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## Ask James Caan: Top tips for spinning your business on the web



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James Caan

11 February 2013

Small business agony uncle James Caan shares his advice on how to promote a business online.

Dear James:

*What is the best way to promote a new online business? - Sharaz Naraz*

James says:

One of the fastest ways to start your own business is through a website. Online businesses are popping up every day all over the world.

However, the popularity of the online sector means it can be very challenging to make your mark in this space. It requires hard work and dedication.

As your business is new, you need as much traffic as possible. Paying for sponsored ads can be useful but there are many other things you can do.

Get the essentials right: is your web address clear? Will people know exactly who you are or what you are offering? Will search engines be able to show your site when people do a general search for products/services like yours? Many people try to be funny and quirky when choosing a URL but completely forget the basics.

Being an online firm means you have fewer overheads, so you should be able to afford someone to manage your website. Update the site on a regular basis with news, pictures and videos. Social media is a must. It keeps your content relevant and helps generate traffic, and customers will feel more connected to you.

Once people get to your website, you need to keep them engaged. One of the most crucial aspects is your home page. Make sure your unique selling points are clearly evident. A greengrocer would ensure that

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his best apples are at the front, while a fashion store puts its newest lines in shop window – the same concept applies online. People may only spend a few moments there, so having attractive design and a strong call to action is crucial. Stay true to your brand, keeping things like colour and tone of writing consistent all the way through.

Once you have looked at the basics it's time to think about engaging and promoting your site. Encourage people to sign up for email updates, tailor the emails to suit your audience and soon you will have a rich database of target clients to send specific business news.

Finally, never forget the importance of the customer experience. If you take orders, ensure you have the technology to handle enquiries. If it is a brochure style site make sure all copy and images are the best they can be. Shout about positive feedback and shout about it on your site. Contact local newspapers to create a buzz around your services.

*For the full article and news of James Caan's free app, go to [standard.co.uk](http://standard.co.uk). James Caan's book, *Start Your Business in 7 Days*, is out now.*

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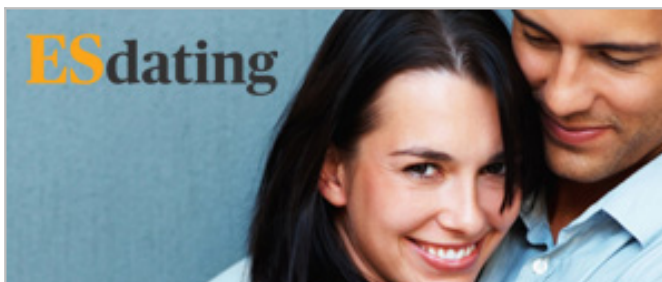
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