

Title:

Using the Internet to your Advantage

Word Count:

976

Summary:

Coming from the "Internet generation," I understand the importance of doing your business, or at least advertising your business online. The Internet has opened up a wealth of possibilities to businesses that were simply not available 10 or 15 years ago.

Keywords:

business, website, internet, startup, work at home, new business, tips, advertising

Article Body:

Coming from the "Internet generation," I understand the importance of doing your business, or at least advertising your business online. The Internet has opened up a wealth of possibilities to businesses that were simply not available 10 or 15 years ago. But before I start telling my age, please let me explain further.

Open 24 Hours a Day, 7 Days a Week

The Internet never closes down for the end of the business day or the weekend. Your businesses information and contact information is available at any time. This means that potential clients can research and decide if they want to do business with you, without having to contact you. Before, the only time a potential client could inquire about your business was during business hours, unless you wanted to give out your private phone numbers and cell phone numbers. Now, they can send you an email, and you can answer it at your convenience.

More Information Then Ever Before

The Internet does not constrain you to a certain number of words. You literally have unlimited amounts of space to talk about, advertise, and display information about your business. Before, you would have to fit what you felt was the most important information into a 30 second commercial, or a specific size of brochure.

Global Users

Before the Internet, you were required to spend large amounts of money to advertise anywhere but your local area. You had to rely on people driving by or hearing/seeing one of your local ads in order to do business with them. The Internet however, is reachable by every country on the planet, and a website or online ads usually costs exactly the same whether people from your hometown, or people from the other side of the world are viewing it.

Changeable Content

When creating a business brochure or handout, you had to make sure you only put none-dateable information in there, because after all, once they are printed, you cannot change the information. This created potentially large advertising costs, and sometimes many wasted ads due to changing information. Likewise, you were unable to change the text or print on a radio or TV ad until that ad ran its campaign. Online, changing information is as simple as point and click. Your phone number changed? Simple, log onto your website or ad and change it.

Small Cost, Large Results

We all know how expensive traditional advertising campaigns can be. A simple ad in the newspaper now costs about \$15 a week, a billboard around \$600 a month. However, advertising online is far less expensive. For example: a static, 5 page website will cost you around \$109 (if you choose the right designer) and about \$3 a month after that. That is a total of \$145 dollars a year. Posting to search engines where clients can find your business is free, and allows visitors to search for, and find your website. If you choose to advertise your website on other networks, you only pay when someone actually clicks on your ad. That allows you to control the amount of money, and you only pay for the people that actually see your website. Small businesses or businesses with small budgets and get, and maintain a website for about \$.39 a day.

Overall, the Internet is not one of the best ways to successfully advertise your business. If you are new to the Internet, you may want to consider hiring a professional to develop and maintain your advertisements for you. When searching for a designer and web developer, please pay special attention to their details. Here are a few things that you will want to avoid:

1)Template Websites- Templates, sometimes called cookie cutter websites, are pre made designs and set ups of a website. Any number of other websites can use the every same template for their website. In the event that a potential customer has visited a website with a similar template to yours, then chances are they will either not take your business as serious, or reference your business with

that website. Ask the potential designer if your website will be unique or made from a template before you do business with them.

2) Hourly Rate Design- Some web design companies offer "hourly rate web design." It has been found that many hourly designers will tell you something takes much longer to complete than it usually does. In this case, you will end up paying for hours of work when the work only actually took a few minutes, or they will hold your website hostage until you do. Look for set packages that list what you will get, no matter how much time it took to complete.

3) High Hosting Charges- Many new business owners and business owners not familiar with the Internet will let their web designer host their website for them. While there is nothing wrong with this, be cautious of the amount you will be paying month for their hosting. Small businesses that only require small website should not pay over \$3-\$7 a month for hosting. Larger businesses or businesses with large or dynamic websites should never pay over \$10-\$15 a month. On the other hand, you may find a design company offering free hosting as an introductory offer. If this is true, be sure to ask how much you will be paying for hosting once the offer expires.

4) Long Completion Times- Web design is a complicated process, however, a good designer can finish a website in a rather small amount of time. Be cautious of web designers that take a long time to complete each website. This may be a sign that they may have too much on their plate. If that is the case, then chances are you will not receive the proper attention and care that is needed to make a website a success. Always ask a potential designer how long it typically takes them to finish and publish a website.