

Do You Really Need a Website?

Some webdesigners will tell you “Yes, *every business should have a website.*” However, if you are happy with the number of customers coming through your door, the way you interact with potential customers, the way you share information with customers, and aren’t looking for a way to do it more cost effectively ... then possibly, you may not “need” a website.

Even so, if you still wonder what a website could do for you, I invite you to read on.

Who Benefits From a Website?

Admittedly, just as a primary goal of your business is to help you earn a living, the underlying goal of your website is to generate and retain business. By working to retain current customers and transform potential customers into actual customers, your website can help do just that.

But ultimately, a business website is really not for you, the business owner. It is for the convenience of the people who choose to do business with you, your customers and potential customers.

In today's world, there is no doubt the internet is replacing the Yellow Pages, library and other forms of advertising, as the resource people turn to most often for information about a business or when they are trying to find a company to choose to do business with.

Website For Your Customers: Working to retain current customers and transform potential customers into actual customers.

Website is available when it is convenient for your visitors

Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, it is like having a receptionist and tech support always available. Potential customers can check you out anytime they have a few minutes, after the kids are in bed, Sunday morning, Wednesday at midnight ... when it is convenient for them.

Such availability provides instant gratification to the customer. They don't have to wait until you are personally available, to get information they are looking for right then.

Website addresses are typically easier to remember than phone numbers

From the moment visitors land on your home page, you are working to establish a personal relationship with them.

People visit your website to find out more about you, either because a customer referred them to you or they came across your site when they Googled your industry in your town.

These referred and potential customers want to know who you are and what you are about. Are you really as good as their friend says you are? Do you have the unique skills, experience, knowledge, and expertise they are looking for?

How do you share with them that you do? What you are all about? With great content on a great website!

- “About Us” page, with philosophy about what you do, mission statement, history
- Photo gallery of your products, work, etc.
- Awards you’ve won, professional recognition you have received
- Credentials
- Testimonials
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- Sharing knowledge about your field

Website contains information useful to them, today and on future visits, may include:

- information about you and your business, such as
 - services you offer, emphasizing unique services your offer
 - where you are, with written directions and map
 - hours open
 - contact information
 - photos of your business
 - meet the staff: photos, bios, job descriptions
 - methods of payment, timing of payments, what happens if they don’t pay
- helpful information, such as
 - articles
 - forms
 - pricing
- links to business and product partners you have found helpful
- advertising
- links you think they also might find useful

Ultimately helps them recognize, yours is the sort of company they are looking to do business with.

Website For The Business Owner

- Employee that works 24/7/365 for little money
- Can say so much more on a website than you could in print advertising, on TV or radio, or in the Yellow Pages, for considerably less money
- Is therefore cost effective (inexpensive and effective)
 - development and “distribution” costs are low
 - keeping information current also is inexpensive
- Saves you time by answering basic questions and providing basic information
- If make a change, is nearly instantaneous to get the information out
- Keep media kit online
- Keep reference list and other such resources available online for you to selectively share links to
- If still do print advertising, single line with website address can replace a lot of text!
- Great resource for business partners, to get to know you in the same way.
- Let customers know when/where you will be if attending tradeshow, etc.
- Potentially provide income stream during slow time