



NEWS RELEASE

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SBA EXPANDS ONLINE TRAINING COURSES TO HELP SMALL BUSINESSES WITH E-COMMERCE

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) announced six new online courses to help small businesses that want to enter or expand into the e-commerce market.

The new courses stem from the agency's e-commerce directive and complement other initiatives agency-wide aimed at educating and targeting financial and technical assistance to small businesses seeking e-commerce opportunities.

Through a cosponsorship agreement with Cisco Systems, Inc., *Internet Essentials for Growing Businesses*, a six-course learning program, will be added to SBA's online classroom at www.sba.gov/classroom as part of ongoing efforts to enhance SBA's online training tools.

“The SBA will continue to leverage its resources with the assistance of private partners,” added SBA Administrator Alvarez. **“This will be part of our ongoing efforts to provide the best information resources to small business owners, especially through our online courses.”**

The six-course program is broken down into segments that can be viewed in any order, depending on the need of the customer or particular area of interest. The courses can be viewed via the latest technology or in text-only version. The first three courses listed below can be accessed immediately. The others will be available over the next several months. They are as follows:

- The Internet Economy
- Basics of the Internet
- Basics of E-Commerce
- Growing Your Business on the Web
- Integrating Your Business and Technical Plans
- Building Your Business with Web Marketing

Recent research estimates that 85 percent of small firms will be conducting business over the Internet by the year 2002 if current trends continue. Currently, the nation's 25.5 million small businesses produce more than half of our gross domestic product—yet only a fraction of small businesses are participating in e-commerce today. According to a survey SBA conducted last year, small businesses that use the Internet *already* generate nearly 30 percent more revenue than those that do not.

*Additional information about SBA's programs and services is available at SBA's Web site: <http://www.sba.gov> or by calling the **SBA's Answer Desk at 1-800 U ASK SBA.***

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