

The surprising impact of website uptime on small business reputation

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The costs of downtime are significant for businesses of all sizes

As of 2024, the average downtime cost per minute is nearly $9,000 for large organizations. For a business with a revenue of $10 million, daily downtime costs can go up to $55,000, and this amount doesnâ??t even include overtime, data loss, recovery costs, consulting fees, etc. For small businesses, downtime cost ranges from $137 to $427 a minute. While itâ??s certainly less than what large companies can expect to pay, reputational damage is nothing to overlook.

Downtime can make a business appear unprofessional

A website that is always accessible gives the impression of a well-managed, reliable business. Frequent downtimes, however, can make a business appear unprofessional or unprepared. 71% of companies have experienced unplanned full or at least partial website downtime.

It can drive existing and potential customers away

According to a recent survey, 37% of businesses have lost customers after website downtime. Customers expect quick and uninterrupted access to information or services. If a website is down, potential customers may quickly turn to competitors. According to HubSpot data, the bounce rate for the majority of websites is 26-70%. The average bounce rate for a B2C website is 45%, going up to 56% for a B2B website.

Negative feedback on social media can damage businessesâ?? reputation

Customers facing issues with a down website are likely to voice their frustrations on social media or reviews, damaging the businessâ??s reputation. Competitors can then capitalize on that by presenting themselves as more reliable.

Reliable hosting ensures website uptime

Itâ??s important to choose a reliable web hosting provider with high uptime guarantees (at least 99.9%) and robust support. This translates to less than 9 hours of downtime annually. Avoid providers with uptime guarantees below this threshold.

Check if the provider offers a Service Level Agreement that outlines penalties or compensation for not meeting uptime guarantees, such as refunds or service credits, and use tools like uptime monitoring software to detect and address issues immediately.

Proactive communication is key

Inform customers promptly of outages and provide estimated resolution times to maintain transparency. Downtime often leads to a spike in customer inquiries or complaints, overwhelming support channels. If it becomes a regular occurrence, it can create dissatisfaction, particularly if customers are reliant on your services for time-sensitive needs.

The best failover systems and backups to guarantee minimal disruption

Businesses need to have failover systems or backups in place to ensure minimal disruption during outages. The most effective failover systems include load balancers, active-passive failover, and a content delivery network. There are hardware, software, and cloud load balancers, all of which distribute traffic across multiple servers to ensure no single server is overwhelmed. Software load balancers are perfect for smaller businesses and integrate into hosting solutions.

Offsite backups involve storing backups in a separate physical or cloud location. AWS S3 is an option with a free tier.

Full server image backups create an exact image of the entire server, including all data, configurations, and applications. They simplify recovery by restoring the whole environment in one step.

Final thoughts

Downtime is more than an internal issue; it can tarnish a small businessâ??s reputation. Customers expect businesses to be accessible and reliable, and frequent downtime makes them look unprepared and inefficient. Brand damage can be difficult to remedy.

Website uptime is essential for small businesses aiming to establish credibility, retain customers, and maintain a competitive edge. Investing in robust hosting solutions and failover systems and leveraging proactive communication strategies can safeguard reputation and foster long-term growth.

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Author
huubster