Entrepreneurs with both physical and virtual stores must promote their Web sites at every

opportunity by printing their Uniform Resource Locators (URLs; a company’s address on the

Internet) on everything related to their physical stores—on signs, in print and broadcast ads, on

shopping bags, on merchandise labels, on employees’ uniforms, and anywhere else their customers

will see. Quick-response (QR) codes allow smart phone users to go directly to a Web site’s

relevant page without having to type in a long URL. Entrepreneurs also use social media such

as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube, and others to drive traffic to their Web sites

and purchase ads on high-traffic sites such as Google (Google Adsense) and Facebook, both of

which allow companies to establish maximum expenditures based on the number of people who

click on their ads. Using these tools, companies can aim their ads at specific target customers by

location, age, and interests.

**ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE: Mehdi Farsi, Reza Farsi,**

**and Eric Ferguson: State Bicycle** Mehdi Farsi, Reza

Farsi, and Eric Ferguson, owners of State Bicycle, a manufacturer

of quality fixed-gear and single-speed bicycles in Tempe, Arizona,

uses Facebook ads to increase its brand recognition, drive new

customers to its Web site, and build stronger relationships with

existing customers. In addition to adding milestones to the company’s

Facebook page to promote significant events and accomplishments,

the entrepreneurs also ran Facebook ads to people

living in cities whose profiles indicated that they were bicyclists or

were interested in fixed-gear bicycles (known as “fixies”). They

also hosted frequent photo contests on the company Facebook

page (e.g., the owner of the “most beaten up bike” won a new

State Bicycle bike) and ran “Facebook Friday” specials that included

a discount coupon for people who liked the company on

Facebook. With only a minimal investment in Facebook ads, the

entrepreneurs realized an additional $500,000 in sales in just one

year and saw the number of likes increase tenfold in the same

time period.19 ■

Entrepreneurs also should consider buying ads in traditional advertising media as well as using

banner ads, banner exchange programs, and cross-marketing arrangements with companies

that sell complementary products on their own Web sites. The keys to promoting a Web site are

*networking*—building relationships with other companies, customers, trade associations, online

directories, and other Web sites that your company’s customers visit—and *interacting* with existing

and potential customers online through social media outlets.

**Myth 2. Online Customers Are Easy to Please**

Customers who shop online today tend to be experienced Internet users whose expectations of

their online shopping experiences are high and continue to rise. Experienced online shoppers

tend to be unforgiving, quickly clicking to another site if their shopping experience is subpar or

they cannot find the products and information they want. Because Web shoppers are increasingly

more discriminating, companies are finding that they must improve their Web sites constantly to

attract and keep their customers.

To be successful online marketers, small companies must create Web sites with the features

that appeal to experienced Web shoppers, such as simple navigation; customer reviews;

an efficient checkout process; multiple payment options; rock-solid security; quick access to

product information, videos, and blogs; and the ability to track their shipments online. In addition,

when customers have questions about or experience problems with an online shopping

experience, companies that provide easy access to customer assistance and support have the

advantage. Giving customers easy access to service representatives through multiple options,

such as a toll-free telephone number, live chat, click-to-call, live video chat, and texting (for

the growing number of customers who shop from their smart phones and other mobile devices)

increases the probability that they will complete their transactions and return to shop again. The

payoff for creating a positive online experience for shoppers is significant: Customers are more