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**BUSINESS BASICS:
HOW TO THINK ABOUT
YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE**

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Thank you for downloading this short guide! There's no way to cover everything related to online business presence in a single document, but if you're thinking about getting online or you want to improve what you're doing, hopefully I can give you some things to consider and get you off to a good start.



What is online presence?

Online presence is just what it sounds like: making your business available online in some way.

Of course, it's not that simple, is it? Otherwise, why would there be all those gimmicks and gurus out there promising the right way to do it?

The fact is, online presence is not at all simple, although it can be easy. The first step is to realize that there's no single answer, no one-size-fits-all solution. Honestly, not every business even needs to be online. But if you're going to go online, you need to know *why* before you can figure out *how*.

Why be online?

The "why" is the most important part of everything. I'm originally a college instructor, and that idea was at the core of every course I taught. If you're going to invest the time, energy, and money to be online, you should have a good reason for doing so.

There are five basic functions that most online activities and systems serve:

- Attracting visitors: You want to get your name out there and bring people to your business, whether virtually or in person. One reason to be online is to help create or boost that traffic.
- Informing visitors: You want people to know what you do, and you want them to know why you're the best choice to do it for them. People go online to search for answers, so online is a great place to offer answers. Branding and messaging are natural paths for online activity.
- Engaging your audience: The Internet offers incredible opportunities for interaction with existing and potential customers. Being online can be a wonderful two-way street that lets you build connections.
- Creating sales: People are shopping online to the tune of trillions of dollars every year. It's very reasonable for you to want a piece of that pie as your online goal.

These are just the basics. There are other reasons you might want to be online, as well as combinations of all of the above. All of the different online apps, platforms, and systems are tools made to help you get something done. Make sure you figure out your *why* first, because that will make it easier for you to figure out *how* to make it work.

How do you do it right?

Once you know what you want, you can start thinking about the right tools to get it done. There are too many to name, and more every day, but there are some basic categories that most of them fall into.

Website

It's not a requirement, but in most cases you will at least want to have a website to serve as the hub or the core of your online presence. It gives people something to find in the search engines and can be flexible enough to

support most of your strategic goals. Even a simple website, however, needs a plan. You'll want to consider things like a domain name and host, what kinds of pages you want to include and why, and how you intend to attract visitor traffic to the site. And if you already have a website, is it doing what you want it to? How do you know?

Email

Email marketing offers a lot of great options and benefits. One of the most significant is that an email list of your existing or potential customers is something you own that isn't subject to the changing rules of Google's algorithms or Facebook's terms of service. You can control the kinds of messages you send out. You do, however, need to think carefully about several factors. What kind of audience are you going for? What kinds of messages do you plan to send to them and how often? An email list does you no good if you don't use it, but it can also be a liability if you don't use it appropriately or effectively.

Social Media

Everyone says you need to be on social, don't they? First off, don't believe "everyone." Using social media effectively takes more planning, energy and time than almost any other digital strategy. If you can't post regularly, you might as well not bother, so a content plan is crucial. You also need to decide which platform(s) you're going to use. Is your target market more likely to be on LinkedIn or TikTok? What's the difference between Instagram and Pinterest? Social media gives perhaps the greatest opportunity for engagement, brand awareness, and even sales—but it takes the most work and preparation to get it right.





Reputation

One online area many people don't think about is reputation management. It's one thing to get your name out there, but it's meaningless if no one trusts that name. If this is something you want to pursue, you need to know about ratings and referrals. Do you want to get set up with [Google business](#) so you're more visible in search? Or will a [Yelp](#) listing be more powerful if you can get good reviews there? What about a business referral platform like [Alignable](#) or the neighborhood networking of [Nextdoor](#)? There are probably more options than you care to know about, and you can't be on all of them. Go back to your "why" and use it to help you decide.

Some friendly advice

Remember: you don't *have* to do any of this. Online is not the right answer for every business. On top of that, if you do go online, you don't have to use every tool or be in every category. You can start small: pick one path and see how it works out for you.

But if you're going to do it at all, make sure you do it wholeheartedly. Make the decision, then follow these steps:

- Commit. If you're going to devote resources to anything, make sure you're committed to seeing it through. The digital landscape is littered with abandoned efforts. Don't add your idea to the pile.
- Make a plan. Once you've decided you're serious, act like it. Don't just jump in with both feet. Make a plan first, so you don't drown. Going online requires time and energy, and without a plan you can quickly run out of both.

- Re-Commit. Take a deep breath. With your plan in hand, take one last big-picture look at everything. Be sure you want to go down this path. Be sure you are prepared for the work. Be sure you're ready to make the efforts and sacrifices that may be required along the way.
- Execute. Do it. Do it for real. Be all-in.
- Evaluate. As you venture down this road, make sure you look up every now and then to see the results. Ideally, moments of evaluation are part of your plan. These moments give you power and flexibility to consider your next steps: continue, revise, expand, reduce, or abandon the project.

Zeno Effect Media can help

When it comes to marketing strategy and guidance, the choices for most businesses are either in-house marketing staff or a contract with an outside marketing agency. Both options involve long-term commitments and budgets that are often simply out of reach for small and medium businesses.



Zeno Effect Media is changing the game: I want to empower you to get online without killing your budget or overwhelming yourself. I create clear, useful marketing guides—both strategic and tactical—that are customized for your business. I'll work with you to help you clarify your vision, your goals, and your voice. Then I'll craft a tailored, comprehensive solution that you can execute yourself. Best of all, every product comes complete with a coaching session. I'll walk you through the execution documents so you don't have to figure it all out yourself. And you won't be locked into an expensive contract.



I'm here to support you in any way that works. Whether you want to update your website, get into the social media game, or figure out offline strategies, I can develop a playbook, guide, or ideabook that will get you there. If you need a person to guide you on your journey, I'll coach you with focused, friendly sessions and specific, clear instructions. And if you'd rather just run your business, I can handle the marketing work for you at affordable rates.

Call me at [805-394-8440](tel:805-394-8440) or email me at Zeno@ZenoEffectMedia.com to get started right with affordable expertise.

Whether it's messaging, branding, or marketing,
master your message with Zeno Effect Media.

