



Small Business News, Tips & Ideas

Building your small business bottom line

September, 2015



Going to share a couple of thoughts this month.

As I think about this blog post, <http://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2015/9/23/what-about-beauty>, I have mixed emotions. Wide, well-lit streets let me know that I can get around easily with fewer traffic lights and less concern about possibly having a mishap with a pedestrian.

However as a small business supporter, we have lost our front door. The front door that welcomes someone and often gives us a chance for visual marketing of our business. As I drive by stores such as in the one picture, I can think of delivery trucks, big commercial dumpsters and maybe a simple store name. The ability to provide an enticing visual display is gone. And thus, as the author writes, we must turn to more signage just to let them know we exist. Is my age showing?

What are your comments on this issue?

The second thought focuses on the “why of networking.” On a regular basis I include the need for business owners to network. Recently ran across this quote from Bill Nye, the science guy. He sums it up very well when he says, “**Everyone you will ever meet know something you don’t.**”

Do you need any more convincing on why network?

Hope you enjoy the newsletter. Love to hear your comments and thoughts. .

Till next time,
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In Cooperation With



Quotes of the Month

Be sincere. Be brief. Be seated - Franklin D. Roosevelt

You're only as good as the people you hire – Ray Kroc

Beginning is easy -- continuing hard - Japanese Proverb

There will come a time when you believe everything is finished. That will be the beginning -
Louis L'Amour

This Month's Tips

Half Truths

This is generally good information. Do what you love must be tempered with reality. What is not said is that you need to think broadly around what you love. Don't get fixated on just one way to do something. Are there other ways to stay connected with what you love but approach it from a different angle? Sometimes there are but other times you may have to walk away. Agree that passion isn't enough but without it not sure how many businesses would make it. Finally, the good idea. Agree completely it is in the execution.
<http://smallbiztrends.com/2014/08/dangerous-half-truths-entrepreneurship.html>

You Need 7 Points

Thinking of starting a business? Take this test from Small Business Trends and see how you do. The truth may hurt but it also may save you from a wrong decision. This test isn't everything but is a good place to start your journey. <http://smallbiztrends.com/2014/08/quitting-your-day-job-to-start-a-business.html>

Marketing Strategies that Win

Are you a small business owner? Think you can't compete against the big stores. You can and this article gives you some strategies to make it happen. <http://www.inc.com/kimberly-weisul/15-strategies-for-independent-retailers.html>

Working With Your Spouse

Do you know of a couple who together own and manage a business? Or perhaps you would like to do that with your spouse? Many wonder if it is a good idea. Here is someone you trust and already have some shared bonds. However there are also some downsides. Get a great perspective at: <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/236609>

Why be a Business Owner?

Here are 10 reasons why – make things better, like helping people, enjoy self-determination, and the list goes on. <http://boss.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/09/02/ten-reasons-to-become-an-entrepreneur/>

The Three Basic Financial Statements

Doing the financial tracking for your store may be something that you have an accountant do. Yet to get the most out of the money you pay, you need to be able to understand what the accountant has provided. These three statements: balance sheet, profit and loss statement, and cash flow statement, are the basic three documents you need to get and understand. Here is a quick primer on what they are and the information they contain. <http://www.sba.gov/blogs/3-essential-financial-statements-your-small-business>

Business Planning

The article argues how planning can improve the chances of business success. I agree but notice that the gains were not from the finished plan but from the process. And the process was detailed and realistic. It broke down the numbers instead of just accepting overarching assumptions. And that is why planning works. <http://www.inc.com/partners/comcast/The-Much-Maligned-Business-Plan-and-Why-You-Need-One.html>

Starting with Little Money

They say it can't be done but business owners do it all the time. These tips certainly help like avoid unnecessary expense and don't let the credit card bury you. Read more at: <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/236961>

Building a Business with Bootstrapping

This is how many small business owners get started, bootstrapping. It is work but it allows people to achieve their dreams. <http://www.inc.com/magazine/2014/09/alexa-von-tobel/bootstrap-your-business-for-success.html>

Family Businesses

If you are in business, there is a great likelihood you are running a family business. Family businesses offer great opportunities but also great challenges. The article discusses their lack of respect and the fact that they are not for everyone. And of course there will be issues of bringing in the next generation and transition. More insight is offered. Worth your time. <http://smallbiztrends.com/2014/09/family-business-lessons-learned.html>

What to Do When Marketing Isn't Working

You study your audience, you plan your message, you lay out your campaign, and nothing happens. The first question to ask is "are you sure?" Are your evaluation plans in place? Then look at your execution, relevancy, BS use of the right channels, Also, did you really like not your audience? Have you checked your competitors? <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/237007>

Doing the Most Important Thing

Do you plan your workday? Or does your workday plan you? Are you doing the most important thing? See what Seth has to say. http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2014/09/the-most-important-thing.html

Why Do We Start a Business?

The common perception for why people start business is because they have a burning desire. Inc magazine suggests that two other reasons beat that out. Money is #2. For #1, read on. <http://www.inc.com/jeremy-quittner/harris-bank-of-the-west-small-business-survey.html?cid=sf01001> . But business owners also acknowledge that starting a business means they often have to give up things also.

Getting Press Coverage

Traditional media still has a great deal of power to connect with an audience. Therefore it remains an important tool you need to use. Yet many business owners find it difficult to get any coverage. Remember that your story must be newsworthy. It also helps if you have networked ahead of time with the person most likely to be interested in your story. And remember to also help that person with other stories they may be working on by answering questions on a timely basis and being the go-to person for connections that person may be trying to find. <http://www.inc.com/jayson-demers/trying-to-get-press-coverage-for-your-small-business-here-s-how.html>

Decision Paralysis

Are you frozen when trying to make a decision? It happens to everyone at some point in time. And it can be for the smallest things. Here is help. First, whittle down the choices. Use deadlines. Ask an expert. Just some of the ideas you will find. <http://www.inc.com/250-words/7-ways-to-avoid-decision-paralysis.html>

Why Small is Good?

Just a nice article as the importance of small business as well as how your small business can serve people just as well as the big stores. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/nicoleleibachreyhle/2014/09/02/why-you-need-to-support-small-businesses/>

Online Tools and Tech Tips

Periscope and Your Marketing

A rapidly growing new tool is a video streaming service, Periscope. Here are some ways you might use it along with some tips on getting the most out of it.

<http://www.toprankblog.com/2015/09/7-steps-periscope/>

Websites – Getting It Right

How often have you been to a website and you have no idea what to do? The buttons don't clearly tell you what to do. Seth Godin describes this issue and offers suggestions. More tech doesn't fix it. Clear wording does. http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2015/02/the-first-rule-of-web-design.html

Engage with Facebook Videos

Just as visual can help bring more attention to your marketing as well as more engagement, video can take that even another step forward. Video allows you to tell more of your story than written words or even photos. They don't need to be professional quality (most of them aren't). What they need to be is real and something your customer can relate to. So give it a try.

<http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/use-facebook-video-for-more-engagement/>

Content Marketing Myths

One thing holding some people back are a variety of myths about content marketing such as it's easy (and it's not) or the reverse, it's so hard what will I say (if you know your business you have lots to add). This article discusses 6 myths but also looks at the reality.

<http://www.marketingprofs.com/articles/2015/27072/six-content-marketing-mythsbusted?adref=nl021715>

Catchy Visual Content

How can you perk up your visual content? You want it something that grabs attention and gets people to take action. Photos are great, but photos of real people are even better. Involve people. See other ideas at: <http://heidicohen.com/visual-content-promotion/>

Understand Why They Leave

Just as you need to understand what may attract people to your social media channels, you also should watch and understand why they may leave. What are their expectations and are you meeting them? Check out these ideas and put them into practice in your marketing efforts.

<http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/unfollow-social-media-stats>

Email Marketing Can Work

Email marketing continues to be effective in certain situations. Make sure you consider it for your business. <http://venturebeat.com/2015/03/05/why-email-marketing-is-still-in-style-and-thriving/>

Getting More Responses

When to send, subject line, and follow-up are three things to consider. <http://blogs.salesforce.com/company/2015/03/6-data-backed-strategies-getting-more-replies-your-sales-emails-gp.html>

What's Going on in the Office?

There are so many educational opportunities available. One of those opportunities was earlier this month, *Big Ideas for Small Communities* put on by the ND Tourism Division. I love what the online world brings but still like to sit in a room, blot everything else out, and focus. And then we have the breaks where we can talk to and learn from the other participants.

The workshop started with Becky McCray discussing bringing big ideas to life and what works in rural marketing (As a disclaimer, I am a guest blogger on [Becky's Small Biz Survival](#)). She challenged the audience to consider the resources they have and what could be done with them. She provided examples of what small communities across the country are doing.

Becky reminded us throughout the day that "community happens when people talk to each other." Thus it is important to create the places and time to allow the conversations to happen. It can happen in-person or online.

Upcoming Events

Oct 6th – 10 am – 4 pm – ND Heritage Center – Tourism Industry Summit

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