

AN IMPORTANCE OF WEB PRESENCE FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

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ABSTRACT : Now a day, web Presence is the most important way to spreading the business information and for increasing its scope. Acceptance of web presence method results in tremendous business growth in India. Considering use of internet and accessibility, small business owners is slated to scale greater heights. The present study has been undertaken to describe the present status & future growth of small business owners' presence on web, to analyse the present situation & to examine the challenges & opportunities available for small business owners.

Keywords - Website, Web Presence, Small business, Business Owners, Importance of website

Introduction

In the present scenario, for all information people rely on the information on internet, for whatever their purpose. It can be related to shopping a product- its reviews, its price, its availability, its looks etc. / related to a business-about the company, its products, its clients, its location etc. /related to customers –their demands, changing trends etc. When one is searched online, one has to be present online to be found as result of search.

In short, making an online presence is one of the most important and wisest decision that one has taken and reaping the results. Learning from this, people have realized online presence is a must to build credibility, to share information, to educate on products and its uses, to capture market and be successful. This does not mean that making a website is a must- it can be online presence through b2b websites, b2c websites, blogs, social channel etc.

Internet penetration in India

Year	Internet Users**	Penetration (% of Pop)
2016*	462,124,989	34.8 %
2015*	354,114,747	27 %
2014	233,152,478	18 %
2013	193,204,330	15.1 %
2012	158,960,346	12.6 %
2011	125,617,813	10.1 %
2010	92,323,838	7.5 %
2009	62,166,128	5.1 %
2008	52,431,671	4.4 %
2007	46,597,582	4 %

Source: *Internet Live Stats* (www.InternetLiveStats.com)

Definition

Web property - A web property is a point of presence (e.g. a website, social media account, blog, etc.) on the web where is an asset of an entity (e.g. an individual or corporation). Web property is used to represent a brand, person or other identity. Examples of web presence are website, social media account, blog, Business to business website and online business directory.

For a person- web presence could be personal website, blog, profile page, wiki page or a social media point of presence e.g. LinkedIn profile, Facebook account, Twitter account.

For a business – web presence could be a corporate website, a microsite, a page on the review site, a wiki page, or a social media page of the Company/Brand/Product.

Every web presence is associated with a unique web address to differentiate one point of presence from another.

Objectives

- To understand the advantages of web presence
- To study the effective ways of web presence
- To examine the barriers of web presence

Methodology

Research design: The researcher has used only secondary data that has been collected from various articles, journals, books, websites etc. It have been used to study the evaluation, conceptual framework, definition, key players, present trends, future prospectus & barriers of web presence. The researcher also used quantitative research that is the systematic empirical investigation of variables phenomena via statistical & mathematical, theories pertaining to phenomena all the data included is the secondary base & proper references have been given wherever necessary.

Advantages

Getting Business Information Easily

Ease of business information with the use of website, people can easily access all information about business. They able to know products and services offered and it's related information. Moreover they can compare all product and service information available with others. Whatever you decide to tell them, they can find it with a few clicks of a mouse.

Reaching More and More Prospects

A web presence gives benefit of reaching a wider audience. The internet is used by millions of people and increasing day by day.

Building an online presence for business will mean you could potentially reach these otherwise unreachable customers. A Business might be local, but it's have the potential to sell your products or services to a wider market, whether it be people in the next town, the nation as a whole or even the international market.. So having a well maintain web presence will help encourage them to come and visit you or be able to find your business in the first place.

Getting Information Updated

Once a go on web, you can keep it up-to-date to be relevant to your business and encourage more visitors (and potential sales). More and more people are using a website, blog and social media platform to promote their business.

Brand Awareness

With the help of web presence, can create online brand awareness easily and Getting their will allow you to protect and secure your business brand online.

Challenges

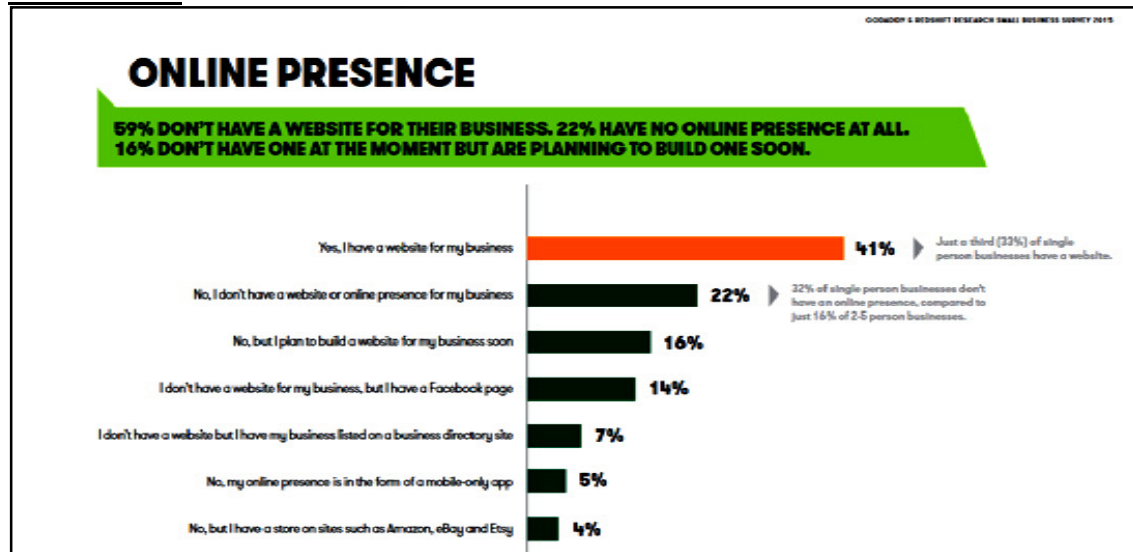
•**There is lack of knowledge on web presence importance to small business owners.** - Small business owner lack the knowledge and importance of web presence. Creating and awareness for the same can make the businesses grow potentially and take the business from being local to being global.

•**If small business owners know about web presence but it's beyond their technical expertise** - The small business owners are not aware that being web present is in their reach, they either resist changing or feeling that it is too expensive for them to adopt, so they maintain a safe distance from the innovation.

•**In India, internet user is less compare to other countries.** - In comparison to other countries, the internet users are very less. But with the increase use by the younger generation, the older generation is also taking steps to updating them, getting exposure to internet and using it for use. Still the decision makers are more or less the elder generation, so...

•**They are not spending time & cost because of busyness.** - The small business owners are so busy with their present work, that they lack the time to devote for updating about the innovation

Online Presence



Key Findings

- Most of the small business owners using website is a primary online presence to represent their businesses:
- For the online presence , most of the small business owners use website to represent their business:

The Global findings reveal that 72% of participants prefer having website for online presence to represent their business. The findings also show that the highest rates of website usage are in Germany of 91%, followed by U.S and U.K. of 88%. An Indian finding of the website usage for small business presence was lowest of 67% and the global average was reported by 82 percent.

The next preference to portray one's business is of social media which is of 13%. Globally social media was reported by 49 percent which showed that highest usage was of China of 63 % and the lowest usage of France of 41%.

- It is a belief that the websites will make the business look more reliable and critical for success:

Small business owners believe that for the business to look reliable and for its success , it is necessary to have a website

Globally, two-thirds (65 percent) of small businesses with an online presence said they elected to create a company website because it makes their company look more credible, and 60 percent said that a website is critical for a small company's success. Overall, 82 percent of small businesses with an online presence would recommend investment in a website to other small companies in their industry.

The above statement is supported by the global findings which reveals that 65% of the small business chose to create a company website as they felt that the website will make the company look more credible, 65% of the business owners believed that website is a must for the success of the company. 85% of the small business vouched their belief and also would recommend it to others for investing in a website.

There is a mismatch in perception barriers and actual barriers to creating a small business website:

The main barrier to name and fame, that popped up after making of the website was the maintenance of the website:

The perception was that the technical know-how required for the creation of a small business website was a barrier in making the website. Even after making the online presence, main hindrances to getting the name and fame was found to be maintenance of the website. Respondents in India and China perceived the security of their website to be the most concerning, but found ongoing maintenance was actually the stronger barrier once they actually created a company website, regardless of the location.

Half of the global small business respondents thought technical know-how would hinder the creation of a small business website, but only 27 percent reported that as an actual barrier. Respondents in India and China perceived the security of their website to be the most concerning, but found ongoing maintenance was actually the stronger barrier once they actually created a company website. In fact, ongoing maintenance was the most cited actual barrier by all respondents regardless of location.

• Small business owners can use other options for web presence also e.g. online business directory, blog, or social media website to promote their business. It is easy to maintain and economical in comparison to making a website. In this way small business owners get web presence for people to contact them for a business.

Conclusion

The technology these days has compressed the globe by bring together the buyers and suppliers on the internet. Owing to this it is very necessary for all the business to be web present. The web presence fetches the business by providing the information to all the prospects. Earlier just the big businesses used to be market players through internet, but now the small business owners have realized the importance of being web presence for business development and growth. So they are resorting to various mediums like blog, social media, business directories, business to business website, and business to consumer website or have their own website to share the business information.

The barrier lies in the inability to compare the cost of web presence with its benefits, it just needs to be analysed to take smart decisions for the small business owners. This urges a need to create awareness in the small business owners through seminars, publications etc. which will clear all the myths and provide the small business owners with better business opportunities.

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