

**Title:**

The Internet The World's Greatest Telephone for the Success of Your Business

**Word Count:**

1295

**Summary:**

The Internet offers your organization whatever it may be the greatest communications device available- simple , inexpensive , comprehensive - technically and cost effective that is simply underutilized and the simple benefits understood by most organizations in their marketing and service plan scope .

**Keywords:**

internet , marketing , profit , customer , service , targeting

**Article Body:**

Business owners of companies both large and small can achieve rich improvements in their operations if they start to ask themselves regularly, "I have just been handed a powerful new tool. It essentially lets me costless communicate with anyone on the planet. How can I best use it to my advantage?"

To focus, business owners must first ask themselves two questions: As a business owner, what am I trying to achieve?

Marry your answers to the diverse communications capabilities of the World Wide Web; you will inevitably create some powerful and highly beneficial new initiatives.

In exploring strategies for success in the developing environment, it is essential to recognize a fact that is often overlooked: The Internet is fundamentally a new communications vehicle. As a consequence, a large part of its value arises because it permits cost-effective communications – down the street or on a worldwide basis—that were not possible before its emergence.

Why is this so important? Because many people have a very different view of the World Wide Web. They will suggest that the Web is an entertainment medium—something that has more in common with the television than the telephone. This focus is easy to appreciate; the typical person is more interested in the new offerings on the Web that can entertain him or her than the less exciting

details of enhanced communications capabilities. In addition, Internet use is the first activity in over forty years that has been clearly documented as something that causes people to spend less time watching television. It's therefore natural to think of it as a substitute for this medium.

#### Benefits of Internet Telephony to Your Business:

1) Availability Completely under Customer Control. With the internet, visitors—potential customers—come to Web sites at their convenience, making them far more receptive to what companies have to say because the customers aren't being intruded upon (as happens with telemarketing).

2) One-to-Many Communications Performed Seamlessly. The Internet offers one-to-many communications systems without losing the privacy or interaction possible by phone. A single posting at a Web site reaches as many people as visit the site that day

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3) Reduced Effort, Time, and Cost. The Web makes things easy and affordable.

Not all businesses are currently bringing in added profit via the Web yet; nonetheless, every business needs to be working on it in order to be competitive today.

The Web makes it possible for companies both large and small to develop new communications processes that save time and money while enabling faster responses to customer needs.

Many industries rely on widely distributed field sales forces that may consist of independent agents or company employees. In today's fast-moving business environment, providing these frontline soldiers with the most up-to-the-minute information and the best possible tools and support is critical to success, and by using the Web, companies can do so at far lower cost.

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#### 4) Reduced Effort, Time, and Cost.

The Web makes things easy and affordable.

The Web makes it possible to communicate regularly with a large volume of customers at virtually no cost.

Businesses can generally benefit by disseminating information; yet up to now, there has not been a cost-effective, satisfactory way of timely customer notification. Not only is direct mail costly, but the timing of delivery is erratic and an overwhelming amount of it is never even opened. The telephone is timely, but information disseminated by telephone is also costly and runs the risk of alienating customers who don't want to be bothered by solicitors.

Enter the Internet. The World Wide Web gives companies a low-cost method to communicate with existing customers and to reach out to potential ones with a timeliness that has never before existed.

The new capabilities created by the Internet far exceed what could be accomplished with the telephone. Consider how a well-designed Internet customer-communications system can work:

- 1.) Orders are confirmed by e-mail -first immediately after they are placed, and again when they are shipped out. The shipping confirmation notice includes an internal tracking number to help customers locate the package if it fails to arrive on a timely basis.
- 2.) Customers can register for e-mail notifications of various kinds. By filling out an online form, customers can request to be notified about newly available products that are likely to be of interest to them.
- 3.) "Missing" customers can be inexpensively lured back: If a frequent customer has not made a purchase for some time, the electronic retailer can send a \$5 or \$10 digital coupon to encourage a return purchase. These types of ongoing efforts to build loyalty can be triggered by well-designed automated databases, combined with virtually costless e-mail, to create an inexpensive, potentially high-return, and customer loyalty program.

This suggests a central strategy for any business today: Gather e-mail addresses from customers (and permission to contact them using these addresses), even if you don't yet have an interactive Web site. Every business from a major manufacturer to a regional discount store to the local plumber will find that

well-designed e-mail messages can be a low-cost, highly effective means of building profitable revenues. In Strategy 7, I discuss how a local pest-control business might benefit tremendously from an e-mail-based initiative.

### The Importance of round the clock availability

Like a good catalog and 800 numbers, the Internet makes your company accessible to customers worldwide twenty-four hours a day. However, the "Web" is better than the world's greatest catalog."

Here's why:

Additional visuals as well as more written detail. Catalogs face an inherent limitation: Paper and postage are costly. As a result, details—other views of a product as well as more written description—often have to be left out. So while the 800-number operator can read to customers the special washing instructions, if the product is offered on the Internet, the consumer can read the special washing instructions for him- or herself, scroll through a more lengthy product description, and in all likelihood, see more than one view of the item.

Expanded offerings. Today catalogs typically list only a portion of a company's offerings, simply because more listings mean expansion of printing and mailing costs. The Web obliterates this limitation.\

Remember too, that anything that can be accomplished online instead of by phone is more cost effective. A five-minute call to order a \$50 item, at a cost of \$1 per minute, means that the call is a significant percentage of the cost structure, and a five-minute inquiry—with no purchase attached—creates a financial loss in addition to time lost by personnel who might have been making a sale to someone else. This contrasts with use of the Internet, where—to the extent that communications cost exists—they are trivial, and consumers bear the cost of company contact by paying their access service.

The Internet has now led to a new definition of what customers have come to expect: In the emerging era, businesses are almost required to provide twenty-four-hour Internet communications, so that the consumer can shop from home whenever he or she wants to. Sites that prosper will be more than order-taking vehicles; they will provide a creative, educational experience that builds knowledge about their products and services and engenders sales as well as ongoing customer loyalty.

Whether your business specializes in Porche luxury cars or temporary employment services, the Web offers you the opportunity to find people who are looking for what your company sells.

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Category: Customer\_Service File:

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