

**S U N D A Y**

## A wider Web market

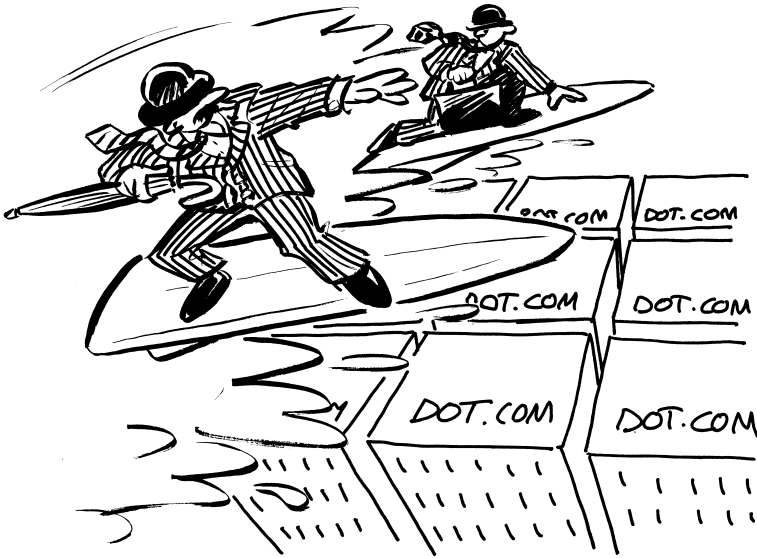
The wider Web makes the world a narrower place. Geographic borders are less defined. Deadlines, shorter. International time and distance is as relative as the space between your keyboard and fingertips.

As you read these words, businesses are saving billions of dollars for themselves and their customers through implementing e-commerce sales cycles. For example, vast transportation cost savings are made by comparing logistic tenders by countries on-line.

Despite the initially shaky start, the Internet is the thirteenth biggest economy in the world. It's no longer just websites, e-commerce, e-solutions or area networks – webmarketing *is* business and everything attached to it, from mobile phones to music centres.

For all this technology, businesses still rely on targeted, value-added sales propositions to draw in new customers whilst securing existing ones. Webmarketing techniques strengthen relationships with stockholders, employees and suppliers. It touches every aspect of your marketing mix, from sales and distribution to advertising (see Monday). In so doing, webmarketing positively distinguishes your organisation from that of your competitors. As we progress through this week you will see how.

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## Explosive e-business

At the time of writing, every four seconds a further eleven organisations establish an Internet presence thereby linking to the world's most successful, broadly spread communications network – the World Wide Web. By 2005, worldwide more than 500 million people will be surfing the Web, from 'Teeny Techies' (aged 6–16) to 'Silver Surfers' (aged 50+).

The popularity of the Internet is only part of a bigger webmarketing picture. Yet, just taking the Internet, you can measure its incredible growth in a relatively short time scale.

**S U N D A Y****WEB FACTS**

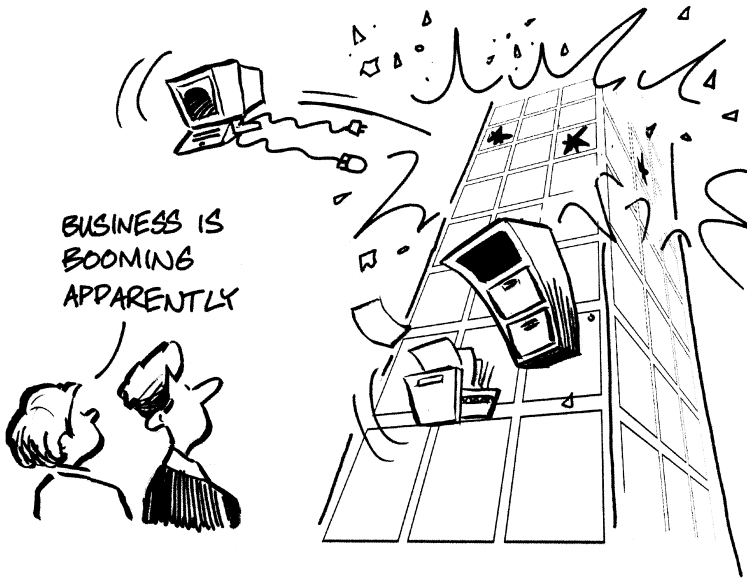
IT TOOK 38 YEARS FOR RADIO TO ATTRACT 50 MILLION LISTENERS AND 13 YEARS FOR TELEVISION TO ATTRACT 50 MILLION VIEWERS.

IN JUST 4 YEARS THE INTERNET ATTRACTED 50 MILLION SURFERS!

Those figures can hardly be balked at, especially when you consider the Internet's beginnings.

**Less is more**

A key business concept during the 90s was 'disintermediation': cutting out middlemen in complex markets. Typically, the scissors were the web and other digital media. As tools, Intranets and Extranets managed corporate internal affairs. Floppy discs went into Zip speed. Tape videos forwarded into video and audio streamed media Web pages. Cumbersome PCs stepped into small footprint workstations. Mini-Discs shrunk into earphone MP3 Players, hand held phones fitted into pocket shirts. TV's turned into digital entertainment centres and diaries became wireless palm held devices, ready to download webpages into the hands of a mobile target audience. The stage was set, the network was switched on: the dotcom connected age had arrived.



## Who is on-line and why?

Today's customers expect businesses to provide goods and services quickly and efficiently and at a location that suits their requirements *more conveniently than yours*. This kind of thinking is a two-way street. Just as your customers and trading partners need to sense that they are in control so you too need to have firm control of your Web business.

## The internal audience

As with traditional marketing, your audience is split into distinctive camps: the internal audience and the external audience.

Both are vital. Your internal audience comprises a community of employees, suppliers, distributors, sales force,

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consultants, and so on, who typically connect to you via a distributed computing network like a secure Intranet. This internal enterprise-wide network uses the same TCP (Transmission Control Protocol) Internet Protocol technology as the Internet. Using Web browsers, an Intranet network directs information from both the World Wide Web and internal systems to individual company PCs. To prevent unauthorised access by anyone on the World Wide Web, the system is shielded from the outside world by security software called a 'firewall'.

### *The virtual company bulletin board*

In addition to being a tremendous internal communication tool, Intranets can save significant marketing print costs through disseminating anything from a newsletter to internal telephone directory, all of which can be updated regularly.

## **The external audience**

To communicate with external partners like suppliers and sales outlets, you could use an Extranet. This takes a network group of computers beyond the boundaries of an office. It sort of hitches a ride on the back of the World Wide Web using the same electronic dialogue protocols of the Internet. Obviously information is subject to passwords and the network is not open to the general public.

### **Web tip**

Check that your site – internal or Internet-wide – prints. Just because a page is on the screen, it doesn't mean it will download to an office printer.

**S U N D A Y***Web community*

Your external surfers are individuals:

- *Prospective buyers* – anyone in the right demographic and with appropriate requirements who can be encouraged to contact your enterprise.
- *Existing customers* – who have previously dealt with you.
- *Borderline customers* – who may leave unless you improve your sales support.
- *Lapsing customers* – who want new services.
- *Potential clients* – who, having previously bought goods, can be encouraged to buy more.
- *Media* – such as trade and national press journalists who want ‘real time’ access to today’s news rather than yesterday’s headlines.
- *Potential employees* – who want published information.
- *Partners* – teaming up with your organisation and able to distribute your products electronically.
- *Would-be investors* – who want solid corporate facts as well as reassuring, visionary communications.
- *Allies* – who’ll recommend you to others, especially if motivated with an incentive.

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*Which web medium suits you?*

<b>Web benefit</b>	<b>Intranet</b>	<b>Extranet</b>	<b>Web vehicle</b>
Strengthen partnerships		✓	
Create loyalty programmes		✓	www
Build brand awareness			www
Increase business efficiencies	✓	✓	
On-line company manuals	✓		www email Bulletin Board System (BBS)
On-line product demonstrations	✓	✓	www
On-line departmental conference links via webcams	✓	✓	www
On-line newsletter	✓	✓	www email
On-line recruitment	✓		www
On-line precision direct marketing	✓	✓	www
On-line sales training	✓	✓	
On-line ordering		✓	www email Electronic Data Information (EDI)
On-line project tracking	✓	✓	Agent software EDI
On-line product catalogue		✓	www

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Web benefit	Intranet	Extranet	Web vehicle
On-line support	✓	✓	BBS email www
Mobile/home working computing/ laptop sales links	✓		www BBS
Cross-company selling (e.g. Airline ticketing agency linking with a hotel chain)		✓	www email
Enhanced customer and employee relationships	✓	✓	www
Inventory control	✓		Agent software email EDI

## Retaining attention

The minute your site is accessed by a potential customer, you have around 20 to 40 seconds to retain attention. Failure to do so means your potential customers remain just that – potential.

To keep them on-line longer, you will need to understand the systems which secure your webmarketing presence such as equipment, Internet Service Providers, website maintenance distribution and so forth. Even if you are only concerned with the shop-front part of your website – at the very least, you need to understand why a consumer would want to visit your page. Keeping them hooked takes strong personalisation in what is, superficially, a highly impersonal mass broadcast media.

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## Summary

People access the Web to share ideas globally. They become part of the overall context of the message being conveyed and so share the experience of your web brand.

The greater the number of targeted surfers who log on to a website for a trusted brand, the higher the so called 'eyeball' share. To retain a surfer's attention you need to tailor and support a brand experience. The first way to establish trust of a web brand is through security assurance. Technologies to protect data over the web are improving by the month. Initiatives from credit card companies to underwrite purchases over the Internet are ensuring that people feel more confident when dealing on-line with their favourite brands.

Web brands are also taking advantage of greater bandwidths for faster downloads – reassurance for surfers who expect a prompt and relevant service from their favoured web brand.

In terms of on-screen advertising, rich media banner ads increase web brand awareness in a one-to-one dynamic environment. Rather than simply promoting a webbrand on a static banner advertisement, information is being disseminated and subsequent sales secured instantly at the click of a mouse.

Finally, however great your web brand may appear on the screen, the ability to fulfil orders promptly through improved distribution systems ensures that surfers come back.

The more people linked to your network, the greater the opportunities to reach micro-communities with highly specialised interests.