



# Field of Dreams? not exactly.

BY LISA WELLS

## GROWING A SUCCESSFUL ONLINE BUSINESS IS ALL ABOUT MARKETING

Most work-at-home professionals start out like I did: researching and asking lots of questions. I sent e-mails to other online entrepreneurs inquiring about potential job openings, obviously not understanding that they were small business owners themselves. I was stuck in the mindset that I needed to work for someone else, learn the ropes, and then once I learned enough I could make it on my own. It didn't take long to figure out that if I wanted to succeed, I needed to get out there—find my own clients, build my own website and be my own boss. When you're developing an online business, *you* need to take the lead.

Believe me when I tell you success didn't come overnight. Starting an online business is certainly no get-rich-quick scheme. After my first six months of working 12-hour days and nearly every weekend, I had made exactly \$200. I had no clients, no niche and no direction. I was signing up for one business-building program after another, each promising me more clients, more money... you know the deal. Many online entrepreneurs fall into this trap. So what changed? How did I go from zero clients to an overabundance in only one year? It is all about the marketing.

### If I build it, will they come?

The expansive nature of the "World Wide Web" feeds the illusion that "If I build it, they will come." If you've been in business very long, you (like me) have probably learned the hard way that just doesn't happen. And you may be thinking "I don't enjoy networking. I don't really 'get' Twitter. Why can't I just put up a website and make money?"

Unless you market your online business, it's unlikely you'll be very successful. By successful, I

mean earning a comfortable income, working with the type of clients you want to work with, bringing in passive revenue (from a product or service that you sell online 24/7 without having to actually be there), enjoying a flexible schedule and having more time with your family. Creating a *successful* business begins with marketing.

An abundance of information, knowledge and expertise exists—much of it free—to help you learn how to market your virtual business. One of the best ways to attract your niche is to properly optimize your website for the search engines so that your site will display when a potential client or customer is searching for products or services that you offer. And yes, there are free programs out there. Cricket Walker offers a free class where she walks you step-by-step on how to optimize your web site. This course taught me the basics, such as how search engines work, how to create effective web page titles, and what every site "must" have to be credible. Check it out at [www.gnc-web-creations.com/seo-optimization.htm](http://www.gnc-web-creations.com/seo-optimization.htm).

Be open to trying different methods. The Internet has changed the way we buy, sell, and access products, information, services and even music. Because consumers access products and services differently, different tools are necessary to get your product or service noticed. Nowadays you can use audio, video, blogs, forums—you name it. Pick the format you are most comfortable with and try it out! ■



Lisa Wells partners with 7-figure entrepreneurs to help build and manage their online businesses. She is the author of *E-Marketing Essentials for Virtual Assistants* and co-author of *The Power of Leadership: Finding the Leader Within*. Read more about marketing your small business at [LisaRWells.com](http://LisaRWells.com).