Topic:

Overview of E-Commerce (Part 1 of 2)

Definitions:

Website – A location on the internet that displays one or more pages on the World Wide Web.

Should Your Business Do Business Online?

Internet sales and marketing has revolutionized the small business marketplace. Most customers today begin their shopping experience by researching their desired product online. Therefore, having an online presence can drive traffic to your business, even if you aren't selling anything online.

The best ways to have an online presence are through websites, social media, and email contacts. The best-selling products online are typically electronics, everyday commodities and products manufactured by well-known brands. But, niche goods, which might be difficult to find by traditional shopping means, can also do very well online.

Business-to-business products (such as raw materials and/or wholesale supplies) are less likely to sell online than products aimed at end-use consumers. Other products that might not do well online include those that people generally like to see in person before purchasing, such as expensive jewelry or high-end fashion items. Selling perishable items faces greater requirements due to storage and shipping demands.

Getting Started with a Website

To launch a website, there are many affordable website-hosting providers that offer pre-designed templates, and can help secure the web address to host your website. Custom designing, building and/or hosting a website on your own can be extremely expensive and time consuming. Therefore, most individuals and organizations utilize website-hosting services from professional website providers.

Some web hosts offer their service for free with restricted uses, and are sometimes supported by selling advertisements to put on your site. Paid hosting services typically allow you more control over your website, but still have some restrictions and may charge extra for site redesigns and updates. Some Internet Service Providers, the service company that connects you to the internet, offer their customers a free web space to host a website, but these are often not suitable for high traffic sites and have only limited technical support. To find the best website fit for your company, research website-hosting companies online.

For more information, contact: technology@allianceswla.org.