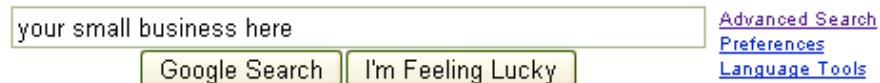


# Have you Googled yourself lately?

Posted by [Chad Gardner](#)



Although low-cost domains and affordable web design are readily available, a recent survey by [Warrillow](#) shows that the majority of small businesses don't have an independent website – in fact, 59% are without this resource.

With more and more people searching for local businesses on Google (ie. “Denver, CO florist”), it is important for small businesses to be on the first results page – if not the first result on the page – for their respective niche or at least their company name.

## **So, if a small business doesn't have a website, how can they rank on a search results page or create a valuable online presence?**

One of the most overlooked avenues to get on results page is to utilize social media. Visualize social media as virtual real estate – the earlier a small business can get their hands on a variety of properties, the better the chance they will reap the benefits when the area begins to develop more.

Here are a few valuable properties within social media that a small business should consider investing their time and efforts in:

- **Social Search Directories** – There are a variety of directories – such as [Yelp](#), [CitySearch](#), and even [YellowPages](#) – that allow users to search for businesses, get their information, and write reviews. Adding reviews to a typical “online phonebook” can help create a community around a business and give the business an opportunity to address any negative feedback.

Even search engines such as Google and Yahoo are beginning to show interest in the value of these communities. They are beginning to populate and enhance their results with results from social (and local) search directories. In addition to those results, search engines are creating [local business centers](#) to make adding your business as simple as possible.

- **Blogs** – With free tools available like [WordPress](#) and [BlogSpot](#), creating a small business (or personal, for that matter) blog has never been easier. Blogs have broken through the stigma of

being trivial and have become a credible source of providing information, establishing expertise, and increasing position on search result pages.

This resource gives small businesses a chance to highlight specials, give customers niche-related information, or anything else that has potential to bring people into their store – this is an opportunity to get creative.

- **Social Networking** – Although most small business owners are still using these networks for [personal reasons](#), there is huge potential for small businesses to connect with their consumers and like-minded industry professionals.

With business networks like LinkedIn and Facebook becoming more popular, small business owners have a resource to share ideas with other small businesses, create business profiles, and interact with consumers.

Just because a small business doesn't currently have the resources available to create and maintain a website, doesn't mean it can't have an online presence. Social media gives businesses an opportunity to be found by large group of consumers that are looking to be well-informed. Not only will current and potential consumers be able to find the small business they are looking for, the small business will be able to proactively interact with them and respond to questions or concerns.