



Web Sites for Busy Business Owners

Busy business owners look to the Internet for information and tools to make their life easier *and* more efficient. This month, the *Business Performance Advantage* features sites that help with everything from price shopping insurance to information on employment statistics. All categorized for easy reference. If you have a Web site you would like to share, please let us know!

General Resources

www.forbes.com/bow - If you don't have this site bookmarked, do it now. *Forbes* puts together a quarterly listing of what they feel is the "Best of the Web". The main listing covers a wide variety of Web sites from investing to auctions to family vacations, each with a short description. They also have a second listing devoted to "B2B - Best of the Web." This listing is alphabetical by business category.

www.zdnet.com - ZDNet is part of the CNET Networks, Inc. empire, which is the global source of information and commerce services for the technology industry. The site contains virus updates, free downloads, new technology updates, and software and hardware information. Stop here before buying to read reviews on computers, PDAs, software, cameras and more.

www.insweb.com - This *Forbes* Favorite site allows you to comparison shop for insurance policies between leading insurance companies. Easy to navigate, the site features an online application. Shop for both business and personal policies here.

www.bizrate.com - Want to get the best deal on an upcoming purchase? From computers to office supplies, BizRate searches the Web for your product and delivers a list of retailers carrying it and their asking price. Find prices as well as more than 1,400 customer satisfaction ratings on retailers so you can stick with reputable vendors.

www.dictionary.com - Looking for just the right word for a sentence in an important business letter? Dictionary.com combines lots of tools in one easy-to-use site. Find Roget's Thesaurus, writing resources (grammar rules, writing tips, etc.) and a translation package that translates from five foreign languages, including Spanish, to English there. Oh, and the online dictionary is great, too.

www.google.com - This is absolutely the fastest, most amazing search engine on the Web. Using a technology that enables the site to render a search of over 1 billion Web pages in seconds flat (it tells you how long the search took and how many records were accessed), this search engine has earned its reputation as the smartest engine on the Web. You'll love searching the 'Net with this hot tool.

www.techbargains.com - Before buying on the Web, cruise by TechBargains.com to check for any online coupons that may be available for your retailer of choice. Online retailers like Amazon, Dell, Staples and others offer everything from free shipping to discounts on purchases. This tech-savvy site also shows you how to combine offers, price matches and other rebates to arrive at a rock-bottom price. On the Web, it can be buyer beware. We suggest that you only do business with reputable dealers, check BizRate.com for retailer ratings.

Small Business Information and Finance

www.destinationSOHO.com - This is a very informative portal site to a publication titled *Small Business Computing*. Its focus is purely on small businesses. You'll find product test drives, a buyer's guide, business tools, an e-marketing section, business articles and a wealth of information and links from Internet.com.

www.inonline.com - An online portal site for the popular *Inc.* magazine which offers a variety of business articles, advice on starting and growing a business, finding capital, personal finance and a free newsletter. This site is worth a visit.

www.entrepreneur.com - Another online portal site for the *Entrepreneur* magazine featuring information about start-ups, home businesses, franchises, business opportunities, money matters, marketing, management, e-business and technology. It also offers message boards on a variety of business topics, as well as, tools, services and research. This site is definitely worth your time to explore.

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Our mission is to provide information and strategies to business owners and managers for improvement in the effectiveness of its business management so that key objectives can be realized.

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www.morebusiness.com – This site's tag line is "Entrepreneurs for Entrepreneurs," and features business "How To" guides, templates (for business, marketing, contracts and agreements, press releases, etc.), tools, weekly articles and a free newsletter.

www.americanexpress.com/homepage/smallbusiness.shtml - Brought to you by AMEX, this site is a way for them to support their products and services for small business owners and operators throughout the world. The site offers connectivity with their network of small businesses, access to information, articles, resources and tools for your business. They also have a section that allows you to optimize your resources. You'll need to check this out to see if it fits with your needs.

SMALL BUSINESS TRAINING, COACHING & SUGGESTED READING

www.e-myth.com - The site is built around the principles developed in the best selling small business book, *The E-Myth Revisited* and the newly released vertical market book, *The E-Myth Contractor*. Both books provide excellent reading, if you're interested in improving and growing your business. The site provides an excellent coaching and training curriculum to effectively link your Vision, your People, and your Process to result in a business that works consistently, predictably, successfully, and systematically. Pay a visit to the site and see if this is something you should be thinking about doing. It's well worth the time to check out.

COMPUTER SOFTWARE

www.symantec.com/avcenter - The anti-virus pros over at Symantec built this site to swiftly alert the public about threatening viruses. If a virus is on the loose, this site will have up-to-the-minute information about fixes and patches. If the latest scare turns out to be a hoax, you can read all about that here, too.

dgl.microsoft.com – Need a photo for a presentation? How about clip art for your newsletter? Microsoft's Design Gallery Live offers thousands of free, royalty-free choices that can be downloaded right to your computer.

www.oraclesmallbusiness.com – This site introduces you to Oracle's Small Business Suite which is a Web based fully integrated software application that handles all your business processes, including accounting, order management, sales and customer support, employee management and your Web presence. According to Oracle, there are over 5000 small and mid-sized businesses that are already using the Small Business Suite.

www.intuit.com – The small business section of the site is probably a familiar home to many small business owners, office managers, bookkeepers and accountants that use their products, such as, QuickBooks, QuickBooks Pro, Turbo Tax for Business, Intuit's Master Builder, as well as, other software products. Intuit also provides an array of services complementary to their software products directed to the small business owner.

LEGAL

www.nolo.com – Nolo is the "go to" self-help legal site on the Web. The site features a free law center covering a wide range of topics, a search engine for the site, free information and tools (legal encyclopedia, law dictionary, calculators, and legal research center and court information), news and feature articles, a free newsletter and a download center. If there's anything legal you're looking for, this is the first place you want to check.

HUMAN RESOURCE SOLUTIONS

www.administaff.com – If you're looking for a complete personnel management system you should definitely pay a visit to this site. Administaff essentially takes the entire human resource function off the business owner's plate. They've put together a comprehensive and fully integrated personnel management program that includes: Employment Administration, Recruiting & Selection, Training & Development, Employee Benefits Management, Liability Management, Performance Management and Government Compliance. One other unique thing they provide is a customized Employee Service Center which is a Web based portal that contains all the resources and information for conducting business with Administaff.

www.ESRcheck.com – Employment Screening Resources provides safe hiring background screening services for employers throughout the US, ranging from Fortune 500 firms to start-ups. They specialize in legal compliance, criminal records, employment checks, drug testing and a full range of screening services, as well as training and consultation. The services are offered through a state of the art web based paperless system that's quick and efficient to use.

www.hrtools.com – Owned by CCH Publications (publisher of numerous tax, legal and other technical reference manuals & services), this subscription based service provides employers and HR managers with a fully functional online HR department, complete with all the information, eTool Kits, forms and checklists necessary to accomplish specific HR tasks.

Web Sites for Busy Business Owners (cont.)

BANKING AND CREDIT

www.bankrate.com – As the URL would indicate, the site specializes in providing information to consumers and businesses on bank rates, from mortgages to auto financing to money market instruments. The site also provides information and news on the various rates and their trends, along with helpful advice. If you're interested in lending rates or investment rates, this is probably a good place to start in checking them out.

www.creditFYI.com – Use this site for checking on the creditworthiness of a client or customer in a fast economical way. CreditFYI uses major credit rating firms, such as, FairIsaac and Experian for their credit rating reports and have distribution partners, such as, American Express, Hibernia Bank, Quicken.com, LiveCapital, Carolina First Bank and Danvers Savings Bank.

VENTURE CAPITAL

www.ventrueone.com – This is a site dedicated to the venture capital community and an excellent source for venture capital intelligence. It boasts that it has the most comprehensive database on venture-backed companies and investors in existence. They provide insightful content and coverage on the latest venture capital trends.

www.vfinance.com – This site serves high growth companies and high net-worth investors and is the home of the world famous “Venture Capital Resource Directory”. It has specific sections for entrepreneurs, investors, CEOs/CFOs including a section where companies can post information about their firm to get the attention of over 150,000 CEOs, CFOs, venture capital firms and investment banking executives. Additionally, you can search to find capital and angel investors.

GOVERNMENT

www.census.gov – This is the site for the U.S. Department of Commerce Census Bureau providing useful statistical information on the results of the 2000 Census. All the information is categorized by people, business and geography. Other features include a search engine, American finder, and access tools. This is a great starting point for gathering population and demographic information to support a business model or market strategy.

www.bls.gov – A site for the Bureau of Labor Statistics giving an incredible amount of information, such as, inflation & spending, wages, earning & benefits, productivity, safety & health, occupations, demographics, employment & unemployment. If you want labor statistics of whatever kind, this is the place to go.

www.irs.ustreas.gov – This is the home of the Department of the Treasury. The site offers a tremendous amount of information covering a wide range of tax related topics and subjects. For ease of navigation, I suggest using the search engine, site map or the forms and publications finder to get to the information you're looking for quickly.

www.ftb.ca.gov - This is home for the California Franchise Tax Board. The site also has a lot of information covering a wide range of tax related topics and subjects. It features online services (filing your return, getting tax forms, making tax payments, check refund status, etc.) The site covers individual and business taxpayers.

www.ss.ca.gov – This is site for the California Secretary of State – Business Portal. It provides information, forms and fees for corporations, LLCs, partnerships, trademarks, service marks, etc., the ability to check records online, a guide to starting a business, notary information, Uniform Commercial Code (UCC Financing Statements and other forms) and engines to search for businesses, forms, etc.

www.edgar-online.com – Interested in finding information about a public company? This site is all about finding and viewing the documents filed by public companies with the Securities & Exchange Commission. In addition to the SEC filings, it has other information relating to IPO's and related topics. This is an excellent starting point for researching a company for creditworthiness, competitive information, market strategies, product lines, company size and headcount.

www.uspto.gov – Considering registering a trademark? Stop by the United States Patent and Trademark Office first to do a preliminary search. Although, the USPTO can't ensure a trademark will be available when you submit your application, you can rule out names and marks that currently are unavailable. The site also has links to all the forms needed to submit an application.

www.sbaonline.sba.gov – This site is home for the U.S. Small Business Administration and has a wealth of information and facts about starting your business, financing the business and business opportunities. The site has two convenient search features that aid in finding what you're looking for – “Frequent I Can't Find and Answer” and “Frequent Requests”. As you would expect, the site contains a wealth of information about their services, local offices, SBA classrooms, outside resources and an online library.

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