



## Small Towns and Fancy, High Quality Websites Don't Mix – The Death of a Myth

Many independent retailers think,

**"I don't need a high quality website because my appliance store is in a small town and everyone already knows me."**

Over the years, we have heard this from hundreds of different retailers. Frankly, before conducting this survey, we always *thought* there was some truth to the belief that being in a small town made having a really great website less valuable when compared with being in a big city. The results, however, could not be clearer:

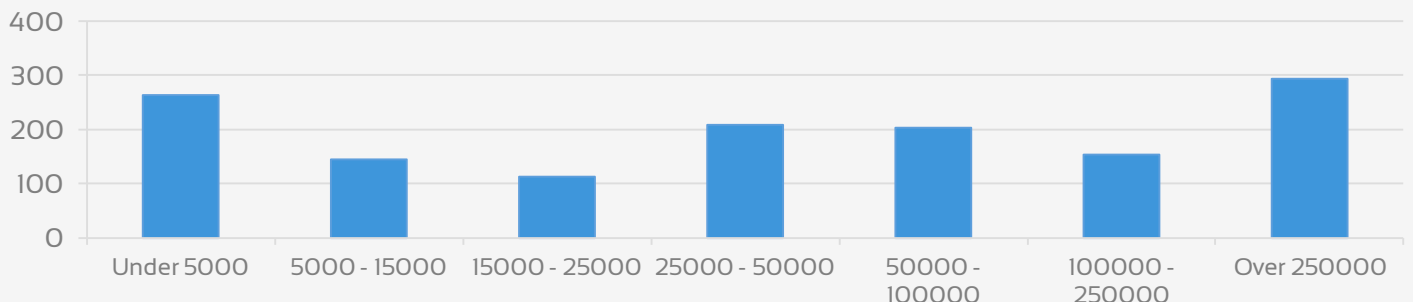
The idea that because you are in a small town you can't benefit from a high quality website is a **myth**. It is simply not true – and we can prove it!



Between June 8<sup>th</sup> and July 20<sup>th</sup> of 2014 we surveyed 1,468 consumers from all over the United States.

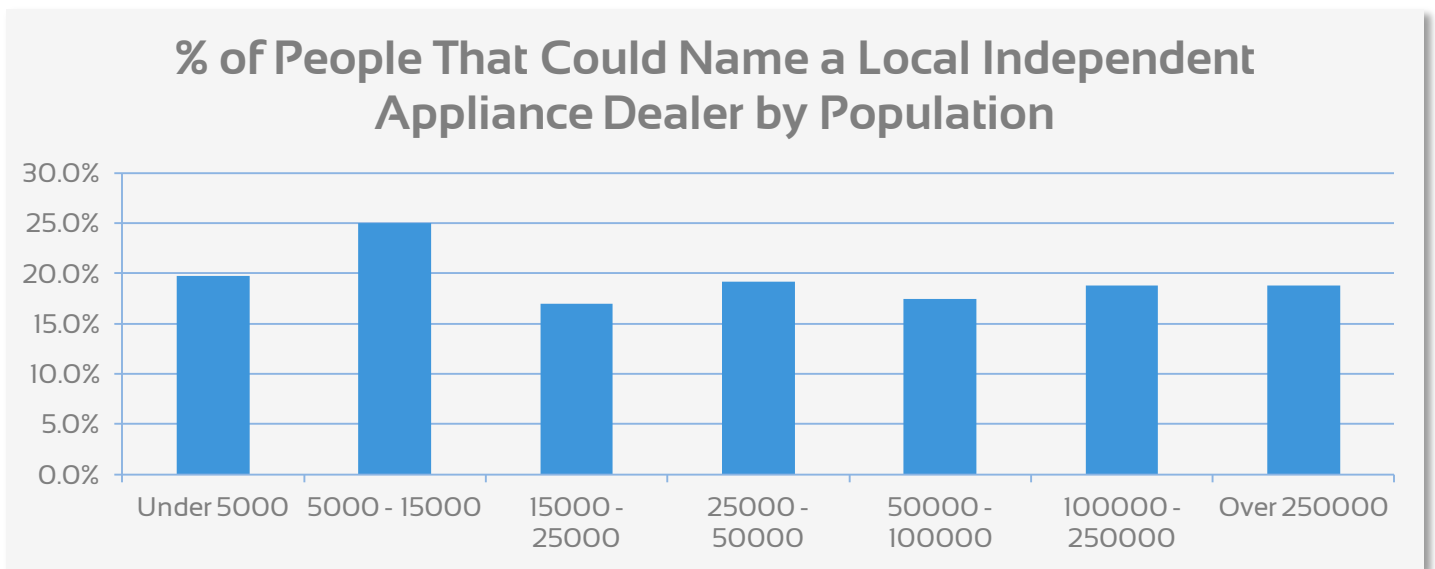
We wanted our survey to be as broad as possible, so we took special care to make sure that we talked with people not only from big cities but also from small towns. We succeeded! More than 19% of the people we surveyed were from very small towns (less than 5,000 residents).

### Number of Survey Responses by Population





Our survey asked respondents to list all of the appliance stores they knew in their local area. The data shows that only 19.5% of consumers were able to name an independent appliance retailer. What is really interesting (and shown clearly in the graph below) is that the likelihood that someone knows an independent retailer (*a.k.a. you!*) is the *same* in a big city or very small town! That means that if you sell appliances, about 80% of your prospective customers *don't know you exist* – does not matter if you are in a big or small town!



Now, take a close look at the data displayed above:

- You will notice in towns with populations smaller than 5,000, 19.7% of people knew the name of an independent appliance retailer.
- Jump over to the largest sized towns (quarter million and up), 18.8% of people knew the name of an independent appliance retailer.

**That's less than a 1% difference between residents of a small town to a big city!**





## How Can This Possibly Be? Your Survey Must be Wrong!

If you make your home in a small town, this information probably comes as a bit of a shock; It certainly surprised us! We checked (and re-checked) and re-ran, and re-surveyed, expanded our data set, and on and on. But no matter how we looked or tested the data the results were consistent.

Then we got to thinking, and when you do that for a bit, it begins to make more sense. Everyone you know also, almost by definition, knows you. People that know you, either professionally or personally are very likely to shop in your store.

This means you go through your whole life mainly seeing, talking and selling to people *who already know who you are*. But, even though your town is small, you probably *don't* know everyone in it, and they don't know you. However, because you are surrounded by people who *do* know you it's easy and logical to start believing that you don't need to advertise because everyone already knows you and your store.

### Here is another way to think about it:



Do you have a Sears, Lowes, Wal-Mart or Home Depot in your town or nearby? Probably. Do they advertise? You bet!

They all have great websites, run radio and TV spots, run newspaper circular advertising, advertise in the yellow pages (yes, we checked, and yes they all do!). They even send out direct mail and the like.

Why? I mean, who does not know what Sears is? Well, I can tell you our data shows not everyone knew that Sears sold appliances; only 54.1% of people that responded knew that Sears sells appliances. So, Sears keeps advertising so that the other 46% can find out about them.

Also, how do you think Sears got to a point where 54.1% of people thought of them when asked to name an appliance store in the first place?





## What Should I Do About This?



The complete survey data referenced in this paper is on the last page and it is pretty clear – **you should build a high quality website.**

It should have great full text search, lots of product data, work amazingly well on Smartphones, show prices, and generally be every bit as good as Sears.com, Walmart.com or Lowes.com.

**Why is a high quality website the answer?** Well, because your prospective customers are telling you it is!

We asked them what their first step would be to find a retailer if they needed a new refrigerator:

- ✓ 90.9% said their first step would be to do an internet search!
- ✓ When it comes time to call your store, 96.4% said they would use either internet search or your website to find your phone number!
- ✓ When it comes time to visit your store, 98.8% (**Yikes!**) will use the internet (either on their Smartphone or desktop) to get directions to your store.

The web is where your customer is starting their shopping experience...you can get more business by having a high quality presence there; Retailer Web Services can help. Call us today!





## Data Used In This Whitepaper - Breakdowns by Population

<b>Do Prospects Already Know You?</b>							
<b>Question</b>	<b>Under 5000</b>	<b>5000 - 15000</b>	<b>15000 - 25000</b>	<b>25000 - 50000</b>	<b>50000 - 100000</b>	<b>100000 - 250000</b>	<b>Over 250000</b>
Knows a Local Independent Appliance Dealer?	19.7%	25.0%	17.0%	19.2%	17.4%	18.8%	18.8%
Knows a Local Independent Furniture Dealer?	41.7%	48.9%	54.7%	42.4%	50.3%	45.7%	48.6%
Knows a Local Independent Electronics Dealer?	10.9%	11.1%	18.1%	9.6%	14.8%	14.9%	12.6%

<b>How Will Prospects (Who Don't Know You) Find Out About You?</b>							
<b>Question</b>	<b>Under 5000</b>	<b>5000 - 15000</b>	<b>15000 - 25000</b>	<b>25000 - 50000</b>	<b>50000 - 100000</b>	<b>100000 - 250000</b>	<b>Over 250000</b>
Internet Search	93.3%	90.2%	88.0%	90.4%	89.8%	91.7%	90.6%
Ask a Friend	3.3%	1.5%	3.7%	6.2%	1.7%	3.8%	2.4%
Phone Book	2.1%	3.8%	5.6%	1.7%	3.4%	2.3%	3.5%
Newspaper	0.8%	3.8%	0.9%	0.6%	4.5%	1.5%	3.1%
Seen Your Store While Driving Around	0.4%	0.8%	1.9%	1.1%	0.6%	0.8%	0.4%

<b>If a Prospect Wants to Call You, How Will They Find Your Number?</b>							
<b>Question</b>	<b>Under 5000</b>	<b>5000 - 15000</b>	<b>15000 - 25000</b>	<b>25000 - 50000</b>	<b>50000 - 100000</b>	<b>100000 - 250000</b>	<b>Over 250000</b>
Internet Search and/or Your Website	96.7%	94.8%	93.5%	97.8%	97.2%	96.9%	98.1%
Phone Book	3.3%	5.2%	5.6%	2.2%	1.7%	1.5%	1.6%
Newspaper	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.8%	0.4%
Phone a Friend	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%
They Already Know Your Number	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%

<b>If a Prospect Wants to Visit Your Store, How Will They Get Directions To It?</b>							
<b>Question</b>	<b>Under 5000</b>	<b>5000 - 15000</b>	<b>15000 - 25000</b>	<b>25000 - 50000</b>	<b>50000 - 100000</b>	<b>100000 - 250000</b>	<b>Over 250000</b>
Using a Smart Phone	53.2%	45.1%	50.0%	50.3%	50.6%	47.0%	52.5%
Using Google Maps (or similar)	37.1%	43.6%	39.6%	39.5%	34.3%	41.7%	37.0%
Using Directions From Your Website	7.6%	8.3%	9.4%	10.2%	14.0%	11.4%	9.3%
Ask a Friend	1.7%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	0.8%
Paper Map	0.4%	0.8%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%