

Get Started Selling Your Products Online



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Overview

Whether you're a business that offers a whole line of products or a crafter who markets one unique piece at a time, selling online is a great way to both expand your market reach and boost your sales.

Unfortunately, there's a lot of ways to sell online and getting started can seem overwhelming. Honestly, you want to spend your time producing more products to sell, not figuring out where and how to sell online.

And that's exactly why I created this ebook.

The following pages detail a step-by-step process for you to follow in order to get started selling online. **The goal** here is to get started with minimal investments in both time and money.

The "Get Started Selling Online Process" includes three primary steps:

1. Create a "Bare Minimum" website (I'll tell you how to get one up and running quick, easy and cheap) or make sure that your existing website includes what's needed;
2. Discover and select the best online marketplaces on which to sell your products; and
3. Launch!

Getting started selling online takes three primary steps.



The key to this process is to start small and grow along with your sales. To that end, you will begin by selling through online marketplaces instead of on your own site because that enables you to:

1. Get started selling online quickly and easily;

2. Validate that your products do sell online before spending large amounts of time and money;
3. Pay for increased and enhanced e-commerce functionality (if needed) as sales grow; and
4. Prepare for growth when that time comes (if it does: some businesses stay small and that's just fine!).

Why shouldn't I sell on my own site from the beginning?

There are a couple of very good reasons why using online marketplaces to sell your products is the best way to get started:

1. **Established traffic volume:** like the old adage, "Location, location, location", marketplaces allow you to get your product in front of many more customers than you could on your own. That's because these established sites already have huge daily traffic numbers and listing your products there enables you to get in front of all those shoppers as well.
2. **Setting-Up e-commerce on your own site is costly:** there can be many advantages to selling from your own site, but at the start it can be expensive in terms of both money and time to add the functionality that online marketplaces already have. The right time to start selling from your own site is when you have proven that your products sell online (via marketplace sites) and when you can pay for adding e-commerce functionality to your site with the revenue from existing sales.

Don't feel comfortable with technology and the Web? Never fear, the "Get Started Selling Online Process" is geared for non-techies to use.

Ready to get started? Let's go!

Step 1: It All Starts with a Website

When folks shop online, nothing makes them hit the "Buy" button faster than trust.

Nothing makes shoppers hit the "Buy" button faster than trust.

That's right, your customers want to believe that they are buying from a trustworthy source that will:

1. Send them the actual product they purchased;
2. Protect their personal information (especially important when selling online); and
3. Handle any problems that arise with their purchase.



In other words, they want to know that you're a legitimate seller and that they can get in touch with you directly if they have any issues.

Now here's the important part:

When you sell your products through online marketplaces, the best way to build belief and establish trust is through your website link.

This is the spot that each marketplace provides for you to link back to your website. And believe me, folks are going to use it.

Why? Because there are a lot of other folks selling through these online marketplaces as well and chances are that at least some of them are selling similar products. So, how does a customer decide from which person to buy?

That's right – they click each seller's website link to see what you're all about.

The "Bare Minimum" Website

Once shoppers click that link and get taken to your website, here are the "Bare Minimum" elements that they expect to see:

1. **A welcome message** – something that makes customers feel warm and fuzzy and more importantly, includes some text about your credentials (how long in business, your process for creating your products, your training, etc.);
2. **A contact form** – so that customers can reach out to you in case of issues (or to say, "Thanks!"); and
3. **Links to the spot(s) where you sell your products online** – this way, folks can go there and buy them!

Here's what shoppers expect to see on your website.



If your site does not include the "Bare Minimum" elements, then you will have an uphill battle when it comes to building trust. Customers will feel uncomfortable buying from you and you will lose sales.

The good news is that a "Bare Minimum" site is nothing fancy. Since you will be directing traffic there from marketplace sites, you don't really need to worry about having your site found through search engine optimization (SEO) or inbound marketing. All you need to do is complete a few tasks and you'll be one step closer to selling online.

If you have a website already, it will work just fine (as long as it includes the three bare minimum pieces listed above – if not, add them) and, if you don't, I will tell you how to get one up and running quick, easy and cheap in just a bit.

One Step Up from the Bare Minimum

If you're feeling frisky, some things that can make your website even more effective include:

1. **Product Images** – even though your products will be shown on the sites on which you sell them, including them on your website will help expose your customers to your products and reinforce what it is that you sell. Images also make your site look oh so much better and more professional – another factor that contributes to establishing trust.
2. **A full-fledged "About" page** – you can use this separate page to really dig deep and tell your story. Discuss how your product was invented or the journey you've taken to becoming an artist. The goal is to humanize you and make customers trust you more.
3. **Design** – more modern and "put-together" websites exude trustworthiness and professionalism and the good news is that it's pretty easy (especially if you use my suggested approach to create a site) to find and use a great design. You might also want to consider breaking the "Bare Minimum" pieces out to different site pages (as opposed to having them all on the front page) – that makes your website feel like it has a bigger presence online.
4. **Additional Contact Information** – if you feel comfortable putting out a contact number or address, then by all means do so. Giving additional communication channels to your customers just makes them love ya' more. And, if you have spots in the real world where customers can buy your products (a store, gallery or consignment shop, etc.), then definitely include the contact and location information for each.
5. **Testimonials** – do your customers say great things about you and your products? Lets shoppers know by listing some of their feedback on your site. This creates an effect called, "Social Proof" (shoppers think, "Since other folks buy and like their products, they must be good") and is extremely effective in establishing trust and boosting sales.

Make your website even more effective with cool additions.



Getting a Website Up and Running Quickly, Easily and Cheaply

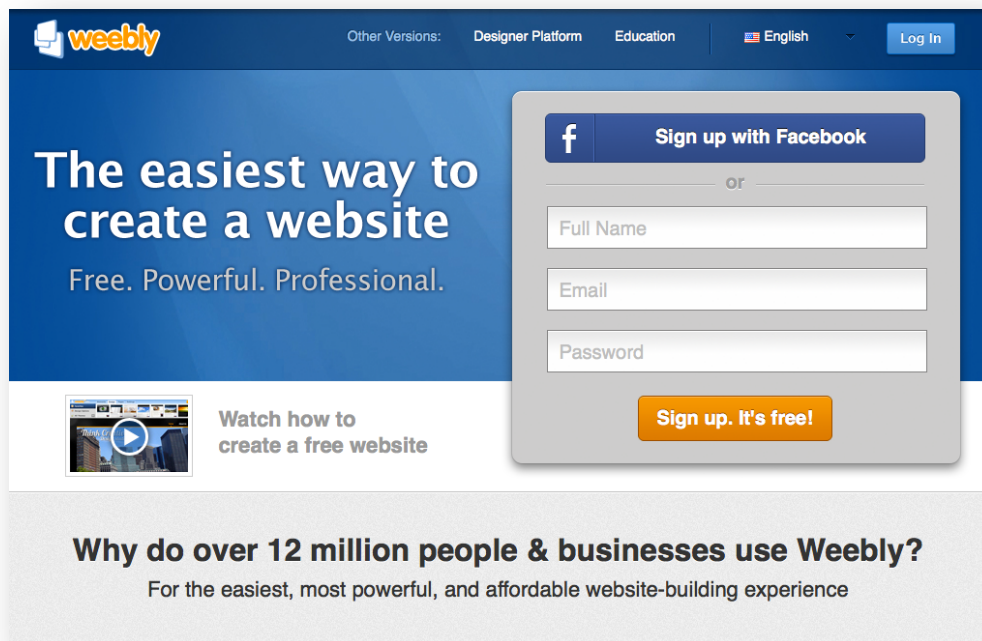
So, you need a website? Well, there's no better place to get one than over at [Weebly](#).

That's because you can set-up a free site and use their easy drag-and-drop editor to get it up-and-running in no time flat.

Now, there are some fees if you want premium options (see the lowdown here: [Pro FAQ](#) and learn about the great new Pro features they recently added in this [blog post](#)), but for a "Bare Minimum" website, you can remain free and be just as effective.

Ready? Here's what you do:

1. Go to [Weebly](#) and create an account by entering your information in the sign-up box.

The image shows the Weebly website's sign-up interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the Weebly logo, links for 'Other Versions: Designer Platform, Education', a language selector set to 'English', and a 'Log In' button. The main content area has a blue background on the left with the text 'The easiest way to create a website' and 'Free. Powerful. Professional.' Below this is a video thumbnail with a play button and the text 'Watch how to create a free website'. On the right, there's a white sign-up box. It starts with a 'Sign up with Facebook' button, followed by 'or', and then three input fields for 'Full Name', 'Email', and 'Password'. At the bottom of this box is an orange button that says 'Sign up. It's free!'. Below the sign-up box, there's a grey section with the heading 'Why do over 12 million people & businesses use Weebly?' and the subtext 'For the easiest, most powerful, and affordable website-building experience'.

2. After you click the "Sign-up. It's free!" button, you will be asked to give your website a name and to select what type of site you are creating.

- a. Note: the title you enter here will not be your website address (you enter that next), and you can change the title at anytime so don't stress over what you enter here.

A screenshot of the Weebly welcome screen. It has a blue border and a white background. At the top, it says "Welcome to Weebly!" in bold black text. Below that, there's a grey bar with the text "Enter a title for your website". Underneath this bar is a large, empty text input field. Below the input field, there's a label "Type of Site" followed by a dropdown menu showing a hyphen "-" and a small downward arrow. In the bottom right corner, there is an orange button with the word "Continue" in white text.

3. Next, you need to select the address people will use to get to your website (the site's "URL"). Your options (see image below) here include:
 - a. Using a free subdomain: if you choose this option, your website's address will have ".weebly.com" added (e.g. mattaboutbusiness.weebly.com). This is not a terrible thing for a "Bare Minimum" website and you can always [change the domain into one that is all your own](#) at a later time.
 - b. Creating a new domain: with this option, you will have a domain that is all your own (without the ".weebly.com" added), but it does cost money. Also, the domain has to be one that's available to use.
 - c. Using an existing domain: if you have an existing domain, you can set it to point to your new site at Weebly. They will walk you through the steps once you are ready to publish your site.



Choose Your Website Domain

This is the address where people will find your website online. Reserve your domain now or skip this step and choose it later.

☐

Use a Subdomain of Weebly.com
A great way to get your website started

http:// .weebly.com

☐

Register a New Domain
For a more professional online presence

http://www.

.com

☐

Use a Domain You Already Own
You'll setup your domain once you're ready to publish

http://

Continue

4. If you decide to create a new domain, you will be taken to a spot to pay.

Register a new domain

We make it easy for you.

- ✓ Your new domain is instantly online
- ✓ No setup whatsoever
- ✓ Visitors are forwarded to your new domain
- ✓ Blogging, Weebly Site Creator, Hosting
- ✓ Full ownership and DNS control
- ✓ \$100 in Google AdWords™ Advertising*

☐ 1 Year \$29.95

☒ 2 Years \$24.99/year (17% discount)

☐ 5 Years \$22.46/year (25% discount)

☐ 10 Years \$19.27/year (36% discount)

(Compare to \$394.63 at GoDaddy)

Payment Options: VISA, MasterCard, DISCOVER, AMERICAN EXPRESS, PayPal

Cardholder's name:

Card Number:

Expiration Date: / (month/year)

Security Code: [What's this?](#)

Zip/Postal Code:

☐ Enable Private Registration for my domain (\$10.00/yr)

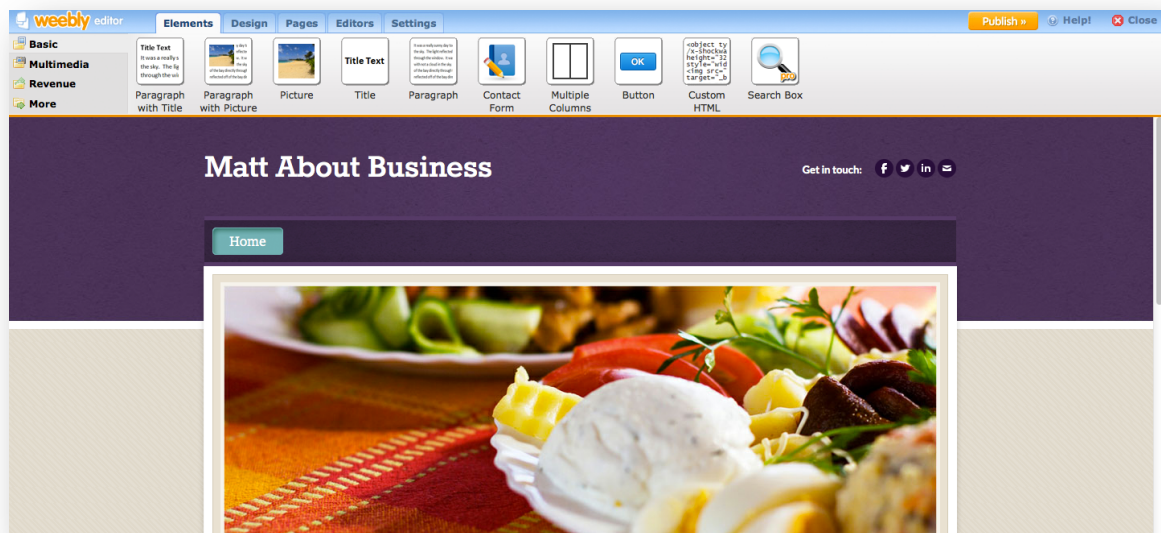
Total: \$49.98

Purchase

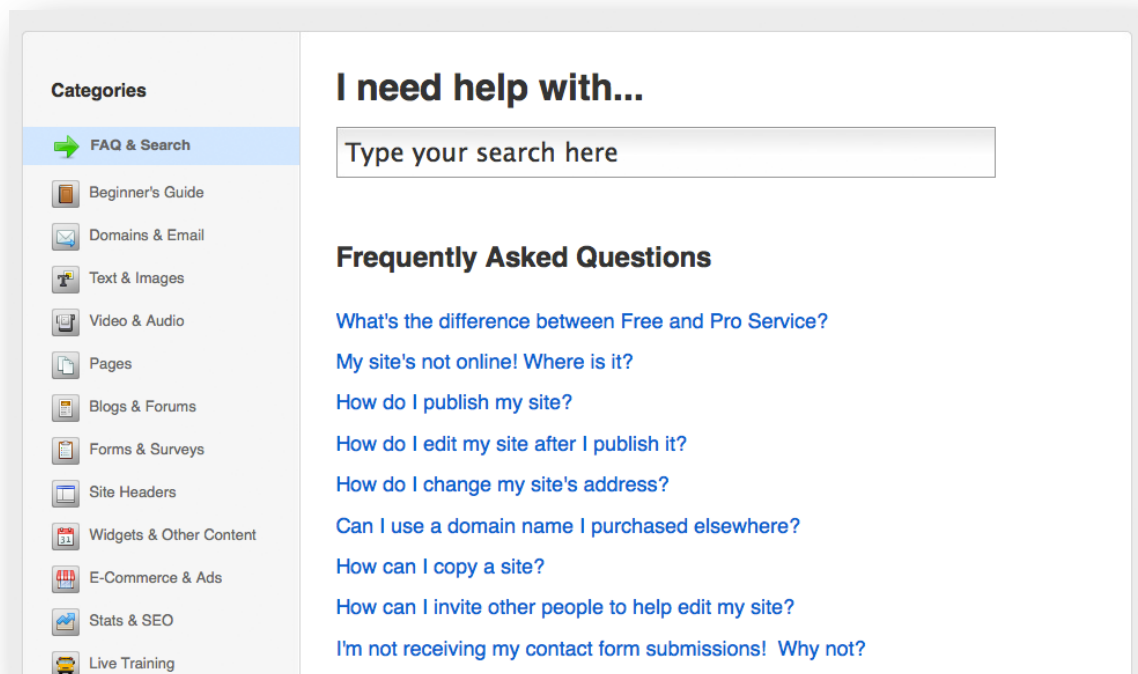
TRUSTe
CERTIFIED PRIVACY

Domain registrations are brought to you through a partnership with Register.com. By purchasing this domain, you become the legal owner of the domain name and agree to pay the full amount listed in the Total; as a convenience to you, your domain is auto-renewing.

5. After you select your site's domain name (if you decided to create a new domain name, then after you pay), you are taken to your site's design screen (see image below).
- This is where you will create your site's design and add your site's content.
 - Make sure you add at least all of the "Bare Minimum" elements!



- c. If you need help, click the "Help" link in the top-right corner to open Weebly's comprehensive support section.



6. Once you have finished creating your "Bare Minimum" site, you should publish it so that it goes live. Then you will be ready to move on to the next step in the "Get Started Selling Online Process": discover and select the best online marketplaces on which to sell your products.

Step 2: Figuring Out Where to Sell Your Products Online

Let's face it: there are a lot of places online where you can sell your products.

Unfortunately, not every online marketplace is equal. They vary greatly in:

- **The amount of traffic they receive** – you want a site with high traffic numbers so your products are exposed to as many shoppers as possible;
- **The types of products they list** – though I just said that higher traffic is good, higher *targeted* traffic is ever better!

You see, the biggest marketplaces sell almost anything so, while there may be a lot of shoppers, you don't know how many of them are actually shopping for your type of product.

A marketplace with high and *targeted* traffic numbers is ideal.



Often, it's best to sell on a site that caters to shoppers who buy *your* types of products - even though the traffic numbers might be lower, the amount of targeted shoppers is often higher.

- **The costs to list and sell your products** – setup fees and ongoing commissions can be very different from site to site so it's important to factor that into your decision-making process; and
- **Features, functionality and ease-of-use** – many online marketplaces offer you all types of features such as the ability to sell on Facebook or a widget to embed on your own website that displays all the products you have for sale on that site.

That's all well and good however, more features often means more complexity which means a steeper learning curve and more work to maintain and add listings. Unless you're comfortable with technology, and have some spare time, you need to balance more features and functionality with ease-of-use.

Evaluation Criteria for Selecting Online Marketplaces

In order to select the best online marketplaces on which to sell your products, you need to learn about each and evaluate the pros and cons against your own needs.

Here are the questions you should ask:

1. Are there online marketplaces that specialize in your types of products?
 - a. If no, which online marketplaces will sell your type of product, no matter what it is?
2. For each online marketplace you have identified:
 - a. Do they have high enough traffic numbers?
 - b. Do their costs, fees and rules fit your products?
 - i. Can you sell your product on that site and still make a profit that fits your expectations?
 - ii. Are there rules you cannot meet (e.g. minimum or maximum amount of product listings, shipping-time guarantees, etc.)?
 - c. Do they offer the features and functionality you want and are you comfortable using them?

Ask these questions to discover and select the best marketplaces for your products.



The Goal of This Process?

After you go through this set of questions, you will end up with a list of marketplaces on which you will sell your products.

Next, let's take a look at each question in more detail.

Are there online marketplaces that specialize in your types of products?

As I mentioned above, there are a lot of places online where you can sell your products. Luckily, there are many resources online for you to discover and learn more about each online marketplace.

Here's a list of links to help you answer question #1:

- [Marketplacester](#) – If you want to discover what's out there, this is a great place to start! Marketplacester is an online database of online marketplaces and, aside from browsing through the listings and learning about new marketplace sites, I love the fact that you can find so much information in one place.

You can use this site without a login, but I recommend that you sign-up (it's free) so you can use the search function.

- [Where to Sell Your Products and Services Online – and How](#) – this is a link to a post on my site where I have links to other spots that list many, many online marketplaces.
- Here are some additional links to spots that list even more online marketplaces:
 - [5 Online Marketplaces You Can Start Selling On Today](#)
 - [10 Online Marketplaces](#)
 - [20 Online Marketplaces to List Your Product on Today](#)
 - [Need an eBay Alternative? Try This List.](#)
 - [The 5 Best Online Marketplaces for Selling Handmade Goods](#)

Do they have high enough traffic numbers?

[Marketplacester](#) is a great source for this type of information. Once you register for free, you can search their list of marketplaces and view their traffic rankings:



This is an example that shows the numbers for the online marketplace, Etsy. Here's what the numbers tell you:

- **Google PageRank** – the higher the better is the case with this number (PageRanks range from 0 to 10). It shows that Google thinks highly of this site and therefore, any searches for products listed on Etsy will appear higher-up on Google's search results pages. Only Google's pages get a ranking of 10 so 7 is pretty darn good!
- **Alexa Ranking** – the lower the better is the case with this number. It shows the traffic rank for this site out of ALL websites online. Any number under 1,000,000 is good; under 500,000 is great! In this case, Etsy is ranked as the 175th MOST trafficked site online – that's very impressive!
- **Domain Age** – This is a good indication of the permanence of a marketplace. Etsy has been around for over 8 years so they are probably not going to fold tomorrow. You should feel comfortable entrusting them with your products listings.

Do their costs, fees and rules fit your products?

Again, a good place to start with this is [Marketplacester](#). Once you register for free, you can search their list of marketplaces and get the direct link to each marketplace's "seller page" which details the costs, fees and rules of that marketplace:

Marketplace Links	
Website	<u>Website</u>
Merchant Information	<u>Merchant Info Link</u>
Merchant Signup Page	<u>Merchant Signup Link</u>

Of course, you can visit each marketplace site individually to find their "seller page" and, if the marketplace is not listed on Marketplacester (they're not perfect), then you'll have to do just that.

Do they offer the features and functionality you want and are you comfortable using them?

Again, check out each marketplaces "seller page" to find out what features they offer and to see if they are missing anything that you want.

You should also spend some time looking at some of the product listings on each marketplace site. Do they look and operate in a way that you like? If they are ugly and hard to use for you, it's likely your customers will feel the same.

Step 3: Launch

Now that you have a list of marketplaces from which you will sell your products, it's time to get ready to launch.

What if You Only Selected One Marketplace?

if you only have one marketplace on your list, that's OK. If it's the best by far, then you're better off focusing your energy there and remember, you can always add more marketplaces at a later time.

Here's What You Need to Do to Get Ready to Sell

1. Start with reading the get started guides and support documentation provided by each marketplace. These will help you learn how to use the each marketplace and will also contain some handy tips and tricks.
2. Next, search for tips and tricks for each marketplace online – learning best practices from experts and those who have come before you is a great way to increase your chances of success.
 - a. For example: do a Google search for "tips for selling on etsy" or "how to sell on etsy"
3. With steps 1 and 2 under your belt, create your online storefront (if that's offered) and product listings. If at all possible, make sure to include a link back to your website to build trust.
 - a. If you need a PayPal account to accept payments from each marketplace, then get it set up and verified ASAP.
4. Lastly, once your marketplaces are ready to go, make sure to add a link to your storefront or group of listing on each marketplace site in a prominent spot on your website (something like, "Buy My Products at:"). This will let folks know where else they can buy your products when they visit your site.

- a. If a marketplace offers a widget to use on your site, you may wish to include that as well. Widgets are a pretty neat way to display your product listings in real-time on another site and might attract a click more than just a link.

Announce Your Launch to the World!

This is where you let everyone know that your products are now for sale online. You should inform:

- Previous customers
- Potential customers (via any marketing channels you already use such as e-mail, TV, radio, etc.)
- Friends and family
- The person standing next to you in line at the grocery store, etc.

Let everyone know that your products are now for sale online.



This is it – you want the word to spread as far and wide as possible. You should use email (though be careful not to SPAM), direct mail, TV, radio, Internet advertising and more. In fact, if you regularly do press releases, this is certainly a press release worthy topic!

The goal here is to get folks to visit your marketplace listings and buy your products. You also want to encourage them to tell others about your listings as well.

One way to boost traffic during your launch is to offer time-limited deals – lower prices for those that buy from you during the two or three weeks after your launch (most marketplaces allow you to set up coupons for shoppers to use for a limited time).

What's Next?

After your launch, you will enter phase 2 of the online selling process, "Attracting Attention". This phase focuses on:

- Using inbound marketing to consistently bring traffic to your website and thus your online marketplace listings:
 - Start a blog
 - Begin writing and sending a regular e-mail newsletter
 - Make use of social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and more
 - Search engine optimization (SEO)
 - And much, much more!

Once phase 2 is in full swing, you might consider entering phase 3, "Selling on Your Own Site" which focuses on:

- Adding shopping cart and online storefront functionality to your website.

Do You Want me to create an eBook that Covers Either Phase 2 or Phase 3?

If you would like me to write an ebook for either phase above, [please visit my site](#) and let me know by filling out the form you'll find there.

About Matt Mansfield



Matt Mansfield is a recognized expert in designing and implementing web content and e-mail marketing strategies that consistently drive targeted website traffic and increase sales.

Matt also creates powerful content to be used in online and e-mail marketing campaigns.

Visit Matt's site at <http://www.mattsmansfield.com> to learn how he can help your business increase online traffic and sales with effective inbound and e-mail marketing strategies.

Just looking for content? You can check out samples of Matt's posts, videos, infographics and more [on the site](#) as well.

Find Matt online:

- **Blog:** <http://www.mattaboutbusiness.com>
- **Twitter:** <http://twitter.com/mattsmansfield>
- **Facebook:** <http://www.facebook.com/mattaboutbusiness>
- **LinkedIn:** <http://www.linkedin.com/in/mansfieldmatt>