

Online or Flatline: The Small Business Owner's Guide to Digital Marketing

Nick Choat

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This concise book offers small business owners authoritative, comforting advice about digital marketing.

Many small business owners find digital marketing intimidating. Nick Choat, whose career moved from working for large corporations to running his own small franchise business, understands this fear factor well. His book serves to quell the uneasiness surrounding digital marketing by putting it into perspective and helping small business owners develop a simple but effective digital strategy.

Choat begins with a helpful overview of how digital changed the world, but he tempers this by pointing out that, while the manner in which businesses interact with target markets has evolved, the basics of marketing are the same: “we as small business owners shouldn’t choose how our customers want to interact with us. Listen and learn the needs of your customers and meet them on their terms.”

Choat lays out a digital strategy that any small business owner can follow, emphasizing such basics as developing a mobile-friendly website, making the most effective use of search, utilizing social media, and employing online advertising as needed. One of his more significant recommendations is to depend on only one good social media platform at the beginning. “Most small business owners don’t have enough time to manage multiple solutions,” he writes.

Choat’s counsel is unfailingly straightforward and based on his own experience. Time and again, he reassures small business owners that it doesn’t take a lot of money to effectively implement a digital strategy; in fact, much of what is needed is available at low cost or free. His advice about search engines and online directories should be particularly valuable to digital marketing beginners.

One of the strongest aspects of *Online or Flatline* is Choat’s ability to distill the dizzying world of digital marketing into content that is easy to read and understand. As a result, this book should greatly benefit any small business owner.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (March/April 2017)

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