to sign up for an excellent autoresponder service (remember Aweber) that will let you build and maintain your email mailing list…which is where a big part of your future revenue is likely to come from.

Next, I showed you how to sign up for a free accounts PayPal so you can get ready to take credit card payments online.

Finally, I showed you how to install the Easy Sales App software, which makes it easy to set up and manage your online business.

That's really all of the technical education you need. Now it's time to use those things to make money.

In the next module, I'll tell you how to find a market that's hungry for what you can provide, and tell you how to target that market with a product they'll love. Thanks for reading, and enjoy the rest of the course.

