



Who thinks you need a website?

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Have you ever had a customer ask you “Do you have a website?” or “Can I go on your website to see samples of your work?” If you’ve answered “no” or “not yet”, did you do so with the sinking feeling that you may have just lost a customer?

If that has been an experience of yours, then you already know that, in fact, you believe you need a website.

Recent studies have indicated that the Internet is the preferred information source for 64% of Canadian consumers. A 2003 Canadian study showed that 79% of Internet users expect a business to have a website that will provide information on their product or service. Furthermore, 47% of Internet users say that they are more likely to purchase a product or service from a business that provides information on that product or service online, than they are likely to purchase from a business with no web presence. With respect to B2B sales, Statistics Canada reported that in 2003, 37% of companies made business purchases online, up from 32% in 2002 and more than double the number that did so in 2000.

So, it’s clear that your customers don’t just think you need a website but expect you to have one.

From 2001 to 2005, the number of small businesses owning a website increased 37%, more than triple the increase seen in medium and large businesses (Strategis - Key Small Business Statistics, January 2007). The main reason cited for owning a website is to increase business, which does not necessarily mean through direct e-commerce, but includes increasing a business’s visibility and bringing information to a business’s customers and clients.

Clearly, small business owners are increasingly seeing the need for a website.

The trend towards website interactivity has brought a new dynamic to websites of all sizes, an element once available only to large corporate sites involved in e-commerce. Now, even small businesses are increasingly adding mailing lists, RSS feeds and blogs to their websites, increasing their potential clients’ involvement with and time spent at their websites. No longer are websites for small businesses merely electronic brochures - they are now used as a means of interacting with clients and providing them with service even before they have made formal contact with the business.

So, who thinks you need a website? Everyone!