



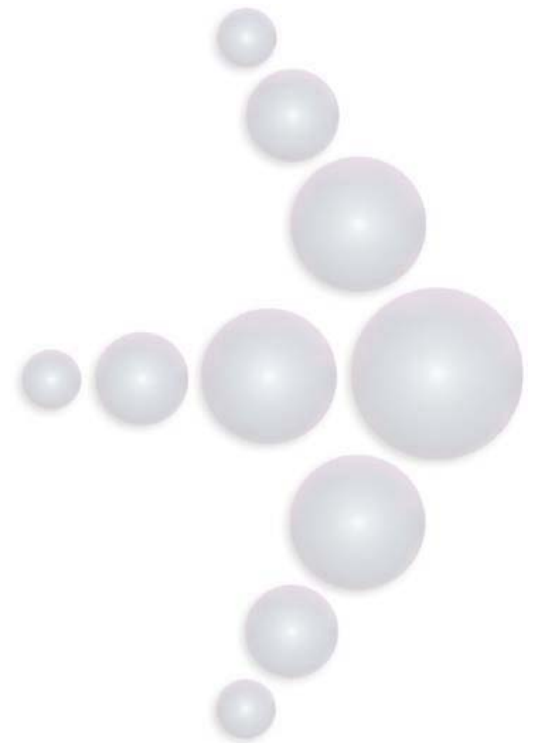
Web-based Application Development for Small Business

Technical White Paper

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Created by: Al Del Degan

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Web-based Application Development for Small Business:

You might think that only huge corporations develop custom software applications to solve their business problems. A lot of people believe that custom software is very expensive and therefore out of reach for small businesses. If you think this way, then you may be interested to know that custom software in the form of web application development can be very cost-effective with an amazing return on investment.

The terminology: "Web Application Development" comes from the marriage between the Internet's world wide web and computer software that is written to solve specific business problems.



Perhaps you may not be totally clear on what web application development is, or how it can benefit your small business. Or maybe you are aware of the terminology, but believe that it is much more expensive than you feel it is worth. Please read on...

The terminology: "Web Application Development" comes from the marriage between the Internet's world wide web and computer software that is written to solve specific business problems. A long time ago, in computer years anyway, people realized that they could do a lot more with the world wide web than just displaying pictures and static text. It was determined that dynamic content could be presented by connecting the static web pages up to database back-ends. Web sites were able to retrieve all sorts of information from databases and that information could be formatted and presented to the user. When the information in the database changed, the very next person that viewed the web site would be viewing the new information. Form fields, like text boxes, check boxes and radio buttons were used to gather information from the user, process it and store it in the database. This made the task of keeping your web site up-to-date much less time-consuming.

Many companies set up web servers on their internal corporate networks to share information about company policies, events and human resources information. These Intranets are a natural place for web applications because of the existing security and access to corporate databases. In fact

one of the largest growing markets for web-based applications is corporate Intranets.



Now, if you realize that more and more consumers and business-to-business transactions are taking place over the Internet every day, it is hard not to realize the importance of a strong Web presence.

Now why would a small business be interested in spending money on custom software? The answer is simple. The Internet provides access to millions of customers around the world. How much do you think it would cost to send out flyers or make phone calls to millions of people around the world? Now, if you realize that more and more consumers and business-to-business transactions are taking place over the Internet every day, it is hard not to realize the importance of a strong Web presence. Even to simply provide a central location for all your clients to go when they need information on your products or services. How much time and money would you save if you provided answers to the most commonly asked questions on your website instead of answering those questions over and over again on the phone. What if your products could be for sale 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year? How much would it cost to keep a retail storefront open all that time?

Many potential customers are way more comfortable visiting a web page than walking into a store and being harassed by sales people, or being phoned at home during dinner time to take a survey or donate to a charity. If you think about it, as each day goes by, the world wide web is growing faster and more business is being done over the web than ever before. Don't you want to reach out and grab some of that money that is electronically flying by?

How much is it going to cost? Obviously that is a loaded question. The important thing is that it can be easily affordable if it is done correctly. The biggest mistake people make is they come up with an idea for the most amazing website that can do everything their business needs including their accounting and washing their car. Then they call some of the major software development companies that advertise on T.V. and in magazines and ask "How much for all this?". After they get up off the floor, they decide that they cannot afford this technology and go back to doing things the old fashioned way.

The same idea could work for hair dressers, dentists or veterinarians. You simply cannot purchase a piece of software in the store that will accomplish these specific tasks.



The proper way to save money and achieve the same result, well maybe not the car-washing part, is to start out small. Prepare a reasonable budget to get you started with a basic website that has the important information about your company. Information like how to contact you, information about products/services you provide and how to get help/support for those products/services. Then decide what dynamic content will be the most effective for your company immediately. Perhaps it is an on-line help desk to provide support for your products/services. Perhaps it is an on-line calendar to provide information on trips, events or classes. Maybe it is a web-based inventory solution so sales persons on the road can ensure they make promises that they can keep. It could be an on-line solution to manage company information when multiple people are working out of their homes, or offices spread out over the city, or farther. Even an on-line store front or catalogue that allows people to purchase products/services at any time, day or night.

As an example, let's say you have a furnace cleaning business. You could manage all the appointments using a web-based application and then people could come to your website to book and pay for an appointment to clean their furnace. In the morning, a list of appointments could be printed off and given to each of the mobile cleaning crews. The web application would ensure there were no conflicts, and could even email a reminder to the home owner a day or two before the appointment. If you had a bit more money to spend, the system could even phone the home-owner the day of the appointment and play a pre-recorded message saying "Your furnace cleaning appointment is today. If you cannot keep this appointment, please call 555-1234 immediately to re-schedule". The same idea could work for hair dressers, dentists or veterinarians. You simply cannot purchase a piece of software in the store that will accomplish these specific tasks. Especially if you want it tailored to your business and perform exactly as you want it to.

DKTek Software Corporation will work with you to keep your costs down. You could provide a monthly budget and have the work spread out over a few months to keep the cost manageable. As time goes on and your business grows, you

can add new pieces to your web application until you have all the pieces you need. The two biggest benefits to web applications are that they are much cheaper than traditional desktop or client-server applications and they are infinitely expandable to grow with you as your business grows. DKTek also provides extremely affordable web hosting services to host your website and web applications. If you would like more information, or you would like us to sit down with you to discuss some ideas on how your business could benefit from web application development, please give us a call at (403) 703-9853. You may also visit our website at <http://www.dktek.com> where we have white papers and discussion forums for you to get more information. Isn't it time you took advantage of what the world wide web has to offer to your growing business?



Contact Us

If you would like more information on web-based application development or any other product or service offered by DKTek Software Corporation, visit our website at www.dktek.com or call us at: (403) 703-9853.

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