

# Exploit Your Web Address

## Purpose

This white paper represents a discussion document on how by using the illuceo Web Hosting service, you can exploit web technology to improve your business.

The paper discusses:

- Affordability – how even illuceo low costs are actually cheaper than you think
- Benefits of a web site – what a 24/7 advertising presence can do for your business
- Benefits of email – how electronic communication can improve the way you conduct your business

## Affordability

Illuceo offer to register your domain, set up email and a web site for a one-off 'activation' fee. Thereafter you pay £9.99 per month + VAT for us to host your service i.e. we provide the technical platform on which your service runs.

All businesses are faced with challenges of keeping expenses under control, and you may be thinking "why do I need something else that is going to eat into my profits". However we believe that the illuceo service is very affordable and when complimented by the benefits we will show, it is a 'must have' solution.

If we deal with the activation fee first, this one-off charge is a legitimate business expense and will be tax deductible when you file your annual accounts / tax returns. This

could mean that the true cost is anything up to 40% less than that you pay illuceo, depending on rate of tax you pay.

The illuceo activation fee has to be compared to other competitors. For instance, if you use the yell.com 'site builder' service, the fees are £400 – and this is a service where you have to do the work yourself.

Regarding the monthly fee, there are a number of points to make regarding how cost effective the illuceo service is

1. The monthly fee is again tax deductible as a business expense in your accounts and tax returns.

After tax, therefore, the service may only be costing somewhere between £6 and £7.50 per month.

*You should speak to your accountant to confirm this*

2. Do you currently use the post to send quotes, invoices, updates on your service or products etc?

£9.99 per month represents less than 30 first class stamps! How many letters a month do you send? If you replace those postings with emails, the illuceo service is effectively free!

To what extent do you currently hold back on sending out through the post due to cost – now, using mailshots through email, you can send out reminders each Autumn to get their service booked, or to advise of a new product that you now supply.

3. A web site represents 24/7 advertising of your business.

To get the same level of coverage in printed media would require hundreds, if not thousands, of pounds of advertising.

## Benefits of a Web Site

- ***New customers finding your business***

Experts will preach about how your business can be reached by the hundreds of millions of people that use the internet these days.

Whilst in theory it's true, it's probably not actually relevant to you. You are probably a small business, and the fact that you are, say, an interior designer in the South East of England is hardly going to make someone from Cape Town come banging at your door.

What is relevant though is probably the tens or hundreds or thousands of possible customers in your locale who might just check the internet before they go hunting through old newspapers.

- ***Credibility***

In today's increasingly sophisticated consumer market there is almost an expectation that a business will have a web site. If you don't, it already in people's minds may mark you out as an amateur operation

- ***Making You Contactable***

Your customers can be sure of getting in touch with you without making endless unanswered phone calls (which in themselves may make you less productive as you have to answer the phone).

By showing your email address, or even by having an order or enquiry form on your web site, with a few clicks your potential customer can initiate contact with you and be assured that as a result you will get back to them

- ***Instantaneous Reaction***

How many times do we see a newspaper advert that catches our eye and although we mean to, we do nothing about it? Maybe it was out of business hours and you lose the will later on; perhaps you carry on reading and it slips your mind; or the newspaper is lost or thrown out?

Because you are immediately contactable via email or a form, you do not lose that opportunity. When your office opens, that enquiry from the midnight surfer is sitting there awaiting your attention.

- ***Getting Your Foot into Cyberspace***

There are probably thousands of your competitors with web sites already. How long do you think it will be, 5 or 10 years maybe, before *everyone* of them does?

Can you afford to be left behind? If some of your competitors are currently missing out, then maybe you can snag customers who will then remain loyal to you when that competitor, who is perhaps cheaper than you, comes online.

- ***Your Calling Card***

Are you ever stopped in the street, or when out socially, because someone is interested in what you do? Whether or not you have business cards, quickly jotting down your web site address is an effective means of telling someone how they can check out what you do, and then contact you if they are interested.

- ***Open New Markets***

At the moment your customers are probably derived from your traditional advertising or by word of mouth. As such your market is localised to either where you advertise or where your customers exist.

If you have products or services which need not be constrained by geography, your web site will create a presence in

wider regions and territories and you never know where your next customer may come from.

- **Currency of Information**

Updating a web site for new prices, services, products or announcements can be relatively straight-forward compared to undertaking the same exercise through printed media such as brochures. As such your web site is an up-to-date communication tool.

- **Value Added Services**

If you add sections such as 'Frequently Asked Questions' or 'How To' guides, your web site visitors will respect that you are passing your knowledge on free of charge, and not only will they be inclined to return, but they may also become a customer.

These types of sections can also be of benefit to you, as they may reduce 'support' calls where without the information existing customers may have had to contact you direct to get the advice or information they need.

Some of the benefits described above require more sophisticated web sites than the 3 page illuceo offering. However, as you see the benefits of your web site we will be happy to work with you and quote for more specialised design and implementation.

## Benefits of Email

- **Immediacy of Communication**

Email can often replace traditional forms of communication such as post and even telephone calls. With an email you do not have to worry whether your letter got lost in the post. Don't forget, as well, that you may get an immediate response, so the 4 day turnaround of sending a letter and receiving a reply has been replaced by something that took only minutes.

Imagine the scenario – you want to advise your customer when you will be attending them. You either post an appointment card or make repeated attempts to call them – both cost money. You may still be unsure whether the time was acceptable, and this could last a couple of days. However, send an email and chances are you will have confirmation by close of business that day, and it will not have cost a penny.

- **Internal Communication**

If there is more than one person in your business, say you have a partner, email is an effective way to pass notes; reminders; messages to your colleagues, safe in knowledge they will receive. No more losing those scraps of paper!

- **Enquiry Filtering**

Quickly reject work you are not interested in. Worst case, you simply ignore the email, but best practice sends a courteous reply declining.

- **Avoiding Distractions**

How many times are you working on a job and you get distracted by your phone ringing? When you answer, you don't have the means to hand to take notes. All of this can add up to inefficient working and lost productivity.

It is common practice these days for people to ask their customers to drop them an email with the details of their request. Slowly your customers will learn that email is the most effective way to get hold of you, and you will be able to get on with your work uninterrupted.

At the end of the day you simply deal with that days correspondence, which you can do in a far more focused and organised manner.

- **Improve your Business Processes**

Email can improve specific ways that you do business. For example, you may decide that you will email invoices to your customers, and this can not only reduce costs but also improve your cash flow. Also, there can be no arguing about "I haven't paid you because the invoice must have been lost in the post".

Similarly, if you order from your suppliers by email, this may improve the speed of delivery, and this in turn you are more confident about reducing your stock, freeing up cash.

- **Marketing**

You can use email to undertake mass communications to your existing clients, or even try and reach out to new ones.

This does not have to be sophisticated. For example, a heating engineer or a chimney sweep may simply want to remind their customers that they need to book their service for the coming winter. All you do is write one email, add all the customers who have email addresses and click send. Easy, and before you know it you have lots of replies and your work for the next 6 weeks is all mapped out.

- **Credibility**

Finally, let's not forget credibility.

If someone sees your advert and an email address that is NOT linked to your business name, they can immediately lose a degree of confidence that you are who you say you are. In that split second you may have lost their interest.

If there is more than one of you in the company, you can all have email linked to the same brand, and this will avoid confusing your customers.

It's a fact of life now that email is used throughout business, and domestically. If you do not have a company email, you are potentially telling the world that you are out of touch and behind your competitors. Instinctively, customers may look elsewhere.