

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



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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.

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