

If your website is just a copy of your sales brochure, it is not being fully utilized. Websites need to be Web 2.0... dynamic, interactive, collaborative, interesting, continually updated ...

Below are 13 ways that you can use your website to help your business:

1. **Be found.** The internet is the first place people go to find products and services. If you aren't there, your competition will take those customers!
2. **Get new leads around the clock.** A website is a 24/7 salesperson that brings in new leads, allows people to purchase and empowers customers to interact with you.
3. **Reach beyond your area.** You can reach beyond your geographical area to new markets and service areas.
4. **Build your business's reputation.** Well-designed websites with a professional image help to establish that you are credible and trustworthy and it helps build customer confidence.
5. **Affordable way to advertise.** TV ads, radio spots and print ads are quick hits that can cost more to execute (with lower results) than a website.
6. **Use it to lower costs.** Instead of reprinting old brochures, post updated PDFs on your website. Instead of mailing those new brochures and paying for postage, email a link.
7. **Be more efficient.** Sell online. Have customers pay bills online. Receive customers inquiries or registrations online. Take your business processes and convert them into your website to help cut costs and make your business more more efficient.
8. **Increase communications and networks.** Provide the most current information about your business to your customers, vendors and employees.
9. **Educate your customers.** Publish brochures, case studies, success stories, white papers, interactive demos, etc. Then track ROI through downloads and views of these items.
10. **Gather customer information.** Get people to sign-up for newsletters, create user accounts, participate in surveys, etc. to gather contact information, buying patterns and preferences. Use web analytics to monitor what works and what doesn't.
11. **PR.** Speak directly to the media.
12. **Provide great customer service.** Provide FAQs to help people help themselves. Provide forums (message boards) to encourage customers to talk with each other, post questions and receive responses from employees. Provide resources such as tutorials, instruction manuals, software updates, etc. Provide live chat or contact us forms.
13. **Brand your business.** Create an awareness of your business, products, services, etc.