

Part One: 12 Benefits

1. Far Cheaper and Much More Flexible Than Print Advertising

The Internet is extremely different from print advertising in that space is cheap, your advertisement is accessible for a longer period of time, the content can be changed without having to ask someone to do it for you (if you use a content management system) and you can potentially reach a wider audience.

This is not to say that you should not use other forms of advertising at all. You can use it to entice people to visit your website and find out about your company and potentially open two-way communication between the potential customer and a sales person.

2. Market Expansion

The Internet has allowed businesses to break through the geographical barriers and become accessible, virtually, from any country in the world by a potential customer that has Internet access.

3. Diversify Revenue Streams

A website is not just a medium for representation of your company, it is a form of media from which everybody can acquire information.

You can use this media to sell advertising space to other businesses.

A recent trend has risen where businesses feature their very own directory of complimentary services, where the visitor can search for information on a business that will enhance the use of your service. The business sells complimentary businesses a listing in their directory. A good example is a catering company featuring a directory with businesses such as event co-ordinators, electronic equipment rental companies, etc.

4. 24/7/365

No more turning customers away when its time to close shop, putting up a note saying "closed for public holiday", or leaving an irritating message on your answering service specifying your trading hours ? tell them to visit your website for information they are looking for.

5. Offer Convenience

It is far more convenient for a person to research a product on the Internet than it is to get in a car, drive somewhere and look for or ask someone for information on a product. Also, a potential customer won't have to judge a call centre agent to determine whether he/she has their best interests in mind, or just wants to make a sale. The potential customer can visit your website whenever they like in their own privacy and comfort, without the stresses and distractions that exist in the "real world".

Your website is a self-service medium. For example, instead of having to wait in a long cue to pay your TV License, you can now do it electronically through the TV License website.

6. Add Value and Satisfaction

By offering convenience, a point of reference and that touch of individualized customer service, you ultimately add value to your offering and your customers experience a higher level of satisfaction.

Your website can add value in other ways too, by featuring tips, advice and general interest content you can "entertain" your customers. This will also help them remember you better.

7. Standardize Sales Performance

By looking at which approached / pitches have worked in the past and those which have not, you can produce the ultimate pitch and use it with your website, so that you use it on every customer. No more training of sales people and waiting for them to get a feel for your line of trade.

8. Improve credibility

A website gives you the opportunity to tell potential customers what you are about and why you deserve their trust and confidence. In fact, many people use the internet for pre-purchase research so that they can determine for themselves whether a particular supplier or brand is worthy of their patronage, and won't take them for a ride.

The Internet also allows for Viral Marketing where your website visitors spread positive word-of-mouth about your business - your customers do your marketing!

9. Promote your "Brick 'n' Mortar" Presence

Getting lost trying to find a place can be frustrating for a potential customer. You can publish what they call a "dummy map" on your website, which shows directions and landmarks graphically, and the potential customer can print it out when looking for your "Brick 'n' Mortar" premises.

You might advertise a promotion on your website encouraging the visitor to visit your "Brick 'n' Mortar" premises (eg. "At a branch near you!").

Also, if you recently moved to a new location, you will have to wait for the next 'phone directory to come out before people figure out where you currently are. Because a website is flexible ? you can change the content as you like ? you can change you contact details instantly and lower the risk of losing customers when moving to a new location.

10. Growth Opportunity

A website serves as a great place to refer potential investors to, to show them what your company is about, what it has achieved and what it can achieve in future.

11. Two-Way Communicative Marketing

Customers can quickly and easily give feedback on your product and/or marketing approach.

12. Cheap Market Research

You can use features on your website such as visitor polls, online surveys and your website statistics to find out what your customers like more and how they feel

about certain aspects of your business to determine how you can improve your product and the way you do business.

Website statistics show you how much traffic your website receives, how the visitor got to your website and where, geographically, the visitor is from.

Part Two: Internet Marketing Benefits with an Email Newsletter Strategy

Email newsletters continue to be an essential part of an effective Online Competitive Strategy. Newsletters build relationships with users, and also offer users an added social benefit in that they can forward relevant newsletters to friends and colleagues. While being targeted, measurable and effective, email marketing also has many other benefits.

- Internet Marketing Benefits
- Improve your Competitive Edge
- Expand Customer Base and target Audience
- Increase referrals and word of mouth
- Boost sales, repeat business and customer loyalty
- Save time and money by reducing marketing costs
- Build customer trust / Protect your customers privacy
- Improve your competitive edge

Internet Marketing with an Email Newsletter is the best way to stay competitive in today's online market, giving you an edge on your competition. The more contact you have with your customer the more likely they will return to use your services and products rather than your competitor. Issues and problems that arise with your customers are discovered and dealt with quickly.

Expand customer base and target audience, Increase referrals and word of mouth

Through a regular and frequent Email Newsletter publication targeted to your customers, you provide them with the ability to forward your email messages onto other highly potential customers.

Increasing your target audience and customer base is point and click simple and proven to be very effective.

Boost sales, repeat business and customer loyalty

Internet Marketing with an Email Newsletter boots sales and repeat business by targeting existing customers with timely, relevant, current and beneficial information. Customers who receive regular communication from your company are more likely to buy from you rather than your competition.

Save time and money / Reduce marketing costs and time to market

Your Email Newsletter can be setup and deployed at a much faster rate than traditional direct marketing efforts and at half the cost. Internet Marketing with an Email Newsletter allows you to save time and money for yourself and your business.

Build customer trust / Protect your customers privacy

Email Newsletter services provided by Urban Route are exclusively permission based and require the customer to Opt-In to receive email content from your business. This type of marketing builds customer trust and protects their privacy. Customers are anticipating email content from you, so they are more likely to open and read your email marketing newsletter.

Part Three: Some Thoughts About Internet Marketing

Some of the benefits associated with Internet marketing include the availability of information. Consumers can log onto the Internet and learn about products, as well as purchase them, at any hour. Companies that use Internet marketing can also save money because of a reduced need for a sales force. Overall, Internet marketing can help expand from a local market to both national and international marketplaces. And, in a way, it levels the playing field for big and small players. Unlike traditional marketing media (like print, radio and TV), entry into the realm of Internet marketing can be a lot less expensive.

Furthermore, since exposure, response and overall efficacy of digital media is much easier to track than that of traditional "offline" media, Internet marketing offers a greater sense of accountability for advertisers.

Limitations of Internet marketing create problems for both companies and consumers. Slow Internet connections can cause difficulties. If companies build overly large or complicated web pages, Internet users may struggle to download the information. Internet marketing does not allow shoppers to touch, smell, taste or try-on tangible goods before making an online purchase. Some e-commerce vendors have implemented liberal return policies to reassure customers. Germany for example introduced a law in 2000 that allows any buyer of a new product over the internet to return the product on a no-questions-asked basis and get a full return. This is one of the main reasons why in Germany internet shopping became so popular. Another limiting factor, particularly with respect to actual buying and selling, is the adequate development (or lack thereof) of electronic payment methods like e-checks, credit cards, etc.