

## Do you want to know why you should have a website?

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I've heard many small-business owners say they think they "should" get a website. They're not quite sure what they will do with it, but they've been told they should have one.

In most cases, they're right. A website can be an important marketing tool for almost every small business, but there are a few exceptions. If you have as many customers as your business can handle and you have no desire to grow larger, then there's no point in marketing on the Internet. But that is not the case for every business!

There's no question that a website is more mission-critical for some businesses than others. Companies trying to reach customers in different locations (think hotels or tourist attractions) or who have products that can be shipped to customers far away (think flowers, handmade dolls, etc.) obviously need to have an online presence.

But local businesses (dry cleaners or shoe repair shops, for example) also can benefit from a website that shows their location, lists their services or offers special promotions.

And to those who think they don't need a compelling website because they serve other businesses rather than retail consumers. Many businesses search for new suppliers online — and order from them that way, too.

In short, if you want more customers, you should be online, regardless of your industry.

Here are some other reasons to have a website:

### 1. Easier to Remember!

Some people can remember telephone numbers really well, but most people remember a name or phrase better. A catchy web address is all a potential customer needs to remember to find out more about your business.

### 2. Easy to Update!

Your website can give the potential customer as much information as you want. It is current, up to the minute, and you can include pictures, maps, coupons, and personal messages. It's cheaper to update a website than to update a brochure.

### 3. Customer Convenience!

A website is for your customer's convenience. They can explore your website in their own time frame. They no longer have to drive to your place of business to see what you are talking about. Your store is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week!

### 4. Increase Market Area!

You can increase your effective market area. People anywhere in the world, can find your business with a search engine on the Internet, visit your website, and become a customer. You are no longer limited to customers within driving distance.

### 5. Stability!

You may move your place of business, change your phone number, or even change your hours, but your web address is always there, your website is always open.

### 6. Save Yourself Time!

Do you get a dozen calls asking for stuff you don't carry? Do you spend time describing a product on the phone when you could be doing a dozen other things? Direct those calls to the picture and product description on your website. Let your website screen some of those phone calls for you.

### 7. Build Loyal Customers!

A satisfied customer can easily check a website to see what's new and look for sales. Include information on new products and tips on their use. Your customers will come back again and again because you add that personal touch to supporting them.

### 8. Millions of Web Surfers!

You know that the Internet is attracting more and more consumers every day. If you could move your storefront to a location that had 50 million or more in walk-by traffic everyday, what are the chances you would get more customers?