

55 Reasons you need a Website or why upgrade it

There are still people wondering whether their business really needs a website. Or they say: we do not have a business, but a not-for-profit organization: should we have a website? Definitely! I could easily come up with 50 reasons why you need a website and if you have it other 5 to upgrade it... here is what changes your mindset, its's just that you have to think it open – mindedly in this Internet and communication era

1. Promote Your Products

A website allows you to showcase your products for everyone to see. You can explain the benefits, compare it with other products, or show testimonials of happy customers that already bought the product.

2. Promote Your Services

It is hard to showcase services in a store, or office. The web allows you to introduce the service, the professionals providing the service, and how several services can complement each other.

3. Promote Your Organization

People buy from people. People support organizations and causes that they believe in. A website is a fantastic tool to promote an organization and build trust – that is, if you do it right... A well-developed website can convey trust and credibility, making people to buy from you, or support you.

4. Promote Yourself

Whether you are a professional looking for a job, or an expert in your industry: you can show that to the whole world by having a comprehensive website. The use of an associated email address also increases perceived professionalism: a letter from someone at me-the-expert.com will certainly open more doors than an email from a hotmail account.

5. Promote Your Ideas

Political campaigns are now all over the web. A website can be a powerful way to promote your ideas, and build a following of like-minded people. Or you can just write online journals ("blogs") to ventilate some of your thoughts and concerns.

6. Promote Your Events

Have a fundraising event? Want to promote your business with seminars, workshops or a tradeshow? You will increase awareness when you create a website for the event. Show dates, programs, prices and riving directions – to name but a few features that will be greatly appreciated by your target audience.

7. Sell Your Events

Want to take it a step further? You may even want to consider selling (or pre-ordering) tickets for your events on a website. Shorter line-ups, less expenses: it sounds like a good idea to me..

8. Sell Your Organization

Whether "selling your organization" is a figure of speech (to convince people) or a true selling effort, a website can be considered a very valuable asset to your organization.

9. Sell Your Services

A website can be a great tool to not only promote, but also actually sell your services. You can automate many repetitive tasks, such as registration, billing, collecting and much more. Whether you are selling phone



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services or speaking engagements: you can effectively do it with a website.

10. Sell Your Products

A few years ago, after all the dot-boms, people lost faith in e-commerce. Now e-commerce is booming. Gift moments like Christmas and Valentine's Day show record sales numbers, and money-guzzling giants like Amazon are starting to make money. Offering a great user-experience and minding usability is the key to success.

11. Save Costs

By integrating systems and automating certain tasks you may be able to actually save costs. For instance, by integrating your e-commerce website into your inventory and accounting systems. Build extranets to connect with suppliers and clients alike. You can provide downloadable documents on a website rather than mailing them out. The opportunities are endless.

12. Build A Community

Want to be perceived as a leader? Want people talking about you, or provide a platform for people to share ideas and ideologies? A website, especially with a forum or bulletin board, can be a great help in building an online community. It may even be the cement that keeps an offline community together, because of its empowering character and 24/7 availability.

13. Share Pictures, Sound And Other Files

I just watched wedding photos, I enjoy watching funny commercials from all over the world, I like listening to music – on a website. You can use it to share Media Kits, sound bites, or PowerPoint presentations. A website is a great tool to exchange multi-media.

14. Offer Service 365/24/7

This may not be of great value to you (it may even be a burden...), but to your customers it is very empowering and important. The Internet puts the web browser in control – and if you are not there, you will be more and more passed over in favour of an online competitor.

15. Answer Frequently Asked Questions

Answering the same questions over and over again can be a great waste of money and employee morale. A carefully crafted list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), posted on a website, can reduce the stream of repetitive questions so your Customer Support department can actually start supporting customers, and your Sales Department can really devote their time to selling!

16. Improve Branding

Branding is a way to differentiate your product, service or company from its competition, and create loyalty. The content of a website, its style and tools such as newsletters allow for many ways to differentiate yourself, make the visitor feel good about you, and build loyalty. More worrisome: if you do not do this, a competitor may snatch not only your prospects sales, but also their loyalty away from you with their website! Eat, or be eaten!

17. Reach A Local Market

More and more people use locally defined keywords in the search engines, which indicates that they use the



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Internet do find local information. "Used cars Toronto" or "Guelph real estate" are obvious, but mentioning a website in a local ad may do wonders in terms of converting a reader into a customer.

18. Reach A Regional Market

A website is one of the easiest tools to expand your exposure into a wider geographical area. Want to move your business from just Fergus into the whole of Ontario? A website allows you to do that.

19. Reach A National Market

Political campaigns are just one example where websites are being used to service a National audience. Offering a National specific version of your product, such as Tylenol.ca, is another one. You allows you to offer information about specific national tax and delivery charges, or appeal to National pride.

20. Reach A Global Market

If your target audience is "the world" then you really need a website. But you knew that already, didn't you ;o)

21. Reach An International Market

If you target specific International markets it may be highly effective to design dedicated websites for them. By targeting your US customers on a ".com" site while servicing your Canadian clients with a ".ca" site you are able to cater to the specific needs and expectations. It allows you to avoid confusion by separating different currencies, taxes, fees and prices onto different websites. You may even want to consider offering websites in different languages, such as a specialized ".nl" website, in Dutch, for your loyal customers in The Netherlands.

22. Reach A Specialized Market

Do you sell cat and dog helmets? Are you into monoclonal antibody production (link opens in a new window), or other biotech products? Whatever niche market you may service, a website will expand your possibilities of promoting or selling your product or service – wherever in the world your prospects may be.

23. Test New Products And Services

With a little bit of help from search engines and directories, or by linking from high-traffic websites, you can create a new website to test new products or services. You may even keep quiet about the fact that you are behind this new product or service site. A dedicated website can prove to be a very valuable test case before fully launching your new success – or quietly taking it off the market again if the market is not quite ready yet ;o)

24. Solicit Feedback From Customers

A contact form on a website can provide you with a lot of valuable information from customers, prospects and other interested people. You may even get them to take an online poll – especially if you say they can win a prize as a reward. And if the stakes are high enough, the free word-of-mouth promotion will start automatically...

25. Start A Movement

Want the US Army out of Iraq? Want to preserve a local trail? A website is a most effective way to promote your viewpoint, recruit volunteers, build a community (by adding an online forum), make press releases



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available, and much, much more.

26. Spread Ideas

Even if you do not want to start a movement, a website allows you to share your views and ideas with like-minded people all over the globe. It also allows you to easily explain things by means of adding audio, video or animation to your website. It can be like having your own radio or TV station...

27. Educate

Online education can be very effective; more and more people are taking courses over the Internet. If you provide workshops, or complete courses, you may consider offering them online too.

28. Update Information Quickly

Catalogues have been around for a long time, and they still prove to be successful. Newspapers are still a popular way to find out what is going on in the world. They have one major disadvantage, though: you cannot update them very quickly. A website, however, allows you to make changes almost instantly.

29. A Sales Tool Outside The Office

Employees away from the office can be kept informed with a website. A new press release? A new price list? Newsworthy things happening in your industry? You can quickly post information like that on an Intranet, which is a website only available for your employees, so they can see it wherever and whenever they want. If you add features like a forum you are also able to facilitate 1-to-many communication between employees.

30. Integrate Supply Chains

By offering your clients online ordering you are able to integrate whole supply processes. You can offer them password-protected areas with their information, such as prices, year-to-date ordering information, and more. This can be considered additional customer service, but may also be forced upon you by powerful clients or suppliers.

31. Reward Clients

By offering clients access to a website just for them, you can reward them for their loyalty. This website can for instance be used to offer specials, unique tips or other benefits. You can create an online club for Loyal Customers.

32. Run Contests

If you want to run a contest, a website may be a very viable solution. With a carefully chosen domain name it can foster word-of-mouth promotion ("tell a friend!"), you are able to track all the entries in an online database (without having to enter them manually), and you are able to promote it with links from other websites, or search engines.

33. Communicate With Your Target Audiences In Their Own Language

In 2003 I reviewed websites for the main candidates in the California Recall election (Ahhhnold!)(opens in a new window), and was amazed to learn that so many websites did not have sections in Spanish – even though many Californian voters are Hispanic. Addressing your target audience in their native tongue will certainly improve your chances of success.

34. Inquiry Marketing: Be Found – Period!



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A major advertising conference mentioned recently "advertising is dead". Interruption marketing does not work as it used to, due to video on demand, TiVo, the Internet... The consumers are more and more difficult to reach. Instead, they are in control; they are searching – on the Internet. It is inquiry marketing. Search and be found, or fail to be found and lose the customer.

35. Improve Communication

Brochures and flyers only allow for a few lines of communication. A carefully crafted website can guide your clients, suppliers or employees through page after page of information. Another advantage is that you can add audio and video to these pages – something that paper communication tools cannot offer.

36. Change Communication From One-To-One Into One-To-Many

Conventional marketing tools allow you to promote or sell 1-on-1. A website can cater to many prospects at the same time. An effective website will also help you build a buzz: word-of-mouth promotion.

37. Share Basic Business Information

People use the Internet often trying to find quick answers to basic questions. What are your opening hours? Do you offer payment plans? What is your phone number or email address? These are the days of "Inquiry Marketing"; so get a website if you do not already have one, and make sure that people can actually find it in the search engines and directories.

38. PR [Public Relations] Tool

A website can be a great PR tool. You can post Press Releases on it, or articles, or a complete Press Kit – with pictures, sound files, bios, and more! You can also start a forum or blog (an interactive type of online diary), which can be a great PR tool.

39. Expand Your Product OR Service Offerings – Exclusively Online

A website allows you to differentiate your product or service offerings. You may want to consider offering slightly different services online than you do offline, for instance to foster repeat visits, using it as a test market, or target different geographical areas than you do with your store or office.

40. Communicate With Audiences Worldwide

The world is your oyster – especially with a website, which allows you to communicate with audiences worldwide (as long as you both understand the same language). Geographical locations or time zones are no longer a problem with the 24/7 availability of a website.

41. Cross-Sell

When it is busy in your store, not all visitors will be able to speak to one of your sales people. Opportunities to cross sell ("did you see that we also sell ...") are lost. But on a carefully constructed website you can make sure that people are exposed to other offers that may interest you. A classic example is Amazon.com, which is very successful with an automated suggestion feature ("Customers who bought this title also bought:...").

42. Increase Customer Loyalty

By Giving Them More Control These are the times of inquiry marketing, and anything-on-demand. The customer wants to be in control, and websites are a perfect example of that. The customer decides what they want to see, and when, and if you do that right, you will have acquired a loyal customer.



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43. FUN

Websites allow you to present your target audience with something fun. Flash animations as a quirky way to make a point or explain something, can build a lot of goodwill. Skilful copywriting can be used to solicit a wink and a smile from time to time. Sales is all about emotion, and websites allow you many ways to evoke these in a favourable way. But make sure that the FUN is appropriate, or else you will be evoking powerful negative emotions.

44. Family Sites

Many families are no longer in the same geographical area; they may even be spread over several countries... A website can be a great way to keep in contact. Share pictures, movies, stories on a website for all family members to see. Added benefit: you will have an email address @ yourname.com or .net, so you will never have to change addresses again! (Not even in case you decide to witch Internet providers – for instance from sympatico to cogeco)

45. Make Life Easier

Websites can make you customer's lives easier – and yours! Look at online banking, or ticket ordering. Whole new industries have emerged because people want to be able to do things themselves, from their home or office – because it is easier. So: what will make your customers' lives easier?

46. Find Employees

A highly effective way to use a website is to use it as a recruitment tool. You can obviously use it to post vacancies, but you may also consider placing a more general invitation to send resumes. This way you may already know the right person for the job before a vacancy even occurs.

47. Pre-Ordering

A well-promoted product launch on a website allows you to take fully automated pre-orders. This is a great tool to supplement your sales force. You can have an online presentation, and shop, so that enthusiastic clients and prospects can pre-order immediately.

48. Build An Appetite

Pre-launch campaigns can be highly effective. Websites can be used to build the buzz, have a few teasers, a countdown clock, press releases and news about the ongoing campaign. You may even show a picture of just a tiny part of the new product. "can you guess what it is?"

49. Email Address Forever

Let's say that your domain name is www.myvaluenamename.com ; Using email address you@agoodname.com is a good way to promote your website, because people will guess your website based on the email address. And if you keep your domain name indefinitely, you will have that email address indefinitely. No more sending of emails to your friends and business, stating that "you moved to another email service provider; can you please update your address book?"

50. Already have a website ?

50. Play With The Big Guys

Many small companies successfully take on the big Guys. Websites can be relatively inexpensive (compared to running a brick-and-mortar store), and with proper usability and search engine optimization your website can



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be as good as your larger competitors, or even better!
O.k. then; I will throw in a bonus: 10% Additional reasons!

51. Check You Out Anonymously

One of the things many people like about the Internet is that they can research anonymously. No pressure. This is why it is so important that you have a website that is easily found on the Internet – you cater to the preferences of your target audience.

52. Facilitate Knowledge Building

You can use a website to sell seminars or e-books, for people to learn from. You can create password-protected modules so people can learn online. You can build forums where people can exchange questions and answers. A website is an ideal tool to facilitate the exchange of knowledge.

53. Enhance Marketing Effectiveness

Success does not come from doing one thing right. What you need is a marketing mix, and a website can be a powerful ingredient. Mentioning a website in a radio, TV or print ad may just be the thing that wins people over – especially if the online experience feels similar to the offline communication. **ONE OF THE LATEST METHODS IS TO ALLOW THE VISITOR TO CHAT WITH YOUR OFFICE DIRECTLY WHEN HE IS ON THE WEBSITE, THAT INCREASES THE SALES POSSIBILITY EXTREMELY HIGH AND YOUR CUSTOMER CARING AND SUPPORT REFLECTIONS IN A MUCH BETTER WAY.**

54. People Expect It

By having a website you show the world that you are a viable business. Not having one makes you suspicious in the eyes of many prospects. It is silly but true: a website will enhance perceived professionalism.

55. Competition Forces You To(o)

Your competition will force you to get a website, if you do not already have one. Customers (especially the newer generations) will demand you have a website, and will pass you over if you do not have one. It is a matter of adjusting to shifting market conditions. And things will continue to shift, at an amazing speed – just look at how fast the Internet has become an integral part of our lives...

Now that you have known the importance of having a website, Let's design a website for your business, company, church, schools or brand at an affordable rate.

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