

Let The Web Empower You And Your Business

by TERRY BROCK

The other day I was thinking about how the Internet and the web have changed so much of what I do in business. I realized how much I can do now that I couldn't do or would have been almost impossible to do just a little while ago.

Here are some ways that you can use the web to make your life easier and get more done. Warning: What you are about to read can revolutionize your business and personal life.

Get the Best Price

Every buyer wants to get the very best price possible. The web has some tools that can help you search for the best possible price. Check out:

- www.priceworld.com
- www.mysimon.com
- www.rusure.com

Enter an item you want to purchase and these price search engines will locate the best prices on the web for you. And don't forget the site that helps us save lots of money on airline, groceries, gasoline, long distance, merchandise, new cars, hotel rooms, home

mortgages and also taught us that William Shatner did a better job commanding a starship than singing: www.priceline.com. Strategy? If you're shopping for, say, an airline ticket, go to the airline's online site and find the regularly listed price for the trip you want to make. Then go to www.priceline.com and offer an initial bid that is at least 10 percent less than that. Depending on traffic and demand, you have a good chance of getting a much lower-priced ticket. This service is best used when you have flexibility in your schedule. Also use it for merchandise in the same way after visiting the three price shopping sites (listed earlier).

For help on regular monthly bills check out www.lowermybills.com. This is a site that is worth visiting to see some of the savings you can make that add up on a

monthly basis. Check out how to get better prices on long distance, wireless, gas and electric, auto insurance and more.

Some of the best prices on phone service range from free to just a few cents. Visit www.dialpad.com for free phone service over the Internet. The quality is rather poor, so you won't use this for that important phone call to a prospective client. But to a son or daughter in college across the country, it is ideal. Another service that provides long distance help is www.net2phone.com, which has fair quality over the Internet but a good price of 3.9 cents per minute on calling card calls.

Updating Software

This is a way the Internet can relieve a lot of frustrations for your



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home-based business. Often the problem you run into is based on known bugs in a current version.

Here's what you need to do:

- Make sure you get software that can be updated over the Internet.
- Get the fastest connection speed possible. A home cable modem or DSL line can provide rapid connection and updates.

This is usually found in the Help section of the software.

Get the IT Assistance You Need

Finding good help is hard in today's labor market. Rather than hire a full-time employee, contract out what you need with some of the services on the web that link buyers and sellers.

Sites that provide help include:

- www.pcsupport.com
- www.myhelpdesk.com
- www.service911.com

Each has advantages and disadvantages, so shopping around provides the best source of help as you need it. For online assistance on specific problems as you need help, visit www.pcshowandtell.com for to-the-point videos on specific solutions with numerous software packages.

Outsourcing can help your growing business be lean and mean. You can get the job done without dealing with a lot of un-

needed overhead and the hassle of employees. Your job is to clearly think through what needs to be done and define it as tightly as possible so that the independent contractor you work with can complete a task quickly and be done with it.

Find the Financial Information You Need

Get the loans you need for your business. Yahoo! provides a lot of useful information under the topic of banking and finance. Visit www.yahoo.com and notice the

help for loans, small business advice, marketing and sales information and more. This site has morphed into a portal of information on many topics from a mere search engine before. If you haven't visited here lately, it is one to see regularly for updates.

Your Choices?

The Internet provides us with more useful information each week. Drop me a note at terry@terrybrock.com with your favorite site that has helped you most in your business or personal life. □

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