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## **Thinking of taking your Business online...here is a Practical Guide**

In today's Global Market, the internet plays a vital role for many businesses and their success. However, for new business owners, it is important that they examine how much the Internet will contribute to their business before setting up a website. It is also necessary to understand the fundamentals of putting your business online.

Your website should be a tool that serves a purpose for the well being of your business. You must clearly define what purpose your website will serve. Currently, there are various types and uses for websites. The following are examples of the types of websites and their purpose.

**Brochureware Website:** This is a very simplistic type of website that basically is an online brochure that explains your company, products, and how potential clients can reach you.

**Marketing Website:** Marketing sites are designed so that they rank high on internet search engines. These sites often have companies run banner ads of other company's sites, or provide links to other sites for a small fee.

**E-commerce Website:** If selling your products or services online is your main objective, this is the best type of website for you.

**Database Driven Website:** Websites of this nature are used for management of products, documents or account information. Many businesses use Database Driven websites to monitor and manage their inventory or sales.

**Intranet Website:** Most commonly used as an internal form of communication within businesses, Intranet websites are usually password protected and are database driven. This allows confidential information to be shared amongst company employees only.

**Extranet Website:** Extranet websites are very similar to Intranet Websites. The main difference is that they are used to share confidential information with people outside of your business. For example: Customers, suppliers, sponsors and other companies. This type of website is often password protected.

It is necessary to examine what your needs are as a business and then select the type of website that will best suit those needs. If you find that you require characteristics of two or three different kinds of websites, that is in fact possible. Your website, in time, can end up as a hybrid of 1 or more website types.

Once you have decided what your website needs to do for you, it is wise to hire a professional who can aid you in your website's creation. It is important to understand that you can start out with a simplistic and informative website initially, and then slowly work towards a more complex website. This way you can ensure that your website is working on all levels before you expand on it. Also, if you find that areas of your website are not proving to be useful, do not hesitate to remove them. If you do not require it, then why complicate your site for your visitors? A simple and easy to use website is often the most effective website.

By following a few simple guidelines, you will not only choose and operate a website that works for you, but one that enhances your business in all the ways that you need it too.

*Sources: The Practical Guide to Taking Your Business Online by: Visa Breakthrough Series  
Book: The Small Business Marketing Guide by: James Stephenson*