



Advantages Of Establishing An Online Presence For Your Business

Description

Establishing an online presence may very well be one of the few free lunches left in business. With the right strategy, you can get more clients and stand apart from your competition. No business strategy for growth can be complete without a comprehensive roadmap for taking your business online.

The advantages of establishing an online presence take more than just building a website or opening a social media page. They require you to understand how you'll use this presence and to be present to make the most of it.

There is, however, a good number of entrepreneurs who believe their businesses have little to nothing to benefit from being online. This couldn't be farther from the truth. This is a belief that has hurt a lot of businesses, and today we'll remove all doubt that online is the place to go.

Taking your business online levels the playing field

Taking your business online can help you compete with industry giants, even in mature markets. By leveraging the right online assets, you can put your business in front of the same clients as your larger counterparts.

Additionally, you can give your business the same opportunity to capture the market. Whether as a purely online operation or brick and mortar business, online exposure can make you a force to be reckoned with. Online, financial might doesn't sway the odds to any business's favour as it does offline.

With the right amount of effort and a great strategy, your small budget can yield better results than massive ones. More importantly, even as a small business, there are [advantages unique to you](#) that make you better suited to succeed online against your larger counterparts.

You are in a better position to tailor experiences to individual clients, retain them and win their loyalty. Your interaction can be faster, more engaged, resulting in more clients moving over to you. In a

nutshell, you can take your business online to enhance the customer experience to levels that beat that of your established competition.

Taking your business online expands your market

The internet has shrunk the globe and basically turned everyone into a global citizen. Thanks to it, you can purchase anything from around the world just as easily as you purchase bread from the corner store. This has drastically redefined market potential for businesses everywhere.

Every business, big or small, has gone from their locale being their target market, to the global population. This has not only increased the probabilities of success for businesses but altered the dynamic of feasible and viable businesses. When you take your business online, you are looking at a potential market of 7.2 billion, and suddenly everything becomes possible.

Establishing an online presence can build brand character

Customers are increasingly gravitating towards brands they can relate to. They want brands that they have something in common with and can relate to as more than just a business they buy from.

For your brand to succeed in today's business landscape, it needs to have character that appeals to its target market. Taking your business online gives your business a greater opportunity to expose this character.

It can be taking a stand, sharing values or adopting a tone, these actions will endear your business to clients. Take for example Wendy's [social media pages](#). They have some very fun and quirky posts and response to customer queries and posts.

This has built them a solid community, and always gets me craving a burger every now and then, even though I'm not a burger lover at all.

Marketing works a lot better online

Marketing can be a very expensive undertaking. It's a necessary evil, but it can definitely break the bank. For this reason, it's important that marketing and advertising efforts yield the best results.

Of all the channels available for marketing, the internet provides the best opportunity to optimize return on investment. The amount of data that can be collected and analyzed can assist you in better targeting clients. Different intents and demographics can be identified, and advertising can be designed to cater to those.

Unlike other advertising avenues where you just hope for the best, online, you have more control to influence results. Your audience and timing can be better defined for better results. This results in advertising and general marketing being more cost-effective and successful online.

Establishing an online presence requires little maintenance

This is not to say that your online assets can be established and ignored, but they need less attention than your other channels. Be it in terms of cost, content or effort, your online assets will continue to represent you well without being catered to regularly.

This makes them ideal for businesses that are working on limited time and monetary budgets. You can take your business online to multiple channels without worrying about being stretched.

A well-optimized website will continue to yield benefits throughout the year without much additional work. It'll continue to provide leads and information with little to no effort from you.

A medium like, say, print media, requires you to continuously re-invest time and money to make sure it's reaching the right people.

An online presence helps you measure better

At Mut-Con we believe in the scientific method to [decision making and business growth](#). We believe in [collecting data and analyzing it, to come up with better decisions](#). While all business methods, departments, and decisions can be measured to some extent, your online efforts are perhaps the easiest to adopt a data approach in.

There are a bunch of [free resources](#), like Tag Manager and Google Analytics that you could use to collect and analyze data. Moreover, this data is more complete and comprehensive. As a result, it's easier to base your online decisions on more robust analysis than any other business decision.

Additionally, this data makes it easier to measure the return on investment from your online efforts. Finally, you can measure the impact of establishing your online presence across all your platforms,

because online, they are linked. With the right [set-up, goals and reporting](#), you can paint a picture of the advantages you are enjoying from taking your business online.

This setup can be extended to understanding the impact of online efforts on offline sales. Not only will this be motivating, but it's also a step towards a better allocation of resources for your marketing and sales.

Turn clients into brand ambassadors

Your clients will always stand a better chance of convincing more people to buy than your brand can. This is because people tend to trust fellow shoppers or users than they do brands. As a result, word of mouth and brand ambassadors will have a return on investment better than any advertising campaign.

As an advertising strategy, referral campaigns have about the best return on investment. When you establish an online presence for your business, this return on investment is boosted. This results from establishing brand ambassadors across many channels, who promote your brand for free.

In business, free marketing that is almost impossible, free marketing that works is actually impossible. Unless, of course, you employ brand ambassadors online. Every time your brand is mentioned in a positive light online, be it in reviews or forum threads, you get potential customers.

Because of the number of conversations that happen online, the more effort that's put in establishing an online presence the greater the chances of enjoying these benefits. With enough effort put into cultivating communities on the right platforms and providing great service, these brand ambassadors can reduce your costs in other areas as well.

They can quickly become your PR team, promoting your events and defending your brand from negative publicity. They can even become your external support team, advising fellow customers on how to use your product and enjoy additional functionality.

Keep your business top of mind for your clients

The average person today spends a lot of time online, about [5.9 hours a day to be precise](#). This presents a huge opportunity for businesses that are online to remind consumers that they exist. It's an opportunity for your brand to periodically remind its target market it's there, without being overwhelming.

Your clients can stay up to date on your products and services, specials and events. You can even use online opportunities to bring back those who considered you but didn't complete a purchase. A well-timed newsletter, special offer email or social media post is a great way to let your customers know they don't need to only interact with you for purchases.

This opportunity is not as pronounced offline. A TV ad or billboard can't guarantee you as much reach as a newsletter emailed to a good email list. Because of this, establishing an online presence and utilizing it offers you the best chance of brand lift and recollection.

An online presence improves business legitimacy

This is particularly important for small businesses. Between all the scams, the fly-by-nights, and the poor service mongers, it can be tough to make it as an unknown brand. Consumers are sceptical about brands they don't know, and with good reason.

Establishing a good online presence gives them the means to evaluate your authenticity before they commit. Many consumers will do a search for a business before spending with them. Simply appearing in results for your brand name can be enough to win over their trust. A business that doesn't appear on the other hand is almost guaranteed to be dropped.

For most consumers, if you can't be found on Google, you don't exist. Taking your business online also gives you the opportunities to social proof your brand. Online reviews and ratings go a long way in building trust with new customers.

When other clients express satisfaction in your products and services, new clients will almost immediately feel safe to trust you as well. Be it on directories, social media, or on your own website, positive sentiments around your brand boost your ability to close sales.

Take your business online for 24/7 availability

You might not be able to serve your customers 24/7, but that doesn't mean that your business can't be visible all the time. As an eCommerce store, you can sell 24/7, and automation will take care of clients even as you sleep. Clients can get receipts and order confirmations without any action from you.

Even as a business that sells offline, you can benefit from round the clock visibility. Clients can go online to get the information they need to make purchases later. They can leave information you can use to contact them once you are open for business. Businesses that have a good online presence can boost sales by getting leads round the clock, not just when they are open.

Establishing an online presence is increasingly simpler and easier

In the past, business owners could be forgiven for shying away from the internet if they were not technically gifted. The cost of establishing an online presence was also a considerable hindrance. As the internet has developed, these barriers have continued to break down.

It's increasingly easy to set up any web asset without any technical background, and this has contributed to driving costs down. Services such as Wix allow you to set up and customize a website just as easily as you would type a word document. Website builders are now integrated into many applications.

These range from hosting dashboards, directories like Google My Business and CRMs like Bitrix 24. You might be looking for something more professional or functional, but they do a decent job for a start. Any entrepreneur cannot use cost or skill as an excuse for their business not being found online.

Many of these are free and simple to use. That's even before accounting for the myriad social platforms and business directories that contribute to a business's online presence. The great return on investment you'll get from establishing an online presence will more than make up for the additional costs incurred.

Establish an online presence because you have no choice

If all the other points don't convince you to start working on your LinkedIn company page, then consider this one. You no longer have much of a choice when it comes to establishing an online presence.

The internet is constantly opening new markets and business opportunities. Additionally, it enhances your business's ability to reach these markets. By not taking your business online you are missing on too much of an opportunity.

Even if you believe your business can do without the added reach and market, your competition is not as naive. They are taking full advantage of online opportunities, innovating to serve their market better.

They are not only delivering better services faster, but they are also building strong brands, trusted by many. Before you know it, those brands will use their social proofing to encroach on your market share.

By the time you realize this, they'll probably be too strong for you to defend yourself.

Don't believe us? Then look at the case of Sears, the retail giant that started as a catalogue business, but failed because they couldn't adapt to e-commerce. They basically originated the business model that later killed them.

So let go of the myth that establishing a good online presence for your business is a choice. Recognize it for what it is, a prerequisite to starting or growing a successful business. It's definitely a prerequisite for your business surviving.

Conclusion

Establishing an online presence for a business now carries so much benefit, it's not a choice anymore, it's a must. Businesses that ignore the advantages of a solid online presence are increasingly suffering the negative impact, yours shouldn't be one.

It's become so easy, with so many options to establish your business's online presence, there is really no obstacle to getting started. Even on a limited budget, there are many free options you can get started on and build on later.

Make sure your online strategy is robust, covering every area of advantage your business can enjoy. Look at our [guide to taking your business online](#) for insights on a good start.

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