



# **Power of Business**

## **Rural and Small Business**

### *Tips and Resources*

January, 2014

Getting people to buy your goods and services is the business owner's goal. A step in making that happen is developing an awareness of your business and what you offer. Effective marketing then becomes of great interest and a common question. As you read this newsletter you will find lot of article around that topic. And they cover both traditional and online marketing methods.

One marketing struggle for owners is coming up with new ideas to continue to get people's attention. In just a couple of days one of the largest marketing events, the Super Bowl, will be here. Companies spend millions, not only for air time, but for production, development, and ads that end up in the "round file." But no matter how good the ads are, they will be forgotten and a something new will be needed.

Do you want to get off of this treadmill and make marketing much easier? Then **excel at what you do. Make or deliver in such a way that people can't stop talking about it.** We all know such businesses. We become their brand advocates. You, as the owner, work on the business and your loyal customers take care of the marketing.

Well it probably won't work totally that way, but it can be real close. Instead of you chasing customers, they are chasing you. What a nice place to be. It isn't easy but it can be done.

Till next time,  
Glenn Muske  
[glenn.muske@ndsu.edu](mailto:glenn.muske@ndsu.edu)

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### **Quotes of the Month**

Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value. – Albert Einstein

Why fit in when you were born to stand out? - Great reminder from Dr. Suess

If everyone is thinking alike, then somebody isn't thinking - George Patton

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

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## **This Month's Tips**

### **Start Your Year with Evaluation**

What is the health of your business? Here is a quick 10 question tool to give you an overview. But don't stop there. If you have a weak area, make it your priority to get it fixed in 2014. <http://smallbiztrends.com/2014/01/test-determine-small-business-health-score.html>

### **2014 Outlook for Specialty Food Entrepreneurs**

Want to know what to look for during this next year? Then head to <http://www.smallfoodbiz.com/2014/01/28/specialty-food-2014-plate-of-the-union-report/> and get their outlook. It will help you make plans for this year and going forward.

**NOTE:** Jennifer Lewis, author of the report, will be the featured speaker for the upcoming *Entrepreneurs and Their Communities* webinar. Get more information at: <https://learn.extension.org/events/1395>

### **Email: One Tool You Can't Go Without**

Of course this is one person's opinion but of all the online tools, it is argued that email is the one you can't forget. It is intimate, universal, and it converts. See more: <http://my.copyblogger.com/email-essentials/>

### **Repeat Business**

It has been said that the easiest person to sell something to is the customer who has already once purchased something from you. While not completely true, this is more likely to occur if you met their needs, offered what they felt was valuable, and stayed in contact. For some other hints, read the article at: <http://blog.intuit.com/marketing/how-to-get-repeat-business-from-your-clients/>

### **What is Business Blogging?**

A good definition about what and why you might want to start a blog. (plus it also has a link that nicely defines a landing page). <http://blog.hubspot.com/what-is-business-blogging-faqs-ht>

### **Naming Your Business**

Some people will agonize for hours over what to name their business. Others just pick one and take off. There isn't a right way or amount of time to spend on developing your business name. What is important is remembering that it must work for a long time (changing a name can be expensive and potentially devastating) and it forms a key element in your branding effort. So take whatever time you need.

This article offers some help in this task such as don't try to say everything in your name or going with a trend – your name must last for years. Read more at:  
<http://www.marketingprofs.com/articles/2013/11415/its-a-shame-you-chose-that-name-the-six-biggest-naming-mistakes>

## **A Customer Service Story**

I can't promise that your customer service efforts will get such results but the warm fuzzies you get are often enough payment. And you never know what might happen. Gotta read this.  
[http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-505143\\_162-57598047/a-slice-of-absolute-customer-service-perfection/](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-505143_162-57598047/a-slice-of-absolute-customer-service-perfection/)

## **Time Off When Owning Your Own Business**

Most articles go one of two ways both of which are myths: there is not time off or you have all the time off you want. Neither are true. Actually you will find other articles that take a more realistic look at taking time off. And nearly everyone encourages the business owner to do just that.

This article adds some different angles such as the weekend may not be Saturday and Sunday but when you can get time off. Also your "weekend" may not be the same two days every week. Other tips suggested are flexibility and setting boundaries. Read more at:  
<http://blog.intuit.com/trends/how-successful-entrepreneurs-spend-their-weekends/>

## **Is Pricing Related to Story?**

This blog post argues that you can charge a higher price if there is a story also to the product. And I think many of us have seen examples (just watch Pawn Stars and hear this comment every week). Yet I would add that there also must be value associated to the product or service by the consumer. Maybe that goes without saying but just thought I needed to remind us. Anyway, something to think about.  
[http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2013/07/want\\_to\\_raise\\_prices\\_tell\\_a\\_be.html](http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2013/07/want_to_raise_prices_tell_a_be.html)

## **Building Loyal Customers**

Before reading the article, how would you answer the question, "what is the best way to build loyal customers?". (And it's free).  
<http://smartstartbusiness.blogspot.com/2013/08/the-best-way-to-build-loyal-customers.html>

## **What is a Call-to-Action?**

The words sort of define the term but much of your marketing should focus on getting people to do something, not necessarily buy but an activity that helps implant your name in their minds. Get more info at: <http://blog.hubspot.com/what-is-call-to-action-faqs-ht>

## **Selling Retail on the Web**

If you already are or even thinking about selling retail on the web, then you need to read this article. Understanding what type of retailer you want to be is as important on the web as on main street. <http://mashable.com/2013/08/16/new-retail-web/>

## **Small Businesses and Social Media**

Is social media a waste of your time? My answer is no if done correctly. Then check out Intuit's thoughts - <http://blog.intuit.com/marketing/are-you-wasting-time-on-social-media/>

## **Better Record Keeping = Better Returns**

Although written for farmers, the ideas in this article apply to any business such as avoid making the same mistake twice. No one likes to keep records but it does have a payoff, sometimes a big one. <http://seedstock.com/2013/08/13/three-reasons-farmers-need-to-keep-better-records/>

## **Know Your Break-even Point**

Before starting your business it is important to know your break-even point. Calculating this number tells if your idea is an opportunity, if it needs more work, or whether you just need to keep looking - <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/227927>

## **Thinking About Joining a Franchise**

A business opportunity that many have selected is joining a franchise. Not only do you know if the idea works, but you may receive mentorship, management assistance, shared advertising, etc. Yet for several reasons this may not be the business choice for all. You also need to do your due diligence before signing any contracts. In addition to checking the financial records, reviewing legal documents, and interviewing key managers and other owners, here are some other questions to ask - <http://tweakyourbiz.com/management/2013/08/22/watch-out-for-these-5-traps-when-joining-a-franchise/>

## **Giving Directions**

Do you have to give directions to your business? Of course with GPS, online maps and other navigation aids, it is much easier today but some people still want something in writing. And often these directions are printed, increasingly more so by age of the visitor. So how can you do a good job of providing written directions? Small Biz Survival offers tips - <http://smallbizsurvival.com/2009/09/writing-better-directions-for-tourists.html>

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## **Online Tools and Tech Tips**

### **Need Help Regarding Web Hosting?**

Ready to develop your website or are you looking for a new host? These tips can help you make the best decision. Things discussed include content management systems, developer tools available, to be or not to be in the cloud, and managed or unmanaged. Read the entire article at: <http://www.smallbusinesscomputing.com/News/Software/the-small-business-guide-to-modern-web-hosting.html?dni=102032673&rni=7239080>

### **Understanding Email Marketing**

11% of emails are optimized for mobile devices. 48% of emails are read on mobile devices. Can we say problem? 91% of users check their email daily (who is the other 9% I wonder). These and other stats can help you tailor your email marketing efforts. From Hubspot - <http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/email-marketing-stats-list>

### **Social Media in 2013**

Don't know whether or not to take the plunge and develop a social media presence for your business. These numbers certainly look convincing to me - <http://www.jeffbullas.com/2013/10/25/46-amazing-social-media-facts-in-2013/>

### **Always-On Commerce**

You may say this is the same thing we have been talking about for several years now. Before words such as 24/7 or mobile marketing were used. But this may better capture the idea of seamless, always available marketing. The article discusses the digital aspects of it but I would encourage us to think broader. <http://www.emarketer.com/Article/Key-Trends-2014-Always-On-Commerce/1010439>

### **Email is Dead Or Not?**

More and more we hear about, and feel it ourselves, the avalanche of email that floods our inboxes every day. That leads many writers to suggest that email can no longer be an effective marketing tool. Entrepreneur magazine however looks at some of the facts and would argue that email can still be effective. <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/230284#>

### **Doing Email Better**

Seth offers some ways to improve your email message - [http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths\\_blog/2013/12/eight-email-failures-and-questions-for-those-that-want-to-do-](http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2013/12/eight-email-failures-and-questions-for-those-that-want-to-do-)

[better.html?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+typepad%2Fsethsmainblog+%28Seth%27s+Blog%29](http://better.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+typepad%2Fsethsmainblog+%28Seth%27s+Blog%29)

### **Online Reviews – One Story**

This is a longer review at one review site, Yelp.com, and its potential impact on store owners. Owners may not always like what is being said but they are reality for now. Read this some time when you can take a moment to reflect on the story and how your business fits in - <http://www.inc.com/magazine/20100201/youve-been-yelped.html>

### **Ways to Use Yelp in Your Business**

Not only can you get customer feedback but turn it around and use it in your marketing campaign. <http://www.thegetsmartblog.com/7-ways-to-use-yelp-for-small-business-marketing/>

### **Dealing with Social Media Complainers**

Some tips - <http://www.thedailymuse.com/toolsskills/how-to-deal-with-the-worst-social-media-complainers/>

### **Blogging Myths**

You can't believe everything you hear. Effective blogging means focusing on a niche, chose quality over quantity, and be consistent. Plus she has 10 more ideas at: <http://heidicohen.com/blogging-tips-to-avoid-triskaidekaphobia/>

### **Branding Versus Chasing Customers**

Some thoughts about priorities for business owners that run contrary to what you often here. Read more at: <http://socialmediatoday.com/tommartin/2010696/stop-chasing-customers-start-building-your-brand>

### **Online – Providing Information to Buyers**

According to Forrester Research, individuals may be anywhere from 2/3 to 90% of the way through the decision making process before they ever get to a salesperson. So where does that information come from? Online. Are you ready? [http://blogs.forrester.com/lori\\_wizdo/12-10-04-buyer\\_behavior\\_helps\\_b2b\\_marketers\\_guide\\_the\\_buyers\\_journey](http://blogs.forrester.com/lori_wizdo/12-10-04-buyer_behavior_helps_b2b_marketers_guide_the_buyers_journey)

Related article - <http://www.marketingprofs.com/articles/2013/12334/how-to-add-social-selling-to-your-marketing-mix?adref=nlt122013>

## **Content in Social Media**

As the article discusses, if content is king, then distribution is the queen. If you want to have a social media campaign or are already offering one, you need to check out these things to avoid - <http://www.marketingtrenches.com/content-marketing/content-and-social-media-the-peanut-butter-and-jelly-of-marketing/>

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## **Upcoming Events**

### **eXtension Online Marketing Webinar Series**

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

#### **February 13 - Blogging For Food**

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

**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>

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.

## **UPCOMING WEBINAR**

### **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.

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- Blog - <http://entrepreneursandtheircommunities.wordpress.com/>
- Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/eXtensionentrepreneurs>
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## SBA Webinar Series

Do you know anyone who is thinking about starting a business? Or perhaps they've already started, but still are unsure about market opportunities, regulations or recordkeeping?

The ND District Office of the Small Business Administration will soon be offering a free webinar series, ***Simple Steps for Starting Your Business***, to tackle those issues and more.

### DATES AND TIMES

#### **Business Planning – Your Great Idea!**

Tuesday, February 11th 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

#### **Forms of Business Organization**

Tuesday, February 18th 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

#### **Regulations, Taxes and Insurance**

Tuesday, February 25th 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

#### **Recordkeeping**

Tuesday, March 4th 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

#### **Marketing Your Business**

Tuesday, March 11th 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

#### **Financing Your Business**

Tuesday, March 18th 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

There is an attached flyer with more details and how to register. Please pass this information on to your clients or contacts that would find it beneficial.

If you have questions or need more information, please call the ND District Office at 701-239-5131 or e-mail us at [north.dakota@sba.gov](mailto:north.dakota@sba.gov).

## ND Travel Industry Conference – 4/14-16/2014 -

<http://www.ndtourism.com/information/2014-travel-industry-conference>

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### More Information

Website: [www.ag.ndsu.edu/smallbusiness](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/smallbusiness)  
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