

Mini-Sites A Great Idea For Small Business

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It's been an issue since the late nineties - Just how to benefit from having your businesses on the web. Most business know that a web site is a critical component to their marketing plan, but for most, that's where the "know" stops - and the confusion begins.

Going the traditional route of having a full web site designed is the most expensive option - costing upwards of \$3,000 or more for the initial design, plus extra for adding any functionality outside of the ordinary. However, as any website owner will tell you, the costs don't end there. You also have web hosting costs - and with a larger site, much higher maintenance costs. Even though these costs can be substantial, many business owners aren't entirely aware of them before they get started.

Other options include subscribing to one of the various web site "wizard" type services. These are primarily tools that allow business owners to design, build and manage their sites on their own, without having to know HTML. While this may sound like a great idea - more often than not - it's not. Not only does the business owner have to learn how to use the "wizard" system - they also have to handle the regular maintenance and updates themselves. Who wants to spend dozens of hours each year hacking through all this by themselves - only to end up with a poorly designed template site that offers little benefit for the customer or the business owner?

Enter the business mini-site. Mini-sites have gained popularity over the past few years in the Internet marketing community, but, until now, have been mostly neglected by small business. Web design companies don't promote them as an alternative, because they're not as lucrative as full-sites with hefty maintenance plans. Companies like Instant Web Page Solution - www.instantwebpagesolution.com - are bucking that trend and now produce very attractive and highly effective mini-sites especially for small business.

Stephen Rinaldi of InstantWebPageSolution.Com puts it this way; "The business mini-site as IWPS designs it, is a lean, mean sales machine that helps small businesses fully realize the promise of the Internet as a virtual and never-tiring partner and salesperson".

So, what is this "promise of the Internet" that he speaks of? Well, Rinaldi goes on to say, "for a long time, small business owners have been stuck in a state of confusion about just what their websites were supposed to do for them. They would either get stuck with something too big and complex for their needs - or with a site that was just plain amateur and embarrassing. It's a lot like Goldilocks never finding that 'just right' sized bed. I expect that our Instant Web Page Solution will start a trend toward web sites that fit - and do what they're needed to do".

So, what does a good business mini-site do that other website options do not? Services like IWPS are hand designed pages that use only those features that have a real value to the site owner and the visitor. In other words, there's no fluff. For example, if you run a restaurant, your site would likely include two photos of your business, a downloadable PDF formatted menu for printing, location and driving directions integrated with one of the popular mapping services - possibly even a live online ordering system for take-out orders. Other options would include selling gift certificates online and Live Support.

Rinaldi goes on to say, "being part of our service is like moving your business into a busy shopping mall. While your shop is independent, you still get to take advantage of all the activity and foot traffic that the mall provides. IWPS is similar. Since we maintain all the sites on our servers, we can easily monitor client site traffic - and keep up with search engine globally, rather than working with each site one-by-one. We're also able to route traffic in a targeted way to our client sites through our own busy sites - our clients have a great advantage over the millions of business sites that just languish in obscurity. This format helps keep quality of service high and costs low".

Stephen Rinaldi is Director of BBI - www.bbiworld.com - He is a frequent contributor of online business articles and author of "What You Need to Know About Changing Your Web Host and Transferring Your Domain Name" and "Top Web Design Scams" available free from BBI Publications, www.bbiworld.com/online-publishing.htm

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