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Why Should My Business Have A Website?

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Everybody tells you that your business should have a website but so far no-one has convinced you. They tell you it will help your sales but don't say how, they tell you it will increase your profits but don't say how, they tell you it will be the best advertising and marketing you could do but don't tell you why. I'll attempt to provide some answers to those questions and more.

Advertising

Your website is constantly advertising you. It is larger than any print advertisement and can convey more information than any radio or television advert and unlike traditional advertising where you try to force yourself into somebody's consciousness, and generally fail, your web site will be visited by people who are already interested in finding out about your business and your products or services.

Sales

Internet sales are cheap, they are conducted by computers who don't need to be paid or earn commission. A properly thought out and designed business website is like having a 24hr a day salesman who can deal with multiple customers simultaneously, who never takes holidays or has any time off and whom you have total control over.

Information

You can use your website to provide articles and helpful tips about your speciality or reviews of your products. If people come to your website looking for the information that you provide, they are likely to look at other parts of your site giving you the chance to impress them with your products or services. By becoming a resource for information you entice people on to your website who would not otherwise have come. This can only be a good thing as people who are searching for the information you have may well also be looking for the product or service that you provide.

You can also use your site to provide information about your business such as background, history, policies and any other information that prospective customers may want to know. This allows them to easily and quickly find out about you, shows that you have nothing to hide, allows you to boast of your achievements and promotes their trust in you.

Customer Research

Customers like to research products before they buy, especially online. A shopper generally

has an idea of what they want by function or purpose rather than specific item or service e.g. a web designer instead of a particular web design business. They will start by making a search for items that fulfil that function by putting a general search term into a search engine such as Google e.g. web designer. This will inevitably produce several million results so they will look at the first few and compare them by features, price, popularity etc. If it's a service or complex and expensive product they are looking for, they may well then conduct some even more general research to enable them to make a better informed decision. They then carry out more searches to narrow down the options to the one they want. Only then will they actually decide to buy a specific product. The next step is to find who is providing that service or product at the right price, in the right place, with the right quality and service. If you are one of the sources that they have used and your website was helpful and informative during the search and decision process without overbearing marketing hype, you have built up a level of trust from their previous experience of you and you stand a much better chance of them coming back to you for the eventual purchase.

Open 24hrs

Your website is always available to provide information to the public, publicise your brand and deal with your customers. It can take messages, make sales and gather marketing data while you sleep.

Your competition

If your competition has no website then by launching one yourself you have an obvious advantage over them; internet users can find you but not them. If your competitors have their own websites and you have none, they have this advantage over you.

Marketing

Websites gather data about their visitors all the time. Data such as what country are they in, what time do they use your website, how long do they stay on your website and which pages do they look at. Any customer that registers with your site either for a newsletter or through a purchase gives you further information and the ability to advertise directly to them by post or email.

Support

Your website can take some of the load from your customer service by providing problem solving pages related to your products, sales terms and conditions including returns and refund policies and further information about what to do in the event of any problems. Providing solutions to the most common questions allows people to find the answer they want when they want it without you having to spend time answering the same question time and again to different people. It also shows that you are thoughtful, helpful and aware of what your customers need.

Up To Date

It is far easier and quicker to keep your website up to date than traditional print media such as catalogues and brochures. Any changes that you need can be done very quickly and published instantly.

Profit

A well planned and designed business website should more than repay the investment

through increased sales and efficiency. The benefits from all of the above factors will make you more efficient, easier to conduct business with and enable you to maximise your takings whilst minimising costs.

Summary

There are numerous benefits to having your own website but the greatest is the ability to combine all of those benefits into one package which is always available anywhere in the world. Nobody can guarantee that you will instantly become rich from adding a website to your strategy but not having one guarantees that you lose one possible channel for success.

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