



The Power of Business

Rural and Small Business

Tips and Resources

December, 2013

Last month we had a welcome from the University of Nebraska Lincoln Extension, one of the new contributors to the newsletter. This month we have greetings from our eXtension partner.

Holiday Greetings from eXtension –

Entrepreneurship and small business is the engine that drives economic growth in this country. We know that. So do you. But we also know small businesses are the glue that hold our rural communities together. A diverse mix of businesses is what keeps a community alive and thriving. That is why eXtension is committed to introducing you to the tools and resources that help you do what you do better. And when we can't find the resources you need we get busy developing them. Our eXtension [Entrepreneurs and Their Communities](#) team consists of over 400 educators, researchers and advisers across this country that want to help your business, and your community, thrive. We work with business owners from pre-startup to exit, from agriculture to eCommerce, from retail to wholesale. We use the latest in online communication tools to put you in touch with the information you need when you need it. Whether you interact with us through webinars, blogs, online classes, publications, like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter, know that behind every interaction is a dedicated professional committed to helping you succeed. I hope you'll visit us soon at Entrepreneurs and Their Communities!

Wishing you all a prosperous and fruitful 2014!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Mary L. Peabody'.

Mary Peabody, UVM Extension

With our new partners we are making plans for some changes and some new programs during 2014. Partners can be a great resource for your business. Partners can be new employees in your business. They can also be other businesses and your customers. Make 2014 the year you build your partnership network. Best wishes for a great new year!

Till next time,
Glenn Muske
glenn.muske@ndsu.edu

In Cooperation With



<http://www.extension.org/entrepreneurship>

Quotes of the Month

These days, word-of-mouth referrals are more prevalent because consumers are prone to sharing their opinions on public forums and social media websites - Jill Spiritus

Ideas don't make money. Businesses make money. And businesses might be sparked by ideas, but they're built on execution – Anonymous

Truly successful companies thrive because they **make something people want -- and they price it appropriately** - Margaret Heffernan

This Month's Tips

Work-Life Balance

This topic is not new. But it never hurts to be reminded of how to bring your life back into balance. For most of us, it seems like in time things just get out of control. These steps may help bring order back into chaos. Especially important is "me" time. Also in our connected world, turning off tech for a period can also be a great idea. <https://www.openforum.com/articles/6-ways-to-achieve-that-elusive-work-life-balance/?extlink=of-social-twt-o>

Sticking to Your New Year's Resolutions

We make them and then we forget them. Here are some tips on making them and keeping them. <http://blog.intuit.com/trends/strategies-for-sticking-to-your-small-business-resolutions/>

Did Your Marketing Do Its Job Last Year

If you do marketing, you need to see if it is accomplish what you want. If you don't do that then you may just be burning your money. Heidi Cohen offers a method to evaluate your marketing efforts - <http://heidicohen.com/small-business-marketing-year-end-checklist/>

Understanding the 2014 Consumer

Get some insight into what might be key trends to build your marketing effort around in 2014. <http://mashable.com/2013/12/25/consumer-ticks/>

Copyright Issues and Social Media

Copyright is another intellectual property issue. We don't hear much about it but it can happen to just about anyone. You certainly want to protect your materials and you should respect and

understand that others feel the same way. SCORE offers some help in this at:
<http://blog.score.org/2013/jeanne-rossomme/5-questions-to-ask-yourself-regarding-social-media-and-copyright-issues/>

Branding Yourself

I was intrigued by this article. What one word do you want people to say about you? There will be a word. Decide what habits you will have, your passions, and your work ethics to help influence your word choice - <http://onstartups.com/tabid/3339/bid/100408/The-Most-Important-Word-When-Building-Your-Personal-Brand.aspx>

Cash is King – Well. Maybe Not

Do you accept credit cards? If not, you may be missing my business. My world has become one of plastic and even some online payment systems. Small Business Trends offers some reasons why cash is no longer the only way customers can pay for transactions. If nothing else, #2 – people spend more, should get your attention. Does it cost something? Yes but that is the price of doing business. And how about giving discounts for people paying cash? There are mixed reviews on whether that is a good idea or not. Read the rest - <http://smallbiztrends.com/2013/07/accepting-credit-cards-increase-business.html>

Welcome the Competition

Small town businesses are often concerned when they hear of a competitor opening a store in their town. And this feeling becomes even stronger if the business owner holds a monopoly position. Yet looking at case studies often tells a different story. Business owners find that business increases when a competitor moves into town. Is this always true? No. But it happens often enough that a small business owner not hit the panic button but determine how to make such an event work in her or his favor - <http://smallbizsurvival.com/2013/07/what-to-do-when-competition-opens-in-your-small-town.html>

Training for Small Business Owners

Help exists to help small business owners pick up the skills they need to operate their business effectively and efficiently. Check out:
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323829104578622180226145470.html?mod=di_st_smartbrief

Learn to be an Entrepreneur

Being a business owner is not genetic. You can learn the skills you need.
<http://smallbizsurvival.com/2013/07/you-can-learn-to-be-an-entrepreneur.html>

Marketing Lesson From Television

What makes a successful TV show? According to Tweak Your Biz, it is: tells a story; offers an experience; engages; demonstrates; and intuitive. Isn't that what your marketing effort should look like? <http://tweakyourbiz.com/marketing/2013/07/30/5-marketing-lessons-from-television-shows/>

Pros and Cons of a Sole Proprietorship

A quick look at why you may or may not want to use this type of business structure - <http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/4833-pros-cons-sole-proprietorship.html?cmpid=514642>

Business Plans: The Big Questions

You have probably seen lots of outlines for what should be in a business plan. This story from Small Business Trends doesn't look at the order in which things are written but offers an excellent perspective on the big questions your business plan should answer. Even if you have not done a business plan, you need to be able to answer these questions if you want to build and survive in business - <http://smallbiztrends.com/2013/07/business-plan-questions.html>

Learn From Your Mistakes

The one certainty in business is that you will make mistakes. So, accept it and figure out how to learn from them. How? First admit it and then figure out what happened. Realize you will not be perfect, apply what you have learned and move on. Get more from Intuit - <http://blog.intuit.com/trends/how-to-learn-from-your-mistakes-in-business/>

Successful Businesses Take a Village

Just a short article that discusses the need for business owners to have a variety of professional advisors who they can call on for help. You also need a personal support team. Read more at SCORE: <http://blog.score.org/2013/rieva-lesonsky/it-takes-a-village-to-run-a-successful-business/>

The One Question for Every Customer

There are many ways to do market research. But the simplest is one question asked of every customer, "how did you find out about us?"

As you move forward in building a relationship, I might suggest you instead ask. "what brought you in today?" You maybe can get carried away and ask a second, "did you get what you came for?" I get that question all the time.

<http://socialmediatoday.com/kenmueller/1631551/one-question-you-should-ask-all-your-customers>

Marketing Through Branding

When you are developing the marketing campaign for your business, a key element is knowing your purpose. No, not just the purpose of the marketing, but the purpose of your company. The tips in this article may be ones you have heard before but the writer outlines them in a different fashion than you may have seen before. Take a moment to read the article and then starting building your marketing strategy. <http://www.marketingprofs.com/articles/2013/11329/purpose-driven-marketing-the-missing-ingredient-when-growing-a-brand?adref=nlt080213>

Why Brand?

You see a great deal written today on branding. Why? It is simple. There is more and more competition every day. To stay in the mind of your customers, you need to have a brand or an identity that they remember. Read more at: <http://smallbiztrends.com/2013/08/what-is-branding.html>

Brand Ambassadors

Besides you as the owner, your best marketing tool are those individuals who can be labeled as your “brand ambassadors.” They love you, they are in places you can’t be, they give you feedback not only from their use of your products and services but can tell you what others are saying, and they offer potential content material. Check out more at: <http://www.thedailymuse.com/entrepreneurship/4-reasons-your-company-needs-a-brand-ambassador-program/>

Online Tools and Tech Tips

Social Media in 2014

There will be more completion in content, pay-to-play is growing – Just two of the predicted trends. See more at: <http://www.inc.com/dave-kerpen/5-predictions-for-social-media-in-2014.html>

Building Trust Online

I enjoy most of Seth Godin’s blogs. But this one on building trust online really offers some treat insight. It’s a **must read** - http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2013/11/evoking-online-trust.html

9 Tools for SEO Optimization

These tools will help you get your online message seen - <http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/quick-seo-tips-list>

Marketing Campaigns for Mobile Devices

Ninety-one percent of Americans own a cell phone, 56% own a smart phone and 35% own a tablet. Do you need to have mobile marketing as part of your marketing strategy? You bet. So here are some tips to help you from Huffington Post - http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kristy-l-campbell/5-ways-small-business-own_b_4346419.html

Home Page = Landing Page

Your home page is the place most people arrive at on your website. So learn how to get the most out of it by treating it as a landing page - <http://marketingland.com/your-homepage-is-the-landing-page-65502>

Adding Value

You might be asking yourself how you can establish yourself in the online world. With everyone talking, what can you add? This article points out that one great way to find a niche is to add value to what is already being said. Be a filter, make sense out of it, or bring thoughts together are all opportunities. <http://socialmediatoday.com/hjarche/1964106/ask-what-value-you-can-add>

Mobile is No Longer an Option

Are you ready for mobile ecommerce? It's time according to the SCORE. <http://blog.score.org/2013/dean-vella/how-to-create-a-mobile-impact-on-e-commerce/>

Ethical Content Curation

If you are involved in curating content, you will want to read this article. We need to give credit where credit is due. <http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2013/11/ethical-content-curation-checklist/>

Using Social Media to Boost Your Brand

Hubspot offers some different ways of boosting your brand via social media. Try humanity, visual and participation among others. <http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/powerful-techniques-boost-brand-social-media-list>

Boosting Online Sales

There is a definite increasing trend of people buying online. So how can your business take advantage? Here are some tips to help such as put things above the fold (yes, it applies to your website as well as your newspaper ads) and adding images. Get more at: <https://www.openforum.com/articles/5-ways-to-boost-online-sales-on-small-business-saturday/>

Developing Trust with Potential Customers

Consumers are bombarded with marketing messages (<http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/smallbusiness/documents/fact-sheets/news-articles/marketing-tips/get-your-message-out/view>). So how can you break through that avalanche? One suggestion, don't even try. Instead build visibility, trust and a relationship by participating in the conversations your customers are already having. That used to be joining the conversation at the local coffee shop. Today it also includes being active, or joining the conversation, on the social media platforms they are using. Read more at: <http://www.inc.com/srikumar-rao/entrepreneurial-sales-how-to-get-clients-to-knock-on-your-door.html>

A Unique Advertising Strategy

Would you ever think of sending your ad to only one person? Sprint thought it might be a good idea. Will test the power of social media. <http://adage.com/article/cmo-strategy/sprint-debuts-ad-exclusively-1-person-s-twitter-feed/245514/>

Upcoming Events

eXtension Online Marketing Webinar Series

January 9, 2014

2:00 p.m. ET/ 1:00 p.m. CT/12:00 p.m. MT/11:00 p.m. PT

Crafting A Consistent Marketing Message!

Glenn Muske, NDSU Small Business Specialist and Connie Hancock, UNL Extension Educator

Join us at - <https://connect.extension.iastate.edu/etc-cop>

The eXtension Entrepreneurship webinar winter series focus is marketing online and enhancing their online marketing strategy.

January 9 - Crafting A Consistent Marketing Message!

Glenn Muske, NDSU Small Business Specialist and Connie Hancock, UNL Extension Educator

2:00 p.m. ET/ 1:00 p.m. CT/12:00 p.m. MT/11:00 p.m. PT

<https://connect.extension.iastate.edu/etc-cop>

Getting the attention of customers is harder today than ever before. Learning how to craft a marketing message that draws customers to your website where the information you provide benefits them personally. Crafting the message involves understanding landing pages, call to action, and relating that to your marketing goals. Glenn Muske and Connie Hancock will provide tips on how to Craft that Marketing Message.

Follow us on

- Blog - <http://entrepreneursandtheircommunities.wordpress.com/>
- Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/eXtensionentrepreneurs>
- Twitter - <http://www.twitter.com/extbizteam>

UPCOMING WEBINARS

February 13 - Blogging For Food

Presented by Jennifer Lewis, The Soup to Nuts Resource for Artisan Food Entrepreneurs

Starting your own business is not an easy task especially if you are involved with the food industry – after much research it was evident there were few resources where ‘foodies’ could ask questions and get helpful information. Jennifer Lewis will share her experience with creating a blog to provide resourceful knowledge to the artisan food community. Learn how a blog could be useful for your business to engage with customers.

March 13 – Incorporating Video into the Marketing Strategy

Presented by Jeremy Doan, Rolling Plains Adventures

Video today is as important today as content marketing. Learn how Jeremy Doan, Rolling Plains Adventures uses video to explain what their business is about, how they can share customer experiences, and what it takes to create short video segments to benefit your business.

ND Travel Industry Conference – 4/14-16/2014 - <http://www.ndtourism.com/information/2014-travel-industry-conference>

More Information

Website: www.ag.ndsu.edu/smallbusiness
Facebook: www.facebook.com/NDSUextsmallbiz
Twitter: www.twitter.com/gmuske
Pinterest: <http://pinterest.com/gamuske/>
LinkedIn: [glenn muske](https://www.linkedin.com/in/glennmuske)

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