

Why does my business need a website?

By Stephanie Foster

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It almost seems to be a must now - the business website. From huge corporations to brand-new businesses, whether you are in sales or service, you've thought about getting a website. But what good does it really do your business? What if you are purely local?

Having a website shows that you are committed to your business and being competitive. If you are local, say so on your website. You will still reach more of your local community through your website than through many other media. A website is a great addition to all your marketing materials, from business cards to television commercials.

A website can be a very inexpensive form of advertising. You can offer your audience much more information about your products or services on a website than in any other form of advertising, and it can be changed at a moment's notice. Just think about how much work it takes to make one small change in a regular advertising campaign. There's the time to create the new campaign, produce it and get it out to the consumer. With a website, you can make small or large changes very quickly.

Although website hosting can be had for free, such sites tend to look unprofessional, as the hosting company places banners or other advertising on your site. Depending on your needs, however, a site can be hosted for very little money, often for less than \$15 a month.

Design is where many websites spend the most money. Unless you already know how to create a logo and other graphics and can use a good webpage editor, you will want to pay a web designer to do the work for you. Even if you can do it yourself, you need to ask yourself - is it worth the time and effort you will put into it? Calculate what your time is worth and estimate how long it will take you to create a site. Then get an estimate from a professional designer. It might just cost less than doing it yourself would.

Just remember, you can start out with a small website and let it grow with your business. You might just be surprised at how well you do.

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