

with columnist Robert Ciccone



Marketing basics apply to online and offline world

Online marketing initiatives can be a complicated and sometimes daunting proposition. Some may even argue that it is a science that requires some sort of degree. After all, you need to know and understand things like affiliate marketing, pay-per-click campaigns, ad sense, link exchanges, banner advertising, search engine optimization, HTML coding, and on and on. Today everyone is talking about online social media strategies. Who knows what they are going to come up with tomorrow? – technology is always evolving and with this evolution come new ways for business to capitalize.

So where does that leave the small business owner and entrepreneur? – the person whose forte is running a business and selling and marketing its services. The person who has built a strong business acumen and is on the frontlines every day separating what works in the real world versus the latest theory.

Well, I think it leaves them in the best position of all in terms of capitalizing on the powerful and breakthrough tools that the internet provides. If only the typical entrepreneur could realize this.

It's amazing to me how many smart businesspeople throw everything they know about business-building and marketing out the window when trying to implement their online strategies.

For some reason when experienced, successful businesspeople decide they need to market online, they perceive the internet as some sort of disconnected thing and not part of their current sphere of business or marketing experience. They fail to realize that the internet and all the e-tools that come with it are just that, *tools*. Yes, they are powerful and in some cases business transforming tools, but they are still just "tools".

In my experience, when an internet initiative fails it is usually because the business owner, in many cases, gives away control to internet experts who have educated themselves in a particular area of the internet, but not in the field of marketing or advertising – they may specialize in pay-per-click or how to update your site for search engine optimization, but have no advertising or marketing savvy or experience.

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forts? How do you keep a level head and keep your eye on the marketing ball when implementing your online strategies? Simple. Keep the basics in mind and let them be your foundation for whatever online tools and strategies you are implementing.

Use these basic strategies:

Have an objective. If you don't know specifically what you are trying to do, it will be very difficult to design an effective online program.

Understand your customer. Profile your ideal client and focus all efforts on them. Who is your ideal client? Where are they? How do they think? What are their online habits? How do they surf the 'net? What interests them? What do they buy?

Articulate your uniqueness. In order to succeed online or off, it is critical that you create and sustain a competitive advantage. You must be able to answer the question: why should someone do business with you versus all other choices available?

Synergize. It's not that one form of online marketing is better than the other. They all work but they just do different things, you want them to all work together and with whatever you are doing off-line so that the whole becomes greater than the sum

of its individual parts.

Experiment. Test different things against what you are currently doing. One landing page versus another, one headline against another, offer against offer, copy against copy, bonus against bonus, guarantee against guarantee, and script against script. Change one element at a time, determine what's working and do it some more.

Yes, marketing online can be a complex task, but it doesn't have to be. Realize that you are the expert when it comes to marketing your business. When using the wonderful online tools available, be in charge of your implementation team, manage its direction and don't forget about the basics of business, marketing and strategy.

Robert Ciccone is the president and founder of Success Unlimited Sales and Marketing Group (www.susmg.com). He is also the creator of the Marketing for Profit Program, a three-part results program that provides the marketing systems, tools and ongoing support to help participants effectively build, manage and operate a profitable business (www.susmg.com/MarketingForProfit). Robert can be reached at 604-535-2111 or rob@susmg.com.

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