



SME BUSINESS SPECIALISTS

SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING

Small and medium business owners face the never ending challenge of growing their business and attracting new customers.

Their dilemma is simple:

- How do I grow my customer base without excessive spending or wasting my marketing budget?

and

- How do I know if my marketing efforts have been successful? Plus how do I measure that success? Do we already have advertising metrics in place?

These dilemmas apply to all businesses – it’s really a matter of “resources”.

Relationships

Your small and medium sized business is built on relationships! Yes you really do have a “relationship” with your customers and this is reinforced every time you interact with them (quotes, samples, transactions, telephone enquiries, sales, web browsing, etc).

- So if your business is built on relationships, then building and developing these relationships should be your business!

Developing and fostering relationships takes time, because it takes time to build trust! Regardless of what your business is, your “customers” come to you because they trust that you will satisfy their needs.

- Remember that “advertising “does not build trust – it simply promotes your products and services to an immediate marketplace!

Building “Trust”

Whatever your business type, if you have repeat clients then you have a degree of trust. That trust may be subject to competitive forces and pressures but successful small businesses position themselves as “unique” in that they provide “expertise”!

You probably already have that expertise in your business. It is your proprietary knowledge, systems, and staff that conveys to your customers that you possess the knowledge, skills and expertise they want and require.

Remember that every interaction with a “customer” represents an “experience engagement” which can potentially either enhance or diminish your relationship with them. Unfortunately, in our highly competitive marketplaces, your competitors will always claim to offer a better experience — so focus instead on building that trust with your customer through every experience engagement. It is important to get this right!

KNOWLEDGE

INTEGRITY

PERFORMANCE

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SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING (continued)

Your Staff and the Experience

You employ staff and you entrust them with the most important job of all – customer engagement!

But do our staff truly understand what that experience should be like for the customer? Think of any great company and think of how much effort they put into training and knowledge reinforcement (e.g. McDonalds, Bunnings – but also the big service firms).

The difference between the best and worst customer experience you provide represents your “experience gap”. The smaller the gap the smaller the risk of turning away valuable customers and failing to create new customers.

- ☑ Remember: Quality is important across the entire spectrum of the customer experience! Don't allow untrained or uncommitted staff to derail your customer relationships!

Price Driven Marketing

Sure it works! Right? You have created a relationship, won a new customer but have done so based on price. So is price the only reason? Because if it is then you are mining the competitive floor of the marketplace!

Where will your customer go if another competitor offers a lower price next time?

Don't misunderstand that there is not some need for price driven marketing. This is in fact an essential principal of some businesses unique product offering (UPO) – think Bunnings and Dan Murphys!

For most small and medium sized enterprises you will be faced with price competition but you need to establish and reestablish your relationships based on “trust”.

Immediacy (The great pressure point)

Why did that guy come into the shop (or look in your shop window)? Why did the customer ring with a phone enquiry? Why did they look at your web site? Why did they send you an email enquiry?

- ☑ Remember these are all “experience engagement” points

But your business is built on immediacy! That is what we measure – our daily sales, transactions etc. This is particularly relevant to high pressure sales based industries (think automotive retailing, even supermarkets).

If you don't know the answers to these questions then as small business owners we need to “get in touch”, start some “conversations” and engage with our customers.

- ☑ Remember it is a mistake to think that if a customer does not want to buy today then they should be ignored. They may simply be looking to the future and this is our opportunity to engage and create greater awareness of your business and develop your trust, relationships and “future customers”.

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Conversations

We used to think that conversations were purely face to face. The world has changed, and continues to evolve at a rate of knots. The technology many business owners know and understand (gen x & baby boomers – think “encyclopedia” is now “Wikipedia”).

So what about jumping in for a swim with the sharks? Think social media. Is it “media” as such? Or does it represent an opportunity for us to interact, build relationships, spread the gospel and obtain feedback in the virtual community?

- Remember that it’s a “conversation” and so your customers want you to listen as well! This is why your web site doesn’t always hit the mark (particularly if it is a static medium). Today more than ever people want to be heard.

Social media can work for local based small and medium sized businesses because, if done correctly, it positions your business within your community – which is likely where you draw your customers from!

Spread the Gospel

Most small and medium sized businesses have a dedicated clientele. They are your “fans” and surprise – they use social media, and if they don’t, their children do, their grandchildren do, their friends do.

- Remember – These fans are happy to spread the word, simply engage them, and when others see what you have then they too will want some! We call it “Virtual Fertilization”.

Be Active

To successfully have a conversation in the virtual world it is pretty much the same as the real world. It must be interactive – which means that you must be active! This is easier than what it may appear.

- Remember you need to be receptive and active in accepting facebook friends.

A Word of Caution!

There is a reason it’s called “facebook” and not “fakebook”. There is no place to hide in the virtual world and whilst you can control and manage your content it must be genuine and authentic. It must be representative of your brand and you and your staff.

- Remember it must be honest, but there is nothing wrong with putting your best foot forward!

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