

Internet Marketing 'The First Time'



By Claire Bolton

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Introduction...

The first time you make money online is certainly a feeling that you'll NEVER forget.

Since I launched my free newsletter site (<http://www.clairebolton.com>), I've had lots of emails from people who want to know how I got started in internet marketing myself.

Plans are all well and good – but it seems you'd prefer my personal experiences – something which I'm going to concentrate on in both this report and my free newsletter.

So I've decided to tell you my own personal story from a few years ago when I was just starting out myself.

If you've never made a penny (or cent or whatever) online then I hope you can realise that it IS possible. I promise you that you can be making money this time next week providing you put in some work. Read on and you'll perhaps see the reason why you just might be failing as an IMer.

At the other end of the scale, if you're a full time marketer already then I think you'll still appreciate and learn something from what I'm saying.

Most people over-complicate internet marketing.

I like to work a different way – using methods that are as simple as they are effective...



The beginning...

I first gained an interest in internet marketing several years ago.

Working full time from home is an extraordinarily appealing thing, but at the time I was just interested in 'dabbling' and experimenting in it.

People have often said I'm like a cat on hot bricks when it comes to doing things 😊.

I'm always trying my hand at something new. I HAVE to have something to work on else I go crazy – whether it be decorating a room or (nowadays more often than not) building a new website.

So this was my new 'hobby' or project if you like.

I'd traded on eBay a little before so this was where I headed first.

And like most people, I started with buying LOTS of ebooks.

I bought one of those packages where you get all the £1 ebooks together in a big bundle.



How many of them I actually read in full is another matter entirely – and it's certainly true that there is a lot of material out there which isn't up to standard - but I picked up a general idea of what internet marketing is all about.

For the price there was some outstanding material too, and looking back, I'd say in actual fact I probably learnt TOO much.

And so several years went by, and I was still reading.

I bought into every product launch going - ebooks and information courses that cost anything from £1 to over £100.

Of course there was valuable information there, but somehow or other I never took action on it.

If you're new at all this then you'll know how hard it is to start.

There are so many methods and techniques out there it's almost impossible to know where to begin.

It's a minefield!

Which is why I say I probably learned too much.

I had too many options, and didn't really know any of them thoroughly enough.

I wanted to get started as an internet marketer but I was confused out of my mind as to where to begin.

Adwords? Articles? eBay? Start a membership site? Start a newsletter?

I really wasn't sure.

It was all the more frustrating because I knew the money was there to be made.

And it doesn't help that we seem to get bombarded each day with emails from 'gurus' selling the latest internet marketing 'must have.'

Undoubtedly there are some great products being launched, but in truth I didn't NEED another product.

Rather than helping, it all just adds to the state of confusion.

A lot of people seem to buy into system after system hoping it'll be the one that'll bring them untold riches.

I'm not being critical here either because this was exactly what I did too. It's natural and I think everyone feels the same.

But it's clear that a much better idea is to go down one route and stick to it.

I guarantee that nearly all these people will have information sitting on their hard drive that could change their life if only they put into place what's in the book.

Instead they just buy into the next product launch.

It isn't their fault either – it's all down to the confusion and not knowing what to do or who to listen to.

Open up your email account now and you'll see what I mean (you probably already know.)

You've got one marketer telling you to go left, and another saying to go right.

I say make up your own mind.

Just because someone tells you something doesn't work, does it mean it's true?

Of course not!

I've had people tell me that my sites won't sell well because:

- I don't use videos.
- I don't use audio.
- Generally I don't use professional website graphics.
- I don't have twenty p.s's at the foot of my letter.
- I don't have lots of testimonials from millionaire gurus who are raving about my product.... (I don't think gurus would even look at me, but I don't mind because I don't need them!)

If you've read any standard copywriting book then you may be thinking that these are all valid reasons.

But the reality is somewhat different.

There's more too.

It's also easy to think that something is TOO simple to work.

Who would think a single forum post could bring in thousands of dollars?

That might sound like a bit of a pipe dream, but place the right offer in the right forum and that's exactly what it can achieve.

It's a classic example of internet marketing at it's simplest yet most effective.

Let's get back on track.

Time to start 'doing'...

So after years of reading, one day I just decided it was time to STOP and instead start putting some things into place.

I wasn't sure what would work, but in the end I decided to stick to what I knew.

As mentioned, I'd had some previous experience of eBay, so I began selling individually some of the ebooks I'd bought in the bundled package a while before.

I selected ebooks from various topics in order to give me a wide range.

Despite them all being from the lower price bracket, I sold only the ebooks that I felt were genuinely useful and contained quality information.

It's very important that you give people value, and that it's what they actually want.

There were books on everything from gardening, magic, diy, to internet marketing.

I wanted to concentrate on information because I think it's the BEST product you can possibly sell.

Information is all around us, and people will certainly pay healthily to get the info they want.

There were (and still are) lots of people doing this too, and I figured it must be profitable.

So I became an eBay ebook seller.

I was listing a few hundred resell rights books each week using the buy-it-now format.

And I actually made quite a bit of money out of it, but it wasn't directly the thing that really got me started as an online marketer.

It was a good experience though – figuring how to deal with customers, how to write attention-grabbing copy, even learning how to upload an image to the internet! Of course the extra cash was nice too.

I enjoyed the thrill of it all – logging onto my computer each day to see how many sales I'd made, no matter how small the amount.

It felt like it was really happening, and I was also generating some useful email addresses from my customers.

In short it was my first mailing list.

It wasn't huge – but I'd begun to generate a list of a good few hundred people.

I continued doing this for a while too, but eventually it started to become a bit of a hassle because of all the listing fees, constantly re-listing auctions, dealing with awkward customers etc.

The problem was that in order to make a good profit it was necessary to sell a fairly large volume.

I was selling ebooks for mostly around the £1 mark and although people were certainly buying, the profit margin on each item was small.

Incidentally – I've recently spotted further potential in selling in a similar way on eBay and I'll be trying it out soon – if you're a subscriber of <http://www.clairebolton.com> (it's free) then I'll let you know how I get on!

The big idea...

Then a friend in internet marketing made me realise something very important – most of the people buying these ebooks on eBay were doing so for one reason only – to resell themselves!

In short – there were hundreds, if not thousands of people who wanted to do what I was doing.

This idea was confirmed to me by a trip into town to have my hair done.

I was having the usual friendly chat with my stylist when the topic of business came up.

She seems quite entrepreneurial and in touch with this sort of thing.

I told her I was involved in selling ebooks and that I'd started first on eBay.

To cut a story short (if you'll excuse the pun), it turns out that she wanted to do what I was doing!

She'd too bought a package of ebooks to resell individually on eBay but somehow had never quite got around to doing it.

Now if there was an ebook available to show her HOW to do it then she'd have most certainly bought it.

So this was what I decided to do - *write an ebook about how to sell ebooks on eBay.*

In actual fact there were some similar ebooks already around, but this didn't worry me because I knew there was more than enough room for another.

I'd got the ideal case for my first information product, and if I'd learnt anything over time it was that you really need your own product in order to start making substantial amounts of money online.

Of course it's not strictly necessary, and indeed many people are making very good incomes without ever even *thinking* about creating their own product.

But somehow it seemed the logical next step for me to take.

I'd recently read a report about how to write and market your own ebook, and since then the idea had appealed to me greatly.

I know that at this point you're probably thinking that it's too hard to create your own product, but the reality is that it's quite simple.

Either write about something you know (usually "how to" books are my best-sellers) or research something to the point where you can write an ebook about it.

And I guarantee that you have a book in you!

Made a bit of money online? Write a book on how you did it.

Built a mailing list? Dito.

Know how to build a simple website? Show people in a book.

Can you sell on eBay? Tell people how!

It can be about almost anything too. Perhaps you could write a book on cookery or gardening or hundreds of other niche subjects.

It doesn't have to be an ebook either. You could produce a video using Camtasia, or perhaps record an audio book.

Think about what people need and then give it to them.

Problem solvers seem to do well too.

Someone I know once made a very good living from an eBook about getting a bank account even if you're in the 'checks system.'

It sold like hot cakes because hardly anyone who had the problem knew what to do. It was a problem solver.

Slightly different – but I used to sell an ebook containing a directory of genuine UK wholesalers.

It was really just a list of addresses, but I organised it all into categories and updated it every month.

Buyers appreciated that I was selling a list of REAL wholesalers, and they could be sure the info was up to date because I would personally check all the companies each month and update the ebook as necessary.

I came up with the idea for that because it was something I personally wanted myself.

A few years before I was looking for wholesalers to buy stock from, but I'd bought so called 'wholesale lists' and they all turned out to be rubbish. Either the wholesalers were expensive or half the links were broken.

So I produced my own wholesalers directory.

It's important that you decide if there is a market there before you go ahead and create the product though.

I'm sure you already know something about market research so I won't go into detail about it, but if you're not sure there are hundreds of good free books available on the subject.

When you're thinking of ideas, a good thing to do is to look at what's already selling well.

If a product looks hot, buy the product, research the topic even more so that you have a great deal of information to work from, and then put it all into your own words.

There's nothing wrong with doing this either so long as you're not copying what they've written. Use it to research the area and then write your own.

However if for whatever reason you still don't like the idea of creating your own product, then it's possible to get someone else to create it for you. If this sounds good then I suggest you head to somewhere like elance and check out the kinds of projects people post on there.

The book doesn't have to be a masterpiece either. I try to write as I speak and then convert my Word document into a PDF (what your reading now) using a free tool I found online called PDF995.

People seem to like my 'chatty' style. So it's good to write like this.

If you've got a personal story to tell then that's great too. Try to write in textbook style and people will hate you for it... Make it fun to read.

(I hope you're enjoying this book because that's my aim! ☺)

If you fancy owning the rights to a product but the idea of creating one (or having one made) still daunts you, the other main option you have is to get hold of a PLR (private label rights) product.

Again if this is something that interests you then have a search around on the internet and you'll quickly find more info on it. The Warrior forum is an excellent place to start.

But back to the story.

Working On It...

Being inexperienced, my friend (and now business partner) guided me through the process of creating and selling my ebook.

I'd not done it before so I needed a little advice.

I decided that I wanted to sell the ebook as a 'ready-made business,' so we packaged my ebook together with about 100 other ebooks that my buyers could sell, and even provided them with a little webspace.

All these other books came from the bundle I purchased earlier.

The principle behind this was to make my product more attractive.

It was a sweet deal. People were not only getting my knowledge of how to sell ebooks on eBay, but they were also getting the products to sell.

It was a complete business that my buyers could start making money with straight away.

TIP: If you can provide people with a ready made business then you're sure to have a HOT seller!

So I worked for a few weeks writing my ebook, and then in early July 2005 the website was launched.

It didn't look very pretty, but I'd done the hard bit and actually got something up on the web.

The site consisted of a short sales letter and a Paypal button at the foot of the page.

I still use this format today because it's simple and effective. It doesn't need to be an all singing all dancing site to sell well.

The most important thing is copy.

I've gradually become more experienced at this, but the best way to learn is look at other peoples sites and decide which bits you like. Then you can adapt them for your own use (never copying of course because that is plagiarism and is theft.)

I promoted the site using only free methods – at the time I didn't have much money to spend on expensive advertising (and I actually believe that this was the secret to my success because it made me realise how SIMPLE the whole setup can be. Otherwise I may have over-complicated things and ended up the worse for it.)

This is what I did:

- 1.) I got together some joint ventures (JV's) – this is where other people offered my product to their mailing list. This wasn't with any big "gurus," but just people who had a small list. I got in touch with people using eBay, forums, and email addresses I found on a few related product websites.
- 2.) Secondly I offered the product at a special price to everyone who had ever purchased from me on ebay before.

- 3.) My partner introduced me to the WSO section of the Warrior forum, and I (or rather he) offered it to members at a heavily discounted price. (Incidentally, it took me until quite recently to actually sign up as a member myself – silly me!)

The results...

From doing this alone, on 4th July 2005 I made my first sale for \$30, and by 31st July 2005 I had made \$580.

The next month I made \$452.

So from my very first website, **I'd made over \$1000** in a few weeks.

Not a fortune I agree – but certainly enough to make me see the power of the internet.

See what I mean about the power of forums and such like?

The realisation that you can make money out of nothing from little more than a one page website selling information is exciting to say the least.

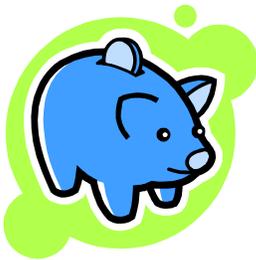
Of course, if you're an experienced marketer you may very well laugh at the amount of money I made on this first-time project. But I still see it as a success.

Even if a website earns you only \$5 - 50 a month – replicate it enough times and you'll have a full time income before you know it.

Many people see such earnings as a failure, but in actual fact it's a MAJOR success, and if you earn just a few dollars from the internet then you're well on your way to success.

Every day I see people who think it's a failure and then STOP what they're doing. If only they carried on they'd be earning substantial amounts VERY soon.

Making money online can be very simple indeed....



The thing that amazed me most about it all was how easy it had been. I'd had the knowledge to do this for YEARS but never even realised it.

Notice that I didn't 'optimize' my website, or mess with Adwords, or..... you know what I mean.

I still LOVE this way of working because I find it to be the most effective.

The fact is that most people massively over-complicate everything.

You can worry about things that don't matter and waste weeks 'perfecting' details (or worse still you end up giving-up completely.)

So what if you don't understand about meta tags, or know how to integrate a video into your sales page? If you're new at all this then trust me when I say you don't NEED to know about it.

No harm in learning it a few years down the road, but concentrate on the basics for now.

My website was very basic (ugly even) yet it sold well.

I promoted it using the most basic of methods, yet it sold well.

The product itself was pretty simple, yet it sold well.

Don't make the mistake of thinking something isn't good enough. Chances are it IS.

If you're just starting out I think you should do the following:

- Create or find a product to sell. Doesn't have to be a masterpiece – just something that people will pay a few \$ for.
- Build a simple website.
- **Concentrate on promoting it** – This is what you should spend the lions share of your time doing. Post on forums. Do some JV's. It doesn't have to be costly or complicated to make money.

The first time you get a 'notification of payment received' email in your inbox is a wonderful feeling that I promise you'll never forget.

I'm no expert – but I'm learning all the time, and starting to now put things into place properly after many years of 'seeing the potential.'

Internet marketing doesn't have to be complicated to make money.

You can earn a substantial income from little more than posting on forums and sending a few emails.

Food for thought?

Well I certainly think so.

Remember that all 'internet marketing' really means is selling things online. So there are infinite ways of doing it, but remember the basics and you'll do well.

Try out the steps I gave earlier. Post a few links on the right forums. Send some emails. Get some JV's organised with other new marketers. Just concentrate on the promotion step and don't worry too much about the little details.

Time to go now but I hope you enjoyed this report.

If you'd like to read more you can subscribe to my FREE monthly newsletter at <http://www.clairebolton.com>

I'd be thrilled to welcome you as a subscriber, and it's the only newsletter I think you'll actually look forward to reading.

Wishing you success..... Claire