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Small Biz Web Site Design

Presents

10 Reasons Why You Need a Web Site *Now!*



• It's Always There •
24 h/d • 7 d/w • 365 d/y

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Introduction



Hi, I'm Jerry Hornak and, in the interest of full disclosure, I've been (and still am) a full-time children's magician for over twenty years. It's a job I love and I'm grateful I can earn a good living from making kids laugh.

That's enough about me for now. There's more on the sbwsd.com website if you'd like to read more. Right now, there's something more important I'd like to discuss.

Why You Need a Website

In my business, a website is essential. It's a way for parents to get to "know" me before they even speak to me. I know it works because I *always* ask how they found me. I credit my website for a big part of my business success.

The internet has become a major presence in our lives, and every major business and restaurant is already on the web. But many small businesses and sole-proprietors have been left behind. I wanted to change that.

The first step was to get my fellow entrepreneurs to understand that having a website of their own is such a benefit, in so many ways, that they really *need* to have one in today's business world.

But most of these businesses have been working fine the way they are and that old saying, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" is an understandable position to take.

While things may be working fine, they could be better. Better for your business, of course, if a website brings in another customer. But it's better for *that customer* to be able to find *you*. To learn that you're just what they've been looking for. That you're what they *need*.

So, you see, it's not just about you. A website is really the ultimate in customer service. In the past, you'd go looking for customers. Today, it's the customer who's searching for you and you want to make it easy for them.

Now, how do you communicate all that to a business owner?

You break it down by the numbers. And I have ten of them.

10 Reasons to be Online

1. *To have a presence on the web.*

The internet is the way more and more people are getting their information. It's fast and, by using the right search terms, they can zero right in on what they need.

But they can't find you if you're not there.

A website means they don't have to happen upon a business card in a deli they'll never visit. A web search will bring you up and let you "talk to them" through your website. It lets them learn what they need to know (at their own pace) to become comfortable doing business with you.

This brings us to a major benefit of a website.

2. *To better serve your customers.*

Whatever you would put on your front door sign, your brochure, or a newspaper ad, you need to put online, too. Give your customers what they need to find you.

If you have a store, certainly have your hours, phone number, address and even directions online. List the specialty items you offer. Answer the common questions you always hear. Make them happy to have found your site.

The same thing applies if you provide a service at your customer's home. Let them know exactly what you can do for them. Give them a sense of how easy it would be to work with you. Give them peace-of-mind with letters from satisfied clients.

Actually, letters from happy customers deserves its own number!

3. *To display testimonials.*

Talking about yourself creates a credibility problem. Nothing builds trust better than the actual words of satisfied customers and clients. Don't *ever* underestimate the value of those letters! I credit the letters on my own website for bringing in so many clients ready to book, even before talking to me.

Having letters like that gives you an advantage over the competition. We should talk about that next.

4. *To be where your competition is.*

When someone needs, for example, a new painter and they do a search online, several painter may **all** pop up and the customer gets to look everyone over and choose.

The point is, once again, you **have** to be where people are looking. It keeps coming back to that. That's why furniture stores often cluster along the same stretch of road. You'll probably see restaurants there, too, as they tend to do the same. Maybe you can think of other examples.

When people get to choose what's best for them, you need to be among the choices to have a chance to stand out. The lottery's constant drumbeat, "You can't win if you don't play," is a true statement that applies here, too.

If everyone else is online, you need to be there, too.

In fact, just being there tells them something about you. It gives you a certain status and that's the next benefit.

5. *To boost your image as a successful business.*

Right or wrong, having a website is an instant credibility builder. I'm even guilty of it myself. My wife and I were looking for a new lawn service when she pointed out a classified ad that listed a website.

"Whoa, **they** have a website?" I was impressed. "Let's go check 'em out." And we headed to the computer.

Just like people everywhere are doing these days.

The internet is where people do business. If you're there, too, it means you're a player on the board.

And you're there to be found, to explain what you can do for them, at **any** hour around the clock. That's more important than it seems at first glance.

6. Your message is always available, day or night.

You wouldn't believe how many people get online in the middle of the night! Other people are early-birds and are up before 5 am, planning their day. It doesn't matter one bit if you're sound asleep or out of town, your website is there for them and working for you.

It's important to be available on *their* terms, day or night. They look and you're there. You have something in common already... you both use the internet. It's the first small step in building trust.

And, as you'll see next, you can do it in your own back yard.

7. *To better serve your local market.*

While the reach of the web is worldwide, web-savvy people know how to narrow their searches to find the business-next-door. They routinely check the web for local movie times, what new DVDs are at the library, and to get the pizza place's phone number. Some restaurant websites let you read the menu and place an order, too.

But, "local market" doesn't just mean the people who live in town. Thanks to the new handheld super-phones (Blackberry and iPhone for example) people carry the internet around with them. This means *travelers* through your area become part of your local market.

Others like to plan their day before setting out. They can find your store online, read a bit about your offerings, and make sure you're on their list of must-see places that day. And they can do it from the comfort of their homes, while enjoying their morning coffee.

The internet is a wonderful thing. Convenient, unlike some older things.

8. *To save folks from dragging out the phone book.*

Sorry, phone company. I have to tell you that, in today's world, the big, heavy yellow page book has become a last resort.

I don't know any statistics and I'm speaking only from personal experience, but the last time I got a letter to renew my yellow page ad (over two years ago) I decided to check my records to see how many callers found me that way during

the past year. I was astounded. And then I dropped the ad.

I was astounded to discover that **zero** calls came in by way of the yellow pages the entire past year! That's zero as in absolutely none! I didn't expect that at all but I do keep records that I can trust. Those inquiries had been replaced by people calling after finding my website and I hadn't noticed.

When conditions change, the smart players change along with them. And sometimes, once in a great while, those changes can even save you money.

Saving money. Another good topic to explore.

9. *To save on advertising costs.*

A website, when set up properly, is a one-time expense that can continue to work for you for years. It becomes your online brochure with one important difference... you only "print" it once.

In the past, if you wanted to reach out to a thousand people, you needed a thousand brochures. If you had to make a change, you had to print new ones all over again.

The internet has **completely** turned that around. You put up **one** website and those thousand people can now come to you. No more printing, distributing, and reprinting when you run out. You put it up once and it keeps on working.

Now, I'm **not** saying your website should be the **only** way to advertise. Not by a long shot! But any other advertising you do needs to send people there.

You can only help yourself by making sure your web address appears on everything it can be on. Sales letters, posters, display ads, magnetic signs, and business cards. **Especially** business cards.

The Internet has supercharged that littlest, most basic advertising piece of all.

10. *To make a giant out of your smallest helper.*

The Internet has magnified the power of the humble business card.

The chief purpose of a business card is to tell others what you do and how to contact you. But there's never room to tell **enough**.

When you put a web address on it, though, your card becomes the gateway to your online profile. A key to a place with almost unlimited elbowroom to:

- Explain how you can help them best.
- Answer the questions that newcomers need to know.
- Calm the fears of doing business with a stranger (by testimonials.)
- Tell your story the way it needs to be told.
- Build rapport, even before you speak to them.

All you need to do is add a little call to action on your card. Just a single line that says, “Visit mywebsite.com for details!”

And they’ll do what you ask. They’ll visit the website. They’ll get to know you a bit and, since we all like to do business with people we know, they stand a good chance of becoming *your* customer or client.

A business card goes hand-in-hand with your website to bring in new sales. Use them both and prosper.

There you have it. Ten good reasons. Of course, there are many more good reasons to have a website but I’m sure you see, from just these ten, how important a website can be to your business.

Wherever you look around you, the internet is there. Look at all the newspaper and magazine ads that have website addresses. Listen to the radio on the way home and you’ll hear ads that wrap up with, “Visit us online at cutename.com” or some such thing.

Cookie boxes, orange juice cartons, and even chewing gum packages all have web addresses on them. Why? Because they’re *needed* and *expected* in today’s business world.

And if all the big players have a website, you need one, too.

Thanks for reading and, while I’d be pleased if you called me to make your first website, what I really want from this report is for you to get your business online as soon as you can. You’ll be happy you did.

Best wishes,

Jerry Hornak