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Books

By [James Gaskin](#), NetworkWorld.com, 09/22/06

The old saying "build a better mousetrap and the world will beat a path to your door" may have been true 100 years ago, but I doubt it. If customers can't find you on the Web today after one quick search, your better mousetraps will rot in your warehouse. That's the premise behind [The Complete Idiot's Guide to Growing Your Business with Google](#) by Dave Taylor (ISBN 1592573967). For many businesses today, success hinges on keywords, adwords, a good domain name, and whether your Web site appears on the first page of a Google search result.



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Even strictly local retailers and service businesses need to hone their search quotients. Multiple studies have shown that a majority of customers for many products search on the Web before heading to a local store. If you provide information and develop some awareness in the customer's mind, they may take a drive over to see you rather than order online. Take a gander at how you rate on Google. If you rate poorly, Taylor's book will help.

Use the [Streetwise Small Business Book of Lists](#) as a reference book for every business question. I don't normally report on general business books, but author Gene Marks included 100 pages in "the geek section" including many companies and services I never knew existed. After being impressed with the technology coverage, I flipped around and was again impressed by the amount of helpful information in every business area.

Marks doesn't give advice because this is a reference book, not a tutorial. But he provides multiple "Things to Consider Before Buying..." sections to highlight important features in the area. Other than those, the only recommendations are based on placement – you assume early numbers in the lists are more important than later numbers. I quibble with some decisions, such as listing Mozilla Thunderbird seventh in the "Popular E-mail Applications" list, but I was surprised to see KDE's KMail listed third, since you only get that with Unix/Linux operating systems. But when the lists are only seven to 14 entries long for the most part, you can read every item and see what catches your eye.

Both are recommended. Not everything worth knowing is on a Web site, you know.

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