



The Power of Business

Rural and Small Business

Tips and Resources

November, 2013

Well November has gone and the newsletter is later. What happens to our time. Hope everyone had a pleasant Thanksgiving. For you small retail business owners, I hope the holiday season is off to a great start.

As I noted last month, two new partners joined the development and distribution of it. This month, Connie Hancock, Educator from the University of Lincoln Extension, provides a greeting and some background on the Nebraska broadband effort going on. Next month we will offer a greeting from our other new partner.

With the change, we are adding a section focused on Online Marketing and Technology. We hope you enjoy. And the changes are probably not over. In early 2014, we hope to be making some additional changes. We hope that you enjoy them.

Till next time,
Glenn Muske
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Greetings from Nebraska,

Everyday there are new tools created to help us be more efficient or applications to reach and engage more with customers or ways to enhance our online presence! Deciding whether to incorporate these new tools can be challenging. University of Nebraska – Lincoln Extension offers Information, education and online learning resources that the focus on helping businesses succeed.

Helping small business owners make wise decisions is the goal of this online [Business Learning Resource](#). The [Business Learning](#) page offers a wide variety of resources, information and support to help you make informed decisions about utilizing and adopting broadband applications and online technologies.



In Cooperation With



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

Learn about how the [Business Learning Resources](#) can help you implement broadband Internet technology into your business operation. ***Taking new paths to success!***

Connie Hancock

UNL Extension Educator

Quotes of the Month

Whether you think you can or think you can't -- you're right. - Henry Ford

If you make a sale, you can make a living. If you make an investment of time and good service in a customer, you can make a fortune -- Jim Rohn

This Month's Tips

Merchandise Your Store for the Holidays

Visual sells. Plus involving the other senses just strengthens your impact. Assortment, complementary products, impulse and good service can make this a great holiday season. You got through the weekend. Now make a push for the finish.

http://smallbiztrends.com/2013/11/merchandise-store-tips-holidays.html?utm_source=feedly

Getting the Press Interested

All small business owners want to get their stories in the media, whether online or traditional. Getting this done comes with having a story first. The story must be newsworthy of interest. Small Food Business reminds us that getting the media's attention also means knowing our audience, knowing your story, and hooking the interest early. More at:

<http://smallfoodbiz.com/2013/07/10/3-tips-to-remember-when-pitching-press/>

Trade Show Booths and Being Social

Trade shows remain a great way to get your business and its products and services in front of important audiences, often those with a bigger customer base. The difficulty at most trade shows though is finding a means to make your booth stand out. Visual merchandising is one such tool. Another is creative use of social media. *Small Business Trends* offers 4 ways to make that happen. <http://smallbiztrends.com/2013/07/make-trade-show-booth-social.html>

The 20+ Year Evolution of Websites

Hubspot provides an interesting and useful look at how websites have evolved over time. With each change, the article offers a take-away for that means as we design today's websites. And realize, what we say today will change tomorrow. <http://blog.hubspot.com/look-back-20-years-website-design>

Legal Issues Where You Might Not Need an Attorney

Check out this Hubspot article for 8 areas where you can do some or all of the work yourself. As noted in the article though, the list is just a guide. There may be times even with these issues or if you are simply feeling uncomfortable where you should consider hiring legal help.

<http://blog.intuit.com/money/8-small-business-legal-matters-that-dont-require-an-attorney/>

Take Care of the 20% Who are 80% of Your Business

Inc article reminds small business owners of the importance in determining who the 20% are in your business that provide a substantial part of your revenues. Once determined, you need to then remember to take care of that group. Their final hint is a good one – turn the new into the few. This focuses on first impressions. Find the article at: <http://www.inc.com/victor-ho/get-to-know-your-vital-few.html>

Will Bootstrapping Work for You?

Inc. asks some good questions to help determine if this is an acceptable financing method for your business. I think they need to consider the size of inventory you will carry and the anticipated speed of company growth. Check out their five things to consider -

<http://www.inc.com/les-mckeown/bootstrapping-5-ways-to-know-it-will-work-for-you.html>

10 Mark Twain Sentences that Define Marketing and Branding

These 10 quotes get to the heart of what you as a small business owner need to do in order to market and brand your business. Ideas such as “sell yourself and not your content” and “I never let schooling interfere with my education” are words that you need to reflect on. See the rest of the quotes at: <http://www.marketingprofs.com/articles/2013/11152/mark-twains-10-sentence-course-on-branding-and-marketing>

Customer Engagement Matters the Most

What keeps you awake at night in terms of marketing. According to a survey of chief marketing officers, customer engagement is what they worry about the most at 30%. Twenty-nine percent worry about staying ahead and taking advantage of digital and 22% said the customer experience.

Perhaps the more interesting question asked who is responsible for customer experience and engagement. Now I know this group is from one area of the business so 35% said it was the marketing department but no one indicated it was the job of everyone in the company. At least 3% said no one had that job and 2% said it was the responsibility of the sales department. In my humble opinion, these companies need to step back and rethink the operation.

Although being a small business owners has its pressures, at least when everything is your responsibility, you are probably aware that the customers experience and engagement begins as you develop a product or service that meets the need, not just something you can sell.

Full article at: <http://www.kornferry.com/PressRelease/14864>

Do You Have Clients or Customers?

I like Seth Godin's view on this:

Customers buy what you have to sell, if they want to.

Clients express their need and you respond by providing.

See original blog at: http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2013/07/clients-vs-customers.html

Do You Offer Discounts for Paying Cash? Pros and Cons

You can offer a discount for cash. Should you? See Small Business Trends list of pros and cons. <http://smallbiztrends.com/2013/07/pros-cons-discounts-for-paying-in-cash.html>

A Disaster and Your Business

You just don't think it can happen to you or you just haven't taken the time to prepare. Disasters can and do happen. In this case it was a food business and salmonella. Learn from another small business owner of what it did to his business.

<http://boss.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/07/18/the-worst-two-weeks-of-my-business-life/>

Sunk Costs are Just That – SUNK

Intuit does a nice job of describing how business owners often make decisions and use past expenses paid to that person or on that project in determining how they will move forward. Sunk costs are sunk and shouldn't affect decision making going forward. See more at:

<http://blog.intuit.com/money/sidestep-the-sunk-cost-fallacy-to-make-better-choices/>

Mobile Payments are Here

By now you have probably seen and may have already bought something and then paid through some type of mobile device. Several stores I shop at have an table and a device to swipe my card. For some this represents their entire cash register. I have had them brought to my table and have a family member who have used them to place their order at the restaurant and then pay for the order with a mobile device at the table while another uses it to handle transactions at shows and events. This article provides some background information for you to think whether it is time for your business to go mobile. <http://smallbiztrends.com/2013/07/mobile-payments-need-to-know-retailer.html>

Marketing to the Info-Overloaded Consumer

We are getting bombarded with more and more information. There are more ways to send information, companies are upping how much they send, and it is so easy to resend information. So how can you get your message through? As *Entrepreneur* suggests people don't have little time to read so: show, don't tell; make it easy to digest; use catchy headlines; and use personal stories (and more about your customer and not you). See more at:

<http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/227386>

Time Management – Follow the 90/20 rule

If you are like me, you probably thought I made a mistake and meant 80/20. Or went the next way my brain worked – on, you want me to give 110% and that is how I get more done.

If you traveled either or both of these routes, you are wrong. So what does it mean? Read the story - <https://www.openforum.com/articles/follow-the-rule-of-9020/>

More Ways to Simplify Your Life

These tips from Inc are not directly all about time management but there are lots of connections - <http://www.inc.com/jessica-stillman/how-to-simplify-your-life.html>

Does Your Marketing Have ???

As most marketing pieces are reviewed, whether traditional or online, there tend to be 5 missing pieces: a call to action; clear message of what you do; benefit noted in the headline; a customer ready for what you do; and something for existing customer as well as new prospects. The article provides you with some homework to help you make your marketing more effective. <http://www.copyblogger.com/marketing-quick-fixes/>

Trademarks – Basic Information

This article provides a basic understanding of trademarks. If you have intellectual property, it may be in your best interest to get professional help to ensure you register it and protect it. <http://blog.mycorporation.com/2013/07/how-to-protect-your-business-trademark/>

Online Tools and Tech Tips

Low-Cost Online Marketing

Small business owners are always interested in two things – building their customer base and doing it with little or no money. This article provides some hints on how those goals can be achieved - <http://experts.allbusiness.com/10-cost-effective-ideas-market-your-business-online/#.UoEqf7HnbvU>

Tips on Starting an eCommerce Business

This SCORE article provides some insight on how to get an ecommerce business, or portion of your business, set up and running. <http://www.score.org/resources/getting-started-e-commerce>

50% + of Digital World Use Multi-Platforms

Are you where your customer is? Today that means not just location but also the device they are using to access your information. Check out this article - <http://heidicohen.com/multi-platform-content-3-strategies-stay-top-device/>

Why #Hashtag?

Get some history and how they help you get found - <http://searchenginewatch.com/article/2305444/The-Role-of-Hashtags-in-Social-Media-and-Search>

Call-to-Action

Google just made including your call-to-action even easier to add. So what? You make it as easy as possible for your customer to do what you want - <http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/google-quick-actions-nj>

Marketing on \$500

A common constraint for many small businesses is money. This one reason is why many small businesses spend little time developing a marketing plan or even making few focused marketing efforts. This article suggests 8 ways to market for \$500. Each are good ideas. I especially like those that put your company in front of a group of people on a regular basis. This seems to be one key in being recognized. <https://www.openforum.com/articles/8-effective-marketing-strategies-on-a-500-budget/?extlink=of-social-twt-o>

Using Social Media to Develop Brand Advocates

Want people to be your spokesperson? You can use social media to help you with that effort. <http://socialmediatoday.com/alex-coley/1916106/how-build-brand-advocates-social-media>

More Information

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

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