

BT Tradespace reveals UK SMEs sell themselves short on internet shopping bonanza



Released on: February 23, 2009, 12:32 am

Author: [BT Tradespace](#)

Industry: [Internet & Online](#)

New research from BT Tradespace indicates that six out of 10 small businesses are missing out on their share of a £20 billion-a-year* web shopping boom because they are not selling their products and services online.

The new Voice of Small Business report from [BT Tradespace](#) shows that 67% have little faith they can find customers on the internet, even though more than two thirds (69%) shop online at least once a month.

The survey found that the number of SMEs with a website rose by 20% between 2007 and 2008. However, just 13% of small businesses consider websites integral to marketing strategy and only three per cent use their site to communicate with consumers.

Mick Hegarty, head of [bttradespace.com](#), said: *"Small companies can benefit greatly by exploiting the marketing and sales opportunities afforded by the internet."*

"During these challenging times, more people than ever are using the web to shop because of the choice, convenience and cost savings it provides. A professional and credible online presence can open up a world of opportunities and provides a great platform to engage with customers."

The Voice of Small Business report, commissioned to discover how SMEs can best communicate and conduct business in the current economic climate, found that 92% are aware of blogging but just 18% use it for business purposes.

The research also found that the smallest companies (up to five employees) were least likely to interact with other local businesses with 47% admitting to not knowing the companies in their area.

Hegarty said: *"The internet opens up a global marketplace for SMEs helping them to compete and prosper."*

"Free business [social networking](#) websites and social media tools like blogging and podcasting can transform a company's fortunes at the click of a button."

"Entrepreneurs can showcase goods, enhance their online marketing profiles, maintain an ongoing dialogue with customers, and share information and expertise with like-minded companies."

Notes to editor:

* Verdict Research estimates that in 2008 online spending by consumers on retail purchases rose by a substantial 32% to £19.4bn. With Internet access growing and users purchasing more frequently and more heavily online, this strong growth is set to continue, albeit at a more subdued rate. By 2012, online retail is set to reach £42.4 billion, 12.4% of total online spending.

About **BT** **Tradespace**
BTTradespace.com is a 300,000-member [online community](#), which enables businesses to sell products and services and connect with other people effectively - both building business and customer relationships.

BT Tradespace provides social networking for [businesses](#) and [free website](#) set-up.

About **BT**
BT is one of the world's leading providers of communications solutions and services operating in 170 countries. Its principal activities include the provision of networked IT services globally; local, national and international telecommunications services to customers for use at home, at work and on the move; broadband and internet products and services and converged fixed/mobile products and services.

In the year ended 31 March 2008, BT Group plc's revenue was £20,704 million with profit before taxation and specific items of £2,506 million. British Telecommunications plc (BT) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of BT Group and encompasses virtually all businesses and assets of the BT Group. BT Group plc is listed on stock exchanges in London and New York.

For more information contact:

Dan Thomas
Senior Press Officer
BT News Room
PP A5P
BT Centre
81 Newgate Street
London
EC1A 7AJ
020 7356 5383
www.bttradespace.com