

Small Business Online

Growing A Small Business Online In A Tough Economy

(NAPSA)—According to the Small Business Administration, small businesses that use the Internet are growing 46 percent faster than those that do not. It is no secret that the number of consumers and businesses who are getting online is on the rise. The Internet is leveling the playing field, enabling small businesses to establish and promote their business online. With this in mind, establishing an online storefront and using the Web can be the secret recipe for success for growing small businesses—especially in today's challenging economy.

There are many economical and efficient solutions for online store hosting, distribution and marketing that can help small businesses thrive by using the Internet to gain new customers and grow sales. Nate Smith of Yahoo! Small Business offers a few solutions for small businesses considering getting online.

- **Use online tools to promote your business**, such as online directories and search engines. Including your online store or Web site in Internet search engines and directories is a simple and cost-efficient way to reach potential customers. Some search engines and directories offer pay-for placement, so you can elevate your business' listing to reach new audiences of potential customers.

- **Business can let customers know how to find them**, on the Internet and off, by including their business listing in online yellow pages. To get even more mileage from your listing, many yellow page directories offer featured placement for a small fee—where you can include more information about your business, such as hours of operation, payment methods and a link to your business' Web site or online store.

- **Consider setting up an online storefront.** There are several online commerce solutions that enable small businesses to create their own online storefront—some for as little as a few hundred dollars a month. It is



Setting up shop along the information superhighway can help put your business on the road to success.

important to look for a solution that will enable businesses to manage operations, inventory and accounting, track relevant statistics and create reports. Also, it is important to seek online store hosting services that will offer access to a large audience of online shoppers—helping them attract and retain new customers.

Despite challenging times, many small businesses have been able to establish successful online storefronts and prosper as a result of their business savvy and the online tools that they have utilized.

Mississippi-based Gun Dog Supply is an example of how the Internet can propel an offline business. Rob Snell, sole proprietor of Gun Dog Supply said, "Through the launch of Yahoo! Store, we were able to double Gun Dog Supply's offline business in our first 18 months of online operations and save this family-owned business." Snell was so pleased with the success of his online store that he developed a consulting business on the side, helping other small businesses create online storefronts by implementing Yahoo! Store.

For more information on how to successfully establish, promote and market your business online visit <http://smallbusiness.yahoo.com> or <http://www.sba.org>.