

# GUIDELINES FOR PRODUCTIZING

Source: Fletcher Marketing Services  
with thanks to Curt Schwink of CLS Enterprises

## Purpose

This section of the site presents guidelines you can use to launch new products on the Internet. This approach takes your ideas and concepts about a new product or service and *productizes* them. It is based on presentations given to the COMMON Conference & Expo by Curt Schwink and Dennis Fletcher. By converting your ideas to product-related materials, you can assist in objectifying them; this will make it easier for you to take the next step to develop products and service offerings that are more concrete and marketable deliverables that can be marketed on the Internet.

## Productizing Components

There are a number of productizing components that are particularly helpful when launching a product on the Internet. The goal is to assemble an arsenal of marketing strategies, tactics and materials designed to reach prospective buyers wherever they happen to be.

1. **Product Nomenclature** – Dennis Fletcher at Fletcher Marketing Services begins by creating names for the product and its key features or benefits. He uses product names that are not already reserved as an Internet domain. To check whether a domain name has already been reserved, who owns it and whether it can be purchased, go to any of these:  
[www.godaddy.com](http://www.godaddy.com)  
[www.networksolutions.com](http://www.networksolutions.com)  
[www.register.com](http://www.register.com)

Each site offers varying features but all can be used to determine if a URL already exists. Also check the website of the United States Patent and Trademark Office at [www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov) to see if there is a pending or registered trademark for your product's name on file. At the USPTO you can file an inexpensive application to reserve a trademark temporarily, or pay more for a longer-term permanent application.

2. **Artwork** – Once domain names and trademarks are registered, artwork can be created around the product nomenclature. Icons can be paired with the stylized nomenclature to create a unified image. The Nike swoosh has become synonymous with the Nike Corporation and its broad image. According to Matt Dandurand at Media Contour, “for the budget-conscious marketer, the focus today is more on the *branding* than on a clever logo.”

Interestingly, the consistency with which the logo is used is more important than the actual logo itself; repetition becomes the key to recognition. Typefaces are indicators of corporate culture. Companies like Gymboree, the children's clothing giant – uses a “fun and colorful” typeface. Insurance and financial institutions tend to use a serif font with little color or artwork. Color conveys different motivations to different cultures. For example, in China red is a sign of wealth, whereas in the United States it is symbolic of urgency or to “stop”.

3. **Product Summary** – This component provides a succinct definition of your product. It names and describes benefits and technical features. Pictures of hardware and diagrams of software or processes are included to improve comprehension. Mention of pricing is optional and if present should feature bundled offerings and be easy to follow. A description of the authorized partners that carry the product and how to locate them (usually on the vendor’s website) should be included.
4. **Architectural Diagram** – Graphic representation of the product’s components, nomenclature and relationship between them. The diagram identifies underlying hardware, software, services, specialists and organizations involved. Matt Dandurand points out, “Architectural diagrams are most effective when the marketing goals of the company are communicated with the designer beforehand.” The goals of the organization can be influential to any design or diagram. Consistency is a crucial element where multiple diagrams are used.
5. **Product News Release** – Collect a list of publications that report on the new product. Be sure to verify the accuracy of the list. Generate a product news release with a genuine *news* angle, to increase the likelihood it will be considered by the news editors. Consider a broad release using these leading wire services:  
Marketwire [www.marketwire.com](http://www.marketwire.com)  
Businesswire [www.businesswire.com](http://www.businesswire.com)  
PR Newswire [www.prnewswire.com](http://www.prnewswire.com)

These wire services leverage the thousands of Internet-based news sites. Each of these news distribution services offers a clipping service to provide copies of all, or a subset, of the news sites that carry your news release that goes through the wire service. Having a copy of your news release that was shown on Yahoo Financial or Hoovers or some other prestigious Web news site can be a great addition to your own Web site.

6. **Internet Ads** – Internet advertising offers a rich array of advertising alternatives. Sinan Kinatsiz at KCOMM manages an ad agency that has worked extensively in this area. Here are some of his pointers:

Graphic representation of the product’s key value can be incorporated into a variety of Internet-based ads including banners, medallions, skyscrapers and the not-recommended pop-ups. Look at Pay-Per-Click ads in the “sponsored listings” areas of search engines of Google, Overture and other search engines. Company directory listings in Yahoo and other portals are a less-expensive alternative. Your best bet may be trade publications targeting the buyers of your product; whether B2B or B2C, most industries have several publications which carry new product info both in their printed magazines and on their Web site. Advertisements that compliment the story are highly effective.

You can pay to have your banner appear on a website whenever a visitor enters a term in the site’s search/go field that matches a term the advertiser has specified and paid for. For example, if you are selling a computer backup product, any of the terms related to the protection of data would be candidates for such an ad program. The objective of these ads is to encourage the reader to follow a link to a Web site containing additional product information or a product offer. To assure the process works, make sure the landing page contains thematic elements common with the advertisement, so the reader of the ad sees continuity when linking to the product landing page.

7. **White Paper** – This component provides a research report to managers and executives on a problem area related to the product. Include product-related issues; identify

alternative solutions in addition to your product and the *benefits* of your solution. Many include a comparison with alternative products. Detailed reference information should include relevant Internet links to back-up your claims. Place your white paper up on your Web site as a PDF. To protect your proprietary information and research, considering requiring site registration prior to allowing visitors to download the PDF. This serves the secondary benefit of knowing *who* downloaded your material and generating a customized distribution list to discover who is visiting your site.

All white papers should have at least the following: Title, Author(s), Version level/date (if kept updated), Table of Contents, Body of Paper, Links to relevant material, and Conclusion.

8. **Research/Resource Content** – Called an e-Lab, Resource Lab, Information Center, and Relevant Research, this type of Website content was pioneered by Pete Elliot at Key Information Systems, an IBM Premier Business Partner for the IBM server and storage marketplace. It can be a powerful tool, yet takes considerable work to develop. Serious content can provide a valuable information resource directly on your Web site featuring articles, research papers, FAQs, facts and links relevant to a product launch. Separate content resources can be created for each product, or an existing Information Center can be expanded to accommodate new products. Although not as extensive as a portal, e-Labs/Information Centers can lend portal-like status to a Web site that enhances the credibility of the site.
9. **Product Presentation** – A critical product marketing tool is a basic PowerPoint product presentation for face-to-face, telephone and Web presentations. They cover company history, the market, the product's features and benefits, support. Include speaker notes of basic talking points, particularly when resellers will be using it. Hot links back to your Web site are also useful.
10. **Company Presentation** – This is an expanded PowerPoint presentation on your company/organization. It usually covers company philosophy, direction, offerings, and resources including specialists and certifications. Be sure to answer the question: What is unique about your organization? Always include a tie-in to the new product being launched and hot links to the company's Web site and other independent reference sources.
11. **Technical Assessment** – This is an evaluation service that investigates a prospect's specific needs as they relate to the new product. It is used to examine the prospect's business and determine whether a justification exists for the new product. Technical Assessments have been pioneered in the IBM business partner market in the US by Terry Boulais at Key Information Systems. These specialized assessments of specific functions or areas of the business, like data protection, server and storage consolidation, computer security and disaster recovery, are a unique and powerful marketing tool. They increase exposure for a new product, particularly where the selling process for that product is a *conceptual sell* (involving a new or different way of looking at solving a problem.)

Information gleaned from a Technical Assessment is used to create a Technical Blueprint of the examined area, useful for documenting your assessment's findings and providing a blueprint of your recommendations. Technical Blueprints provide a context for future work with the prospect. The Technical Assessment includes a **Data Collection** phase in which the client is interviewed or surveyed, an **Analysis** phase for evaluating the data collected, and a **Reporting** phase for preparing and presenting the results to the prospect or client. Fees can be charged for the assessment, or it can be free to qualified prospects.

12. **Webinar** – Create a Web-based interactive seminar that addresses the problems your product solves. Introduce those who can assist in applying the new product to the problem area. Interactive **webinars** are more effective than a **webcast** where the data transmission is simply one-way and allows no interaction between the presenters and the audience. To discover who is available to host your webinar, Google the term “webinar.” You may post the completed webinar on your website as an audio-visual presentation related to the new product. It is recommended to include a short survey questions at break-points in the webinar to sample the audience attitude on critical issues. This also keeps the audience actively participating in the event.
  
13. **Giveaways** – Create promotional giveaway items that tastefully display product branding and company branding. Examples can be magnets, key chains, reference charts, mouse pads and coffee mugs. Products with a longer shelf-life are the most successful. This is an opportunity to increase brand recognition by including the product artwork, typography and slogans. The product’s Web site URL is an effective way to generate Web traffic. Dennis Fletcher uses his background as a course developer to produce reference pages and tools that make great timesavers and booth handouts. These are easily customized to target just the users or buyers of the new product.

### **Web Presence**

Effective Internet marketing demands the development of descriptive content for Search Engine Optimization (SEO). The content should reinforce your company’s target market and positioning as well as lead visitors to your partner’s websites. A separate Web site can be devoted to the product, using the product’s name as the domain (for example: [www.productname.com](http://www.productname.com)) and linked to your company’s main Web site.

Printed and electronic versions of all marketing materials, including productizing components should be placed onto the Web site for your company, the product, resellers and any alliance partners. The more widely you can broadcast your Web-based marketing materials the faster you can tap into global Internet markets. It will also increase the likelihood that when a search engine is used it will lead the inquirer to one of your many sites.

### **Partners and Alliances**

It is relatively easy to support your partners/resellers and strategic alliances by having links to them on your main Web site and vice versa. Send them advance versions of any new productizing components for new products whenever they will be involved in the marketing of these products. It is important to develop a follow-up system to assure your resellers and alliance partners actually post new materials on their Web sites as you develop them, and are encouraged to develop their own materials to market your offerings.

### **Caveat**

There are literally hundreds of ways to promote new products. This material covers the most basic marketing strategies and tactics you should consider in launching new products on the Internet using the Productizing Model. If you feel anything was omitted that could make this paper more valuable as a learning tool, please send us an email. We will contact you and incorporate your ideas with full credit to you for your contribution. Send your email to the contributor of this material, Dennis Fletcher, at [dennis@fletchermarketing.us](mailto:dennis@fletchermarketing.us) or [yorkman711@hotmail.com](mailto:yorkman711@hotmail.com).

### **Version 4**