

MAKE YOUR **2002** SITE SELL!



Make Your **Store SELL!**

The other three volumes of **MYSS! 2002**

show you how to...

- 1) develop a great product
- 2) write a Web site that **SELLS** that great product
- 3) attract targeted customers to the site.

Make Your Store SELL! adapts
single product **“get-the-order”** principles
to the **multi-product format** of an online store.

Sell your selection of products
with the **same laser accuracy and efficiency.**



1. Same... But Different

The site-selling principles outlined in the main volume of **MYSS! 2002** apply specifically to **single product** sites. However, most of these principles effectively serve online stores, as well. Selling, after all, is selling.

Online stores have rather **a unique position...**

- 1) They are **the same** as a real world store in that people are still “**coming in**” to look around and maybe buy something.
- 2) They are **different** than a bricks-and-mortar store in that **there’s no physical contact**. No one can squeeze the bread, smell the leather, or drive the car. You can’t see your visitors and they can’t see you.

In other words, an online store is the **same** as an offline one... except it’s **different!** How will you know when to use offline principles and when to make adjustments?

Elementary, if...

... you become your customer.

[**SIDEBAR**]

We’ll be using particular online stores and malls as examples...

Amazon.com -- <http://www.amazon.com/>
Amazon zShops -- <http://s1.amazon.com/exec/varzea/subst/home/fixed.html>
Bloomingdale’s -- <http://www.bloomingdales.com/>
Egghead.com -- <http://www.egghead.com/>
Lands’ End -- <http://www.landsend.com/>
Macy’s -- <http://www.macys.com/index.html>
PeaPod -- <http://www.peapod.com/>
RedEnvelope Gifts On-Line -- <http://www.http://www.redenvelope.com/>
The Sharper Image -- <http://www.sharperimage.com/>
Wal-Mart -- http://www.walmart.com/estore/pages/pg_g1.jsp
Yahoo! Shopping -- <http://shopping.yahoo.com/>

These are not my “Top 12” -- some are actually great examples of what **not** to do.

Bottom line...

The goal is the same as for **any** sales-oriented site... **to maximize the percentage of people who buy**. Simply adjust techniques, as indicated.

All set? Let's take a look, point by point, at how online stores are the **same-but-different**, and in turn, how to optimize this reality. In simple language, **sell!**



1.1. The Store's The Product

The fantastic thing about having an online store is that **you don't necessarily have to sell your own products**. Actually, it's very likely that you won't!

Netrepreneurs tend to divide themselves into two camps...

1) Single product and direct sales site -- To succeed in this situation, you...

i) create and produce your own product (or exclusive rights to a product).

ii) create a great site that sells!

iii) market like crazy.

Since all your focus is on **one** product, make it a roaring success! (For more on creating your own product, [check the Product Volume](#) of **MYSS! 2002**.) We started our booming brand line with the first edition of **MYSS!**.

SiteSell focuses on selling a high volume of a small number of quality e-books and tools, dedicated to the success of the online small business owner and netrepreneur -- using the motto of "e-commerce for the rest of us."

[SIDEBAR]

Our site is structured to sell **one product at a time** in order to prevent any distractions. We don't use shopping carts. Of course, all that changes when you sell through a store.

2) Store -- Instead of selling one or a few of your own products, you sell tens or

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hundreds or thousands of products that are produced by others. Naturally, since you're selling an extensive range of items, called **SKUs** (Stock Keeping Units), there's no way, as a small business person with limited means, that you could develop and produce all those items.

So your key role is...



... to be an aggregator! (I gotta get a new graphic designer! 😊)

An aggregator is someone who pulls many things together from many places and puts them together in such a way as to create something new, wonderful, and valuable. In a sense, your store is your product -- it's what you sell to visitors. If they "**buy**" your store, they'll buy your products.



Sound beyond you??? Nope, no way.

Actually, it's pretty easy. **What do you love to do?**

Collect figurines, for example? Easy. Go to...



Thomas Register

<http://www.thomasregister.com/>

This company used to publish a million-pound set of books about every American manufacturer of everything and anything. (OK, OK, I tend to exaggerate a bit.) And it was expensive.

Now the same set of books weighs nothing and is free via the Net.

So... complete your free registration and then search for "figurines." There you go... 57 companies. Start contacting them. Group the figurines by theme. For example...

- Motherhood
- Romance

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- Golf (please don't leave out golf!).

See how your store is shaping up? Simple, right?



The Thomas Register is enough, all by itself, to build your online store. But it also serves as a great starting point. As a small business, you'll add value to your store **by aggregating unusual, high-quality goods**. So spend extra time **sourcing**.

Here's how to find more suppliers...

1) Go to Yahoo! or any other directory that you like...



Yahoo!

<http://www.yahoo.com/>

Once there, do a search for "Thomas Register" **(with the quotes)**. You're not looking for Thomas Register -- you already know where **that** is. This search will show you which **categories** contain the Thomas Register site, like this...



And those categories will contain other sourcing directories similar to the Thomas Register to check out. Some sites will provide lists of links to even more directories, increasing your sourcing power to another threshold!

2) Go to AltaVista...

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AltaVista

<http://www.altavista.com/>

Enter **link:thomasregister.com** (no quotes) into the search box and click “Search” like this...

Find this:	<input type="text" value="link:thomasregister.com"/>	Search
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This will turn up every site that links to the Thomas Register.

To increase the chances that the site is about sourcing products, enter **+link:thomasregister.com +sourcing** (no quotes) into the search box and click “Search” like this...

<input type="text" value="+link:thomasregister.com +sourcing"/>	Search
-----------------------------------------------------------------	---------------

There'll be many dead-ends. Consider investing in [high-speed access](#) to streamline the process.

Scattered among the different leads, you'll find gold -- high-value nuggets that will set you off on the yellow brick road of success.



3) Research European sources...



Thomas Register of European Manufacturers

<http://www.tipcoeurope.com/>



4) Leaving Thomas Register, but still in Europe, there is also...

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Europages

<http://www.europages.com/>



5) Focus on a specific industry -- Call the relevant manufacturer's association and/or attend trade fairs.

For example, would you love to run an **off-beat toy store**? The Toy Manufacturers of America is the place to start. And at Toy Fairs (from New York to Germany to Hong Kong, and places in between) you'll find loads of little-known companies with neat products

Here's a good place to start for trade shows. The whole site is outstanding...



International Business Resources on the WWW

<http://ciber.bus.msu.edu/>

Specifically, check out...



Global Edge

<http://globaledge.msu.edu/ibrd/busresmain.asp?ResourceCategoryID=15>



6) Explore worldwide sourcing -- The same site, **International Business Resources on the WWW**, has two great listings...

<http://globaledge.msu.edu/ibrd/ibrd.asp>

<http://globaledge.msu.edu/ibrd/busresmain.asp?ResourceCategoryID=13>

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7) Follow links -- Whenever you find a good source, use [Alexa](#) to find other related sites. Keep finding and linking to more and more related resources.



8) Check locally -- Is there a nearby flea market with some terrific local artisans? Aggregate them into a cool, online store. Do you have a friend with an offline gallery or retail operation? Be partners and run the online division.

Is your area famous for anything? Napa wines, Inuit sculptures, smoked B.C. salmon... all good examples.



Here's the bottom line...

You **can** put a product line together. Just figure out what turns you on, find products to match, and then **assemble it all in a sharp, new and fun way.**

Take your time here. “**Prepare... Don't Repair**” applies to prospective store owners 1,000%. The time you spend finding “just the right products” and developing your concept will repay you one hundred fold.

You'll also find some great little suppliers for your burgeoning store this way. **When you do...**



... don't tell a soul. Your sources are your gold -- don't give them away.

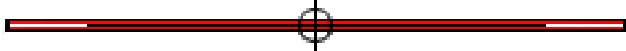


Consider your aggregation of products and your store concept as **your product**. Compare your product development (i.e., store creation) cycle to that of a single-product online entrepreneur. Let's use my experience as an example. I spent 9 months developing PennyGold, my mining stock software. Then I took a full year to create the first edition of **Make Your Site SELL!**

Shouldn't you put the same efforts into getting **your** product (i.e., your store) just right?

This is the single most difficult, and most important, step in building an online store. The rest? Well, you can make it as easy or as hard as you like.

This volume will help you achieve that first step so that you get on with the business of selling, **the fun and profitable part...**



1.2. Photos... Get Them Just Right

A picture is worth 1,000 words. For online stores, increase that value to **10,000!**

Remember, your visitor **cannot** touch your physical product. Worse still, they can't try it out -- people slip on sweaters in real stores. They test-drive cars. They sample the grapes (when no one's looking). In France, they even get to taste the wine!

On the other hand, buying from your store is super-convenient and fast. So your job is to help them **feel** the benefits. Select pictures that show people **using** your product -- wearing the clothes you sell, driving the car, enjoying the succulent grapes, drinking the wine...

... with some good food... on a terrace in Paris... at sunset! 😊



Here's how to prepare photos for your site...

- As you source each product, ask the supplier for photos.
- Get samples of each product as quickly as possible. Borrow, rent or buy a digital camera, preferably one that takes pictures in **JPEG format** (i.e., Web-ready format for photographs). Or take pictures with a regular camera, but get them developed on CD-ROM.
- You need some basic graphic software that can re-size your photos and also compress them into JPEGs for Web delivery. If you don't already have this, these two shareware packages offer the best value for the dollar...

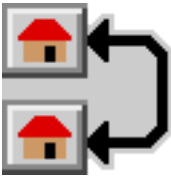
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For Windows... Paint Shop Pro

http://www.jasc.com/download_4.asp

or...



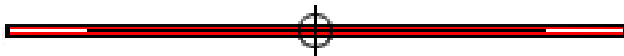
For Mac... GraphicConverter

http://www.lemkesoft.de/us_gcabout.html

- Reduce a photo down to a **thumbnail version** -- users will click on this to see your full-sized photo.

— [**SIDEBAR**] —

If you already have an online store with hundreds of SKUs and no photos, don't get discouraged. I'll bet that 20% of your products account for 80% of your business. Identify your most popular items and add photos about them first.



1.3. As Always... Set and Get the **MWR**

What's the **MWR** of an online store? Simple. It's...

“Buy something... anything!”

This is especially important for the **first-time visitor** to your site. If she doesn't buy, she may **never** be back. So how do you maximize your chances?

Here's one approach... big names, seasonal products, and a clear directory along the left margin. Look at **Yahoo! Shopping**, the largest mall on the Net. It knows what it's doing!...

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Yahoo! Shopping
<http://shopping.yahoo.com/>

And here's another **do-able strategy**...

Lands' End focuses on **seasonal "best bets" and special occasions**, with an easy navigation bar across the top of their site. But they go beyond that... see the **"Show Dad you've learned the value of money"**?

Nothing like saving money when you have to buy for Dad anyway, right?

And take a look at that swimsuit finder **tool**. One more great time-saver...

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The screenshot shows the Lands' End website homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links: Shopping Bag, Checkout, My Account, My Model, Personal Shopper, Ask Us. Below that, a secondary navigation bar says Welcome and lists categories: Women's, Men's, Kids, For the Home, Luggage, Gifts. The main content area features a large banner for Father's Day: "Show Dad you've learned the value of money... Buy 3 or more Pinpoints and save \$3 each". It includes an image of a blue shirt and a tie, and text explaining the offer. To the left of the banner is a sidebar with a search bar, "All Products" dropdown, and links to "Catalog/Quick Order", "Sign up!", "Special Services", "International Sites", and "Our Company". To the right of the banner are two smaller sections: "New & Noteworthy" featuring "Remember DAD" and "Dive in! Swim Finder", and "Find of the Week" and "Top 5 Inflation-Fighters" with product listings and prices.

Lands' End

<http://www.landsend.com/>

Two different approaches... one **MWR**. Get an order.

Mini quiz time... Think about the two Home Pages (Yahoo! Shopping and Lands' End)...

1) **Are they aimed at men or women?** Are they meeting visitors' needs or offering solutions?

2) **Is the presentation clear** or does it cloud visitors' minds and frustrate them?

In some stores, you just don't know where to begin -- there's too much happening at once. It's a sure sign of a company which can't get out of its own mindset. It wants to **get it all** on the Home Page. As a result, the company presents nothing but a blur.

Why? **Because it forgot the customer.**

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Still have some empty space in your resource file? Add this classic winner...

Offer a super deal on something -- a sale, a closeout, a special “Buy 2, Get 1 Free” blitz. Yes, the offline use of “specials” works online, too...



The advertisement features the GE logo and the text 'appliance' in a stylized font. Below this is a small image of a GE dishwasher. To the left of the image, the text reads 'Cook it. Freeze it. Wash it. Ship it...Free'. To the right, it says 'Save 10%-30% on all GE major appliances'. At the bottom left is the 'OURHOUSE' logo, and at the bottom right is the 'ACE' logo. The text 'Ourhouse.com is offering 10%-30% savings on all GE major appliances, such as dishwashers, dryers and refrigerators. Free shipping too! Sale ends 7/7.' is also present.

Macy's had **two** sales going on its Home Page when I checked them out...

souson sale 3.99 or less!



The advertisement shows a collection of Souson bath and body products. The text 'SOUSON SALE' is prominently displayed at the top. Below it, the price '\$3.99 or less!' is highlighted. The text 'Going, going, soon-to-be gone. Act fast, because at \$3.99 or less, luxurious Souson products won't be around for long! Experience instant comfort with the bath and body sensations of Souson, a Macy's exclusive. Click [here](#) to see our selection.' is also included.

july's regal ruby...10% off



The advertisement features a large, ornate ruby ring. The text 'July's Regal Ruby' is written in a stylized font. Below it, '10% off' is prominently displayed. The text 'Once bestowed upon royalty during coronations, the rich, red ruby was crowned as the birthstone for July. So right now we're offering 10% off all ruby jewelry, which makes this the perfect time to bestow a gift of fiery ruby elegance. But hurry...sale ends July 31.' is also included.

Pretty good “store copy,” too! (But I’m getting ahead of myself!)

Special offers, deals, sales, coupons, “bargain basement”... whatever it takes. **Get that first order.**

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So...

Thumbnail your customer, choose your “hot products” and “super-saver deals” to display on your Home Page. Add some easy navigation. Make it all clear, and **get that MWR!**

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