

We live in a day and age where technology is no longer some crazy new idea; it is a necessary tool for businesses looking to expand and reach new customers. On the other hand, there is something to be said for looking someone in the eye, hammering out a deal, and closing with a handshake. Somewhere - between the clipboard toting manager and the plugged-in Blackberry addicted techie - there is a middle ground where a well thought out business plan takes shape.

You may be one of those people who are tired of hearing about the internet. Perhaps you've already got a successful business and you don't have time to play on the computer - here are some stats from small business facts.com which you may find interesting:

- * 79% of small businesses shop online regularly
- * 54% of consumers referred a friend to a vendor found online
- * According to the SBA, in 2004 the average revenue of a small business was \$3.6 million
The average revenue of a small business **with a website** was \$5.03 million.

While it's true that not everyone will want to run out and create a website for their business, there are fairly simple ways to add the internet to your marketing arsenal. Every business should have, at a minimum, a webpage. And Facebook is a fine way to keep your business 'in the news'. Properly managed, it is a fun and free tool to promote happenings at your business.

If your business fits the category of: Where to Shop, Where to Eat, What to Do, Where to Stay, you can get listed (**for free**) on **our** website. It seems a little silly not to take advantage of that offer! Just contact us for easy instructions to list your business. If you know someone who ought to be signed up - please let us know.

If you really want to go the online marketing route, you can become a tweeter on Twitter. I can't write much about that because I don't understand it myself, but I will be attending some of the Chambers fine workshops so I can learn!

"So", you say, "when do I have time to do all this junk?" Here's the great news, the **Northern Gateway Chamber** wants to help you get started. We are hosting a series of workshops, starting with an "**Introduction to Internet Marketing**" which is an overview of using the internet to enhance your business. **This workshop will be held on Wed October 27th, 6 PM in Lancaster. Cost will be \$10 for members, \$15 for non members.**

On November 10th the **Northern Gateway Chamber** is hosting a second workshop, "**Social Media Marketing**" which discusses current trends in Social Media Marketing. This workshop also discusses how to use tools like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and foursquare - make no mistake about it, these are tools - not toys.

Additionally we are looking at some exciting, simple, and inexpensive ways for our members to have a web presence. As part of that process, we have put together some web page and website packages for our members. While we are still working on the details, I'm confident that the pricing is going to be very appealing - stay tuned!

Finally, as part of our mission to help all of our businesses, we are working with **NNESBA**. They will be hosting a workshop on **October 26th at the Mountain View Grand at 4 PM**. The topic will be "**Employee Retention**" and speakers include Commissioner Tara Reardon, from NH Employment Security. **For more information, or to RSVP (by October 15th) please contact Bonnie at nesba@gmail.com.**