

## **The Original "20 Reasons to Put Your Business on the WWW"**

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### **1. To Establish A Presence**

Approximately 750 million people worldwide have access to the World Wide Web (WWW). No matter what your business is, you can't ignore 750 million people. To be a part of that community and show that you are interested in serving them, you need to be on the WWW for them. You know your competitors will.

### **2. To Network**

A lot of what passes for business is simply nothing more than making connections with other people. Every smart business person knows, it's not what you know, it's who you know. Passing out your business card is part of every good meeting and every business person can tell more than one story how a chance meeting turned into the big deal. Well, what if you could pass out your business card to thousands, maybe millions of potential clients and partners, saying this is what I do and if you are ever in need of my services, this is how you can reach me. You can, 24 hours a day, inexpensively and simply, on the WWW.

### **3. To Make Business Information Available**

What is basic business information? Think of a Yellow Pages ad. What are your hours? What do you do? How can someone contact you? What methods of payment do you take? Where are you located at? Now think of a Yellow Pages ad where you have instant communication. What is today's special? Today's interest rate? Next week's parking lot sale information? If you could keep your customer informed of every reason why they should do business with you, don't you think you could do more business? You can on the WWW.

### **4. To Serve Your Customers**

Making business information available is one of the most important ways to serve your customers. But if you look at serving the customer, you'll find even more ways to use WWW technology. How about making forms available to pre-qualify for loans, or have your staff do a search for that classic jazz record your customer is looking for, without tying up your staff on the phone to take down the information? Allow your customer to punch in sizes and check it against a database that tells him what color of jacket is available in your store? All this can be done, simply and quickly, on the WWW.

### **5. To Heighten Public Interest**

You won't get Newsweek magazine to write up your local store opening, but you might get them to write up your Web Page address if it is something new and interesting. Even if Newsweek would write about your local store opening,

you wouldn't benefit from someone in a distant city reading about it, unless of course, they were coming to your town sometime soon. With Web page information, anybody anywhere who can access the Web and hears about you is a potential visitor to your Web site and a potential customer for your information there.

#### 6. To Release Time Sensitive Materials

What if your materials need to be released no earlier than midnight? The quarterly earnings statement, the grand prize winner, the press kit for the much anticipated film, the merger news? Well, you sent out the materials to the press with "The-do-not-release-before-such-and-such-time" statement and hope for the best. Now the information can be made available at midnight or any time you specify, with all related materials such as photographs, bios, etc. released at exactly the same time. Imagine the anticipation of "All materials will be made available on our Web site at 12:01 AM". The scoop goes to those that wait for the information to be posted, not the one who releases your information early.

#### 7. To Sell Things

Many people think that this is the number 1 thing to do with the World Wide Web, but we made it number seven to make it clear that we think you should consider selling things on the Internet and the World Wide Web after you have done all the things above and maybe even after doing quite a few more things from this list. Why? Well, the answer is complex but the best way to put it is, do you consider the telephone the best place to sell things? Probably not. You probably consider the telephone a tool that allows you to communicate with your customer, which in turn helps you sell things. Well, that's how we think you should consider the WWW. The technology is different, of course, but before people decide to become customers, they want to know about you, what you do and what you can do for them. Which you can do easily and inexpensively on the WWW. Then you might be able to turn them into customers.

#### 8. To make pictures, sound and film files available

What if your widget is great, but people would really love it if they could see it in action? The album is great but with no airplay, nobody knows that it sounds great? A picture is worth a thousand words, but you don't have the space for a thousand words? The WWW allows you to add sound, pictures and short movie files to your company's info if that will serve your potential customers. No brochure will do that.

#### 9. To reach a highly desirable demographic market

The demographic of the WWW user is probably the highest mass-market demographic available. Usually college-educated or being college educated, making a high salary or soon to make a high salary, it's no wonder that Wired magazine, the magazine of choice to the Internet community, has no problem getting Lexus and other high-end marketer's advertising. Even with the addition

of the commercial on-line community, the demographic will remain high for many years to come.

#### 10. To Answer Frequently Asked questions

Whoever answers the phones in your organization can tell you, their time is usually spent answering the same questions over and over again. These are the questions customers and potential customers want to know the answer to before they deal with you. Post them on a WWW page and you will have removed another barrier to doing business with you and freed up some time for that harried phone operator.

#### 11. To Stay In Contact With Salespeople

Your employees on the road may need up-to-the-minute information that will help them make the sale or pull together the deal. If you know what that information is, you can keep it posted in complete privacy on the WWW. A quick local phone call can keep your staff supplied with the most detailed information, without long distance phone bills and tying up the staff at the home office.

#### 12. To Open International Markets

You may not be able to make sense of the mail, phone and regulation systems in all your potential international markets, but with a Web page, you can open up a dialogue with international markets as easily as with the company across the street. As a matter-of-fact, before you go onto the Web, you should decide how you want to handle the international business that will come your way, because your postings are certain to bring international opportunities your way, whether it is part of your plan or not. Another added benefit; if your company has offices overseas, they can access the home offices information for the price of a local phone call.

#### 13. To Create a 24 Hour Service

If you've ever remembered too late or too early to call the opposite coast, you know the hassle. We're not all on the same schedule. Business is worldwide but your office hours aren't. Trying to reach Asia or Europe is even more frustrating. But Web pages serve the client, customer and partner 24 hours a day, seven days a week. No overtime either. It can customize information to match needs and collect important information that will put you ahead of the competition, even before they get into the office.

#### 14. To Make Changing Information Available Quickly

Sometimes, information changes before it gets off the press. Now you have a pile of expensive, worthless paper. Electronic publishing changes with your needs. No paper, no ink, no printer's bill. You can even attach your web page to a database which customizes the page's output to a database you can change as many times in a day as you need. No printed piece can match that flexibility.

#### 15. To Allow Feedback From Customers

You pass out the brochure, the catalog, the booklet. But it doesn't work. No sales, no calls, no leads. What went wrong? Wrong color, wrong price, wrong market? Keep testing, the marketing books say, and you'll eventually find out what went wrong. That's great for the big boys with deep pockets, but who is paying the bills? You are and you don't have the time nor the money to wait for the answer. With a Web page, you can ask for feedback and get it instantaneously with no extra cost. An instant e-mail response can be built into Web pages and can get the answer while it's fresh in your customers' mind, without the cost and lack of response of business reply mail.

#### 16. To Test Market New Services and Products

Tied into the reason above, we all know the cost of rolling out a new product. Advertising, advertising, advertising, PR and advertising. Expensive, expensive, expensive. Once you have been on the Web and know what to expect from those who are seeing your page, they are the least expensive market for you to reach. They will also let you know what they think of your product faster, easier and much less expensively than any other market you may reach. For the cost of a page or two of Web programming, you can have a crystal ball into where to position your product or service in the marketplace. Amazing.

#### 17. To Reach The Media

Every kind of business needs the exposure that the media can bring, as we touched on in reason #5 "To Heighten Public Interest", but what if your business is reaching the media, as a newswire, a publicist or a public policy group. The media is the most wired profession today, since their main product is information and they can get it more quickly, cheaply and easily on-line. On-line press kits are becoming more and more common, since they work with the digital environment of more and more pressrooms. Digital images can be put in place without the stripping and shooting of the old pressrooms and digital text can be edited and outputted on tight deadlines. All these can be made available on a Web page.

#### 18. To Reach The Education and Youth Market

If your market is education, consider that most universities already offer Internet access to their students and most K-12's will be on the Internet within the next few years. Books, athletic shoes, study courses, youth fashion and anything else that would want to reach these overlapping markets needs to be on the Web. Even with the coming of the commercial on-line services and their somewhat older populations there will be nothing but growth in the percentage of the under 25 market that will be on-line.

#### 19. To Reach The Specialized Market

Sell fish tanks, art reproductions, flying lessons? You may think that the Internet

is not a good place to be. Well, think again. The Internet isn't just computer science students anymore. With the 70 million and growing users of the WWW, even the most narrowly defined interest group will be represented in large numbers. Since the Web has several very good search programs, your interest group will be able to find you, or your competitors.

#### 20. To Serve Your Local Market

We've talked about the power to serve the world with a Web page. How about your neighborhood? If you are located in San Francisco Bay Area, the Raleigh NC area, Boston or New York, there is probably enough local customers with Web access to make it worth your while to consider Web marketing. A local Palo Alto, CA restaurant even takes lunch orders through the Internet! But no matter where you are, if the big client has Web access, you should be there too.