

These aren't the droids you're looking for.
Marketing Don'ts for Small Businesses

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May the fourth be with you.

Popular Time Wasters
Better Ideas
3 Rules

Internet Marketing Advice

You can't swing a dead cat without hitting a social media / internet marketing guru. They all have the answers. They're all right. And they're all wrong.

The internet is like the wild west. Anything goes and what worked yesterday doesn't work today.

Best to ground your internet strategy in principles. Things you know won't change.

Exercise: Company values

Quick – jot down the top three things your company does.

Did anyone write “social media”?

Probably not. It's a means, not an end. So you just have to know enough to appear engaged.

You don't have to be an expert. You don't need to hire an expert. Seriously.

Popular Time Wasters

And how to use them better

Twitter – everyone has twitter, no one actually uses it. It's a “presence” thing. It's a distraction. A couple of questions: 1) are your customers on twitter? 2) are your collaborators or suppliers on twitter? 3) how much time do you have for twitter?

1 – if they aren't there, that's okay; but you probably should reduce the amount of time you spend there.

2 – if they aren't there, that's okay; see previous bullet. However, if they are there, you can use what they tweet to educate your sales people, your staff, and your customers.

3 – Twitter success is about consistency. Engagement takes time. Be realistic about how much time you have and want to spend on Twitter.

Questions and Advice:

How are you accessing Twitter? When and why? What do you do once you get there?

Use the website. Read your timeline until about 3 hours ago. RT and Like as necessary. Open interesting articles and save them for your designated reading time.

Hack: once a week, compile all your “liked” tweets into one PDF file and share them with customers. It’s like a newsletter of industry-relevant content.

Make Twitter a habit. Weekly, daily, or some other regularly. Give yourself 30 minutes to participate and guard that time like it’s creative time or a meeting. Think of it as 1) social media engagement (marketing), 2) research and learning (professional development), and 3) down time (break).

Hack: Follow funny, interesting, or famous people to break up the monotony of a business-only twitter feed.

Facebook – everyone has it, and it’s not an exclusive outlet for your content so don’t rely on it to push important messages. Think of it as a diary, journal, or photo album.

Nothing urgent.

Make it fun. – polls, activities, questions that engage your friends/customers/interested parties
Share content – yours and others’ but remember your readers rely on you for specific expertise, stay on message.

Hack: pre-schedule your tweets and posts so that your content appears frequently without you having to appear frequently.

Networking events – you can do all, none, or some balance of the two. Look at your values exercise; given what you do best, what kind of networking events are right for you?

Looking for:

Customers

Colleagues

Education

If it’s customers you’re after, consider events where your customers would hang out. Ask yourself, are they there looking for a service provider? If yes, then great! Rehearse your pitch. If not, then that’s okay. Just go and mingle. Get some information about what they’re looking for and why. What challenges are they having? Learn your market.

Colleagues can help you get better at what you do. They can evaluate your pitch, commiserate the market, and offer leads and ideas. Colleagues are important for knowing your industry. No one wants to share their competitive intelligence, but I’d encourage you to consider helping your colleagues be successful.

Education makes you better at what you do. In every networking event you should walk away with something learned, something new. Take time before you go to jot down a few questions you think the session will answer. If you're about ready to leave and haven't answered those questions, get them answered before you leave.

Networking is not your job unless it contributes to revenue. Find ways to measure how the networking you or your team is doing is actually earning you 1) customers, 2) referrals, or 3) recognition.

Do or do not. There is no try.

Return on investment is what matters.

You need to know how to measure your own efforts. Do you have an hourly rate? Then the time you spend can be estimated by that. Create models that identify effort + output = opportunity.

What do you need to get out of Twitter / Facebook / Networking to make it worth the effort? How much does it cost you to participate?

You all spent \$50 to be here today. Plus, you're giving up your valuable time. What did you expect you would earn in return by being here?

You don't need exact monetary values. You can build a model that has a scale. For example, the work put in is less than client work but more than marketing. The time it takes is less than a day but more than an hour. The payoff should be more than a PTO sponsorship but less than a national television ad.

Be like the chefs.

From Rework – Emeril Lagasse knows you can't do it like he does; you don't have the experience. So he gives you the directions, the ingredients, and the technique. He gives you everything. He knows you won't put in the 30 years he's spent working at his craft. You'll never be him.

You have expertise. Experience. Your customers don't have it. So tell them what you're doing, how you're doing it, and help them do it themselves. They can't be you. They probably won't even try. They'll probably just say, "You're amazing."

Three Rules:

Connect & Share
How Wow Now
Be Yourself

When you're networking, online or in person, be interested, not interesting. Ask questions. Listen to the answers. Follow-up. Comment, like, and share their stuff. Promote them to your

audience. Brag about what they've done for you. Be an ambassador for other thought leaders and people will start to see you as one, too.

Content can be one of 3 types: How is instruction, Wow is entertaining, amazing, or engaging, and Now is relevant to news, calendar events, or urgent. This was shared at Content Marketing World by the director of content from Monster.com. She said their "how" is resume building and interview tips; their "wow" is success stories and memes related to job searching; their "now" is jobs reports, unemployment numbers, and legislation.

Be yourself. There's only one you. What you have to offer is unique and valuable. Michael Porter says you can compete on 1) Price, 2) Value, or 3) Service but not all three. You fill a specific need in the Columbia marketplace and you do it because of your unique abilities. Align your purpose with your talent and your authenticity will win out.

Marketing buzzwords like "brand identity" and "differentiator" describe this very concept of Be Yourself. There are plenty of people who won't like it. But there are also plenty of people who will. There is no substitute for authenticity in marketing.

Exercise: Three questions

- 1) What do you do?
- 2) How do you do it?
- 3) WHY do you do it?

The what, the how, and the why

Seth Godin says people will buy from you, they will, just keep telling them what you do and how you do it and eventually they'll get it and start buying.

But if you want to convert them right away, tell them WHY you do it. It's your WHY that really matters to people. Why inspires people. It connects you to them and to the market you serve. Why explains where you came from and where you're going. Nail your Why and the people to whom you speak will understand you better.

Your marketing should reflect first and foremost, your WHY. It should be in the colors and images, in the words and messaging, and in the way you represent your brand online and at networking events.

