

What can the Internet REALLY do for me? - 12 Key Benefits

By Peter Simmons

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In my conversations with business people i've noticed a surprising lack of understanding about the Internet and its potential for their business. Most know it is important for business in general but dont really know why. Few really understand what it can specifically do for their organisation, "What can the Internet really do for me?" This article aims to answer this fundamental question by identifying some key benefits to help you start reaping the benefits of the internet for your business today.

At its most basic level, the Internet provides you with an opportunity to publish a website at a specified www address. Anyone armed with this address can then type it in to their computer and access your website at anytime day or night from any (internet enabled) computer located anywhere around the globe. This starts to give you some idea of the potential power and reach of the internet. Just stop and think about that for a moment. Your website and anything you place on it will be accessible around the world, anytime, by any of the estimated 450 million internet users. Thats some potential eh? Internet benefits for you: it enables you to reach new customers and markets. Plus there's the supreme convenience of the internet's instant, anytime, anywhere built-in characteristics.

Actually I think a website is more than a mere storage area for your web pages, it becomes a sort of 'focus point' to your customers, largely due to its convenience and text/visual format. People make purchasing decisions based on all sorts of questions and anxieties, either real or otherwise. A website provides a place where they can help themselves to find out more and answer those questions and anxieties or take any other action. Thats an often overlooked internet benefit that wasnt really possible previously: easy self-service. If they cant find what they want, they can simply send you a message from your website and await the tailored response. Another benefit: rapid and personal communication.

Clearly, what you put on your website and how you present it is therefore very important. Your website's visitors will start to build an impression of your organisation and products based on what they see there in the first few seconds of their arrival. Both its content and presentation should reflect you and everything you do well and should therefore get the research and attention it deserves. Thats another benefit: flexibility of content and ability to add /update it instantly. Too many sites remain static. If you can, try to attract and engage visitors by keeping your site up-to-date with fresh content. By the way, when i say product i mean this in a very universal way, including products, services, information and any other item you may offer.

All you need now is some promotion to get the word out that your website is up, running and eager to help your new prospects. You can use the internet to find and contact companies, newsletters, publishers, etc. and to arrange your promotions and advertising on any industry or topic you choose.

This of course is the internet's speciality and a key benefit for you to use: easy access to information on every topic imaginable.

Now, if you do your homework and promotion for your new website well, you'll soon start to get prospects looking around your site and viewing your content. Ideally, they will arrive, read exactly what they want to and buy your product immediately. They click to purchase the product and bingo you've made a sale. At this point you smile with satisfaction and sit back as your bank completes the transaction and deposits the payment into your bank account. You haven't even been involved in the transaction. Automation and new revenues: significant internet benefits.

Alternatively, if they haven't just read what they wanted to: do they want further information before making a decision? Are they just not ready to buy yet? Are they just not going to buy regardless of what you provide? Ideally you should cater for all these scenarios to get as many sales as possible. This is an often overlooked internet benefit. The opportunity to interact and in this case cater to different needs. I.e. Want to know more? Click this link. Then they could see some specifically written text with more depth, etc.

However tempting it may be, when you've made the sale don't sit back glowing in that internet glory for too long because there's more to do. Are you happy with one sale or would you prefer more? Of course, given the choice you'd choose more wouldn't you? What if you now produced a useful regular newsletter sent by email and asked them if they would like to receive it? You're on your way to getting more sales from them, instead of that one initial purchase that you may have settled for before the internet arrived. More Internet benefits i yell! The ability to send newsletters/ ezines quickly, easily and cheaply without traditional stationery and postage costs. Plus it's practically guaranteed to be read by the recipient.

Now you have the opportunity to build up a mailing list of prospects and customers who want regular contact from you. They want you to send them useful information, special offers, product announcements, etc. Whether they bought a product from you or not initially they are starting a relationship with you. If you do it correctly they'll begin to trust you and your recommendations and ultimately buy more products further down the line.

Your existing customers may appreciate this type of new attention too. Previously they may have felt abandoned after their first and only purchase and maybe you haven't contacted them since. This is an excellent way to keep existing customers happy and loyal, which again will likely mean more sales further down the line. Ultimately what you are doing here is building strong relationships with your customers. They've probably never had this kind of attention and focus before. Yes, another internet benefit. Do it right and you will positively stand out from everyone else they deal with who doesn't treat them in this attentive way. What more could you want? What more could they want?

I hope you've seen that if you put the thought and effort into your website, your business can reap the benefits of the Internet. There are more benefits than those I've covered here too. Try to use them all to offer something new or unique. Be creative in your thinking and identify how they can benefit you and your customers regardless of your industry and business model. What can the Internet really do for me?

Target and reach new customers and markets with your products.

Sell your products to those new customers and markets.

Sell more products to your existing customers and markets.

Be open 24 hours a day/7 days a week/52 weeks per year.

Be convenient and interactive. Customers love to help themselves anytime, anywhere, etc.

Generate awareness and credibility in new online world.

Build stronger relationships with your customers than ever before.

Get regular, guaranteed reading of your offers by customers who are already interested in them.
Use facility to tailor content and update immediately.
Utilise rapid communication between you and your customers.
Personalise all communications for higher impact, eg. Hi Peter...

Good luck!

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