How the Internet Changed Communication in Business

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The internet has given way to not only new technologies, but an entirely new way of life. Many personal types of communication in business are performed in a completely different way today than before the internet, affecting everything from buying groceries to meeting with global customers via video calls. The business community has especially reaped the benefits of the internet, especially in terms of productivity and discovering new opportunities. In fact, the change is so all-encompassing that it’s almost impossible for those born into the post-internet world to fully understand life in those days.

The internet has dramatically changed communication in business settings.

The Internet and Communication in Business

According to the Internet Society, during the 1960s and 1970s, researchers at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) led by MIT’s Lawrence G. Roberts and Leonard Kleinrock, created ARPANET, a packet network. By using ARPANET as the prototype for the packet switching network, the internet evolved as multiple independent networks. Over the years, the military and contractors began using ARPANET for communication. In 1985, communities and researchers were using the internet for email and research.

History reports that advances continued until 1991, when Swiss programmer Tim Berners-Lee introduced the World Wide Web, which is today’s internet. Two events in 1992 were huge turning points in the internet becoming the cornerstone of life it is today:
1. The development of the browser Mosaic (later becoming Netscape), which provided an interface for nontechnical people to use the internet
2. Congress declaring businesses could use the internet for commercial purposes

Businesses were able to create their own websites, and the world of e-commerce was born.

3 Technology Communications Made Possible by the Internet

One of the biggest changes for businesses is the communication technology enabled by the internet. The way people communicate with one another, share files, make purchases, and collaborate has completely shifted since the internet became widespread.

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These three technologies have transformed businesses of all sizes:

1. **The Cloud:** Before the internet, businesses were required to have physical infrastructure for all communications systems located on-premises, which was expensive due to hardware and maintenance costs. However, after the internet enabled cloud communications, businesses could save a significant amount of money and increase their flexibility and collaboration. By using the cloud for mobile communications, businesses can access all in-office telephone features and critical cloud-based applications from anywhere.
2. **e-Commerce:** Businesses — especially smaller ones — were previously limited by their geographic area. While catalog shopping was possible, it was expensive to mail catalogs and was only feasible for larger companies. And for B2B organizations, sending salespeople to each customer was expensive and limiting. All of these factors put small companies at a significant disadvantage over large companies. However, the advent of e-commerce has significantly leveled the playing field. Companies of all sizes can now sell to consumers and businesses located anywhere in the world. This new method of selling and marketing to companies and consumers is also forcing companies to significantly redo their sales strategies. Customers also have more options because they can shop from stores located anywhere, not just their own towns. This has made retail a much more competitive business in terms of both price and quality.
3. **VoIP and Video Conferencing:** Before the internet, getting in front of customers was challenging, since it either required expensive phone calls or extensive traveling. However, the internet dramatically changed this aspect of business by reducing the cost of calls through VoIP. Sales representatives can now get in front of customers through video conferencing without the expense of traveling. These technologies also allow companies to hire workers who live across the country and work remotely so they can staff their organization with the best talent, not simply the best talent within commuting distance.

By understanding how the internet has affected communication in business, companies can make sure they're fully taking advantage of all technology available today.

Is your business ready to add cloud communications to save money and increase productivity? Contact a Vonage Business representative to take the next step.