The Importance of Mobile Websites

Between 2009 and 2011, mobile web browsing grew by 1000%. It went from less than 1% to a 7% market share in less than two years. A recent study in March 2012 by Opera (a web browsing company) showed that 43% of respondents say that mobile web is their primary means of accessing the internet. If this trend holds out, the mobile web is set to almost entirely replace the traditional web by 2015 according to research firm IDC.

What these statistics translate to for small business owners is that a web presence is now mandatory. Traditional websites that were designed to be viewed on 10-15" screens are largely incompatible with the much smaller screen of smart phones and tablets. Not only will your standard website be difficult, if not impossible, to view on the smaller screen, the functionality will be unusable.

Websites that work well on mobile devices are those that have been designed specifically to function on the mobile web. Most mobile devices won't load Flash graphics – a common aspect of traditional web design. Large graphics files are also incompatible with mobile web browsing. Your website is expected to load within 3-5 seconds on a mobile device and any load-time exceeding this leads to lower and lower browser satisfaction.

Bloomberg news reported last week that "twice as many mobile-phone users abandon a website for reasons such as sluggishness than their desktop counterparts." If your site won't load, 1/3 of users will try to reload the site and 2/3 will move on instantly. After another failed reload, all but 1% of browsers will move on, most likely to a competitor that has a mobile web presence that meets their needs.

The Bloomberg reporter then added that, "almost half of all mobile users are unlikely to return to a website at all if they had trouble accessing it from their phone." This means that you have lost the opportunity to engage that potential customer, likely forever. But using a free mobile web converter or low-cost mobile web designer can prevent you from losing business you never knew you could have had.

The Bloomberg article cites one of the problems with slow load times is that "often it's because the webpage isn't designed to load quickly on a wireless device." Mobile web design can be very thin and provide just the basic information about your business to your potential customer including:

> ➤ Location – preferably with click-to-navigate option for GPS navigation

> ➤ Phone number – preferably with click-to-call functionality

> ➤ Hours/Days of operation – in the easiest to read font and format

> ➤ Opt-in – a link or info on how to opt-in to receive text offers and information

> ➤ Calendar – if you offer special events or certain items on certain days, a simple fast loading calendar or roster is helpful

> ➤ Photos – if relevant, for menu items, inventory, etc. and if they are fast-loading, these can be helpful to customers

Whether you enlist the aid of a professional mobile website developer or decide to go it on your own with a mobile website builder utility, *any* mobile web presence is infinitely better than *no* mobile web presence.