IT Upgrade and the Brave New Scene

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Many of the older generation are starting to become involved more with computers and the Internet. Most younger 'kids' may wonder what the 'big deal is' while many of the main players in the society we live in, the thousands of small business owners, actually struggle with the idea of 'upgrading' to the age of IT (Intellectual Technology).

This is a major concern in 2013 and one of the newer reasons why many businesses either fail to grow to their potential or are out of business within a year or two. In times past businesses came and went according to the fluctuating idiosyncrasies of the people who simply had an urge to 'start a business', many without much forethought or real intent. The lack of actual business knowledge, a Business Plan and Planning Budget and a perceived market for a product or service that was simply a mirage were often the main reasons for failed businesses. And while these reasons can still be relevant, there are now other added reasons why businesses find it hard to stay alive.

Starting a business in today's world is a far more serious case than just 'flying on a whim or a dream' for the many businesses who begin with full intent to be a legitimate venture that will support the family and set aside genuine assets for the future.

So In This Scenario, Why is IT and Computer Know-how So Important?

Firstly time moves faster in today's world; no-one will argue with that. There are many things that need to be achieved and achieved in a specific time-frame or will cost money if they are not, the paying of a telephone bill is a typical example.

In times past the phone bill came every three or even six months and the owner usually had at least a full four to six weeks to pay it. If it was paid a few days late the phone company would overlook it and if it was a week overdue they sent a reminder that it had to be paid.

This is no longer the case, the phone bill, which is now two to three time as much in real figures, comes every month with three weeks to pay, and if the payment is late there is usually a fee incurred, even if the phone company agrees to 'grant an extension' on the due date.

Alas while this is just one very simple example of the pressure families are placed under to survive in our modern world, nevertheless to run a business the pressure is more intense. Dates have to be kept, payments have to be made, orders filled and sent and product paid for when ordered or a minimum end of month payment if a business is fortunate enough to have an account with their supplier. And there is still the phone bills and the power bills!

A businessman experienced in marketing was once offered a business selling first aid products to businesses. The area had few businesses that would need first aid products and the person could see there would be a large number of small orders if enough. It was 1996 and the first thing he could see was needed was a computer just to track all the orders and supplies needed. Doing such a job by paperwork was no longer an option given the higher number of sales that would be needed to be made to make the business viable.

Such is an example of why computers in today's commercial climate is an imperative tool.

Computers are not just about making the job easier; 'so we do not really need one'!

A business in 2013 has to set targets and it needs to achieve those targets or the bills that must be paid to keep the business operational will not get paid.

So firstly computers speed up the process of achieving those targets and allow for growth.

The second reason for the implementation of IT in a business is the market itself.

Although larger businesses will continue to out-source printing and advertising options it is very feasible nowadays, especially when starting a small business, to factor in the producing of advertising materials in-house. The market is growing and that prompts more businesses to start up to supply that market. Therefore operational businesses, no matter how successful in yesterdays marketplace, need to update their operations to stay in the marketplace.

Let us say there may have been say two thousand clients for a particular service in an area with one supplier, the growth to five thousand clients allows a second business to begin supplying the same service. However it is not a simple matter of each therefore now having two and a half thousand clients each in this marketplace.

The newer business, by means of the knowledge they have of more modern business practices including the use of IT facilities and marketing (they have done their homework or even taken a small business management course) may quickly not only start serving capably the extra three thousand clients available but 'eat into' the two thousand clients the first business has. Loyalty only extends so far and often the only ones who may continue using the services of the older 'traditional' business are those who have a deep sense of loyalty if that business has not upgraded their service capabilities.

There are thousands of like businesses around Australia who are negative about 'jumping into IT' because of the perceived lack of need and by now are 'feeling the pinch' of not doing so!

The concept of being 'online' is an important factor in the twenty-first century marketplace. Yes there have been many people already 'burned' by dysfunctional websites costing thousands of dollars more than they were worth, but that does not reduce the consequence of not being online with a working website.

Consequently it is imperative that not only does a business look to promoting themselves online with an adequate website at least, but also that they know what is needed having that website online and how to promote it.

Many businesses may spend a small amount on a website - we are talking about $1000 to place a basic a suitable website online - but then expect that the website is suddenly found by the many millions of internet surfers that are 'apparently out there somewhere'.

In reality only about twenty to twenty-five percent of website visitors should come from 'searchers' looking for a service that find a particular website, so though being on the front page of Google is more than very handy *it is not imperative. WHY?*

Because unlike the limited space advertisement placed in a newspaper that gets delivered to the door of its prospective readers a businesses website, though it is online twenty-four hours a day with a virtually unlimited supply of information about a business, needs people to be directed to it.

Most business website visitors should be prospects who are sent to the site *by other advertising*, also meaning that they are already attracted to the business and are now convinced of that businesses viability as a supplier by the website detail.

Website Advertising needs to be Advertised!

Every piece of marketing material should promote the business website; cards, flyers, newspaper advertising, car signs and the list goes on. Like signs that cannot themselves tell enough of the story they can send prospective customers to where they can read the whole story.

More and more people are going online to find information about products and services, it being the major reason why, as was mentioned in the first paragraph, that older people in particular are 'catching up' with the IT world. These people will more likely have seen and written down the name of a website that might be if interest to them and if a businesses website is firstly not online and secondly not promoted then the prospective customer will not have that business in mind or find them.

Is It All Too Late?

The good news is no, it is not!

All a business needs to start converting to the IT world is an IT Budget and some time set aside to 'learn the ropes'.

It is not just a 'young persons game' however it will take a substantial 'shift' in mental attitude and some patience because it is different to the world anyone over the age of forty-five was brought up in. Nevertheless you do not lose your brain at any age so it is simply a matter of deciding to do it!

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