



If Your Business isn't Online, it doesn't Exist

Have you ever wondered how many extraordinary music artists abandon their dream because they were never able to get on the radio? Thousands? Hundreds of thousands? In the music industry, the radio has the incredible power to connect musicians with music fans. It can be the difference between celebrity and obscurity.

Don't miss out on 81% of Consumers

Like the radio, the internet has become the greatest connector of consumers and businesses. It can be the difference between success and failure. 81% of consumers will research online before making a purchase, yet only 40% of Canadian small businesses have a website. If you're one of those small businesses, you're not just off the podium, you didn't get invited to the race. You've been relegated to compete for the remaining consumer crumbs.



Build Reputation & Trust Online

Everyone knows the power of word-of-mouth, right? Well, new research shows that 84% of online shoppers trust online reviews as much as they do personal recommendations from friends. Sites like TripAdvisor, Google, Yelp!, OpenTable are trusted by consumers to provide valuable customer reviews. But review sites aren't exclusive to the hospitality industry. If you're a contractor, you might want to consider building your reputation through sites like HomeStars and TrustedPros. Classified sites, like Kijiji, get a lot of traffic and can be great for buying and selling second-hand items, but before using it as a business tool, be careful to consider if it's a fit for your industry and the image of your company.

Smart Phones boost local Business

Two-thirds of Canadians have a smart phone and we take them with us everywhere: the car, the bed, into meetings, in the bathroom... thankfully I don't have a statistics on that one. However, thanks to some research done by Google in 2014, we know that 50% of consumers who perform a local search on their smartphone visited a local store with a day. On-the-go consumers are often using their smart phones to look for nearby or local businesses. If you're not online, and if your website is not mobile friendly, you've lost a customer.

5 Tips to Make Sure Your Business "Exists"

- **1. Get your business listed on [Google My Business](#).** Make sure you complete your profile. It could be the most valuable thing you ever do for your business.
- **2. Get a website.** If you have the skills and expertise, do it yourself. If you don't hire

a professional. It will be one of your best marketing investments. Plus, it will free up time for you focus on running your business.

- **3. Social Media** – Evaluate whether you have the time & resources to have a social media presence. Social media sites can be valuable but also can require a lot of work to be effective. Be strategic.
- **4. Get Set up on Consumer Review Sites** (TripAdvisor, Yelp!, etc.) – If your business falls under restaurants, hotels, shopping, spas & wellness, nightlife, fun & games, then you should be on TripAdvisor.
- **5. Search Engine Optimization** – This is the process of getting your business ranked higher on search results pages. Click-through rate on the Top 5 listings is 68%. The next 5 listings are 3.8%. There are many great resources to help you optimize your website. Do your homework.

Need Help?

The City's Economic Development department offers a [Small Business Marketing Grant](#), which provides licensed Fort Sask based businesses with up to \$2,500 in funding to develop marketing content, such as a website. For more information contact ecdev@fortsask.ca