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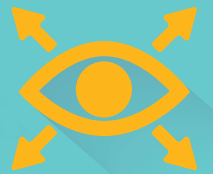
January 2017



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TECHNOLOGY

The How-to-Guide for MARKETING

SPECIAL ISSUE



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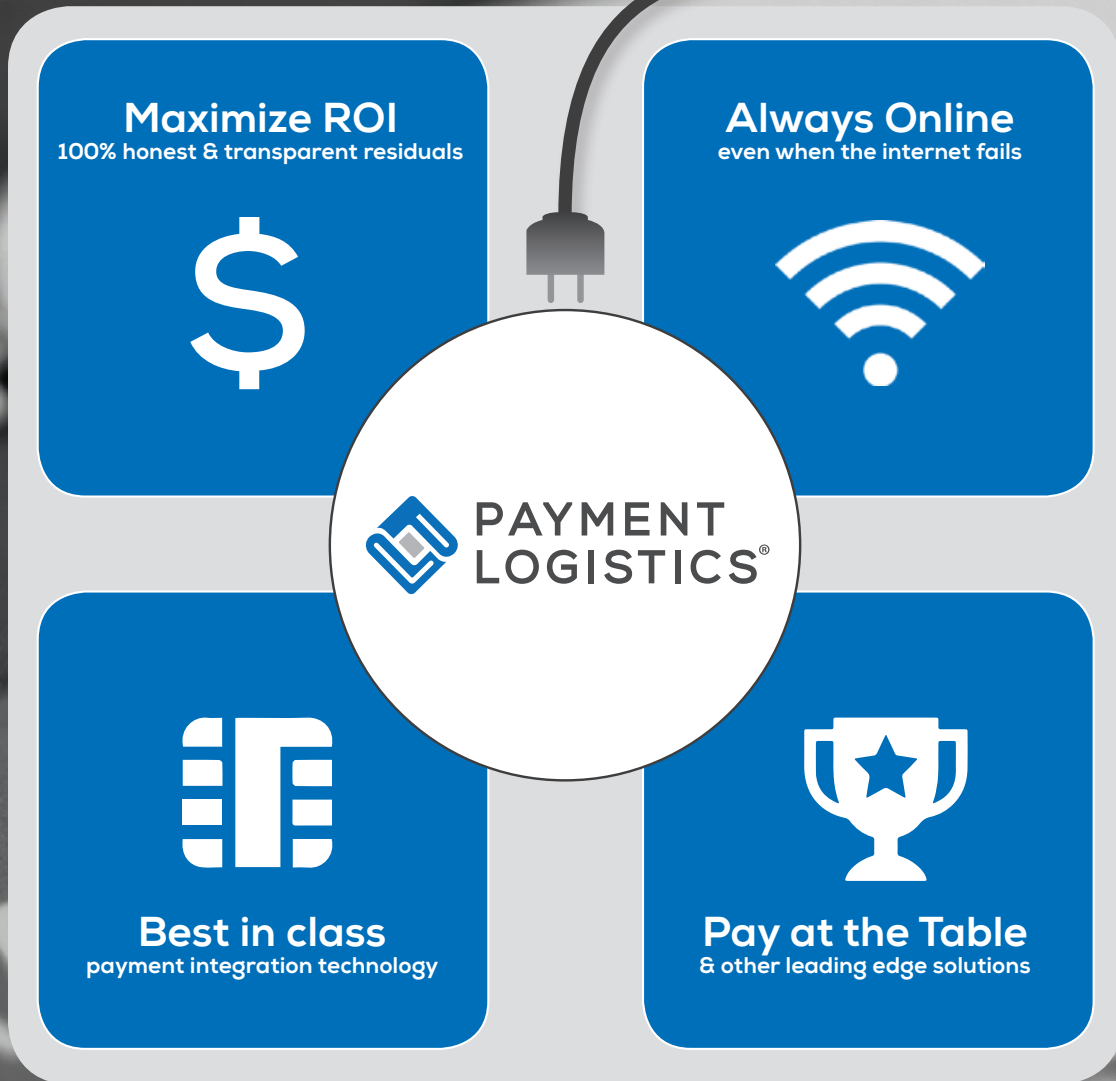
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SPECIAL MARKETING ISSUE 94 | JANUARY 2017



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JANUARY 2017 CONTRIBUTOR LISTING

The start of a new year is always a juncture for goals to be set and advice to be shared. This month, we've asked our Contributors to share with us the best business advice (in their specific area of expertise) they've ever received:

MARKETING ADVICE

Greg Aiken, ScanSource:

"A good marketing campaign should mirror what the sales team is doing."

Brenda McCurry, ScanSource:

"You always need a strong Call to Action."

Jennifer Clark, ScanSource:

"Start with the message's intent to decide your deliverable instead of the other way around."

Briana Moriarty, Star:

"Always be listening. Listen for positive and negative feedback. Don't just wait for a mention to pop-up in your notifications: proactively listen for marketing and sales opportunities."

MANAGEMENT ADVICE

Chelsey Paulson, North Country Business Products:

"Actively listen to truly understand what is being said, and, do the right things for the right reasons."

SALES ADVICE

Vanessa Foden, Intel:

"Instead of jumping into a conversation about how great your product or solution is for a customer, stop to listen to your customers and understand what problems they are trying to solve."

Kevin Kogler, MicroBiz:

"Before going into a sales call, always have a plan on how you're going to close the sale."

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTORS

Jason Firment, BlueStar

Robert C. Goldberg, RSPA Attorney

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February/March 2017 Issue
 Ads & Content Due: February 1

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RSPA President's Note

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Over the past few years, RSPA has focused the first issue of connect magazine in the new calendar year to look forward in a variety of ways:

- In 2014, we talked about business strategy,
- In 2015, we outlined the RSPA's vision and goals for the years ahead, and
- Last year, we focused our content on the topic of

planning, helping our members prepare for success by sharing tips on business planning—ranging from sales to succession planning.

As our Executive Editor Amber was contemplating our 2017 content agenda, she kept coming back to the topics we most frequently hear our reseller members discuss, lament, ponder — how can they compete/differentiate themselves/have their message heard? It was then that we knew the topic we wanted to kick off the year with — marketing!

Marketing is a big term, and can mean many different things, so we wanted to be sure to include something for everyone. We worked with the RSPA Marketing Committee to create a library of marketing know-how. Successful marketing starts with building your marketing plan, identifying specific areas of focus — social media, web marketing and events, avoiding common pitfalls and outlining how to track success.

A huge thank you goes to the Marketing Committee for sharing their time and knowledge so generously. Knowledge and connections are the bedrock of RSPA and this issue is a testament to that AND wonderful people who help provide both within our community.

To a successful 2017!

Kelly T. Funk

RSPA President & CEO
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Ransomware-how much is your data worth?

By Bob
Goldberg
RSPA General
Counsel



We all have heard about the attorney who dies without a will, but what about the reseller that fails to backup its systems or keep its antivirus software or firewall up to date? The call was urgent, anxiety high, and the need for guidance immediate. A pop-up message appeared on the owner's desktop computer advising that his computer had been locked and unless he paid money to the entity within thirty-six hours he would not have access to the data on his device again.

The reseller was a victim of Locker Ransomware that locks the user interface, denying access to computing resources. Unlike Crypto Ransomware, the reseller's underlying system and files were not encrypted or touched. Through the assistance of another RSPA member, a technician was able to remove the Locker Ransomware and restore the owner's access to all his files, financial information and records. A good result in a situation that could have been devastating.

As indicated, Crypto Ransomware is malware designed to find and encrypt valuable data stored on the computer, making the data useless without a decryption key. A key that will be provided only if the demanded amount is paid. Without a regular backup schedule, the loss of files could be permanent. Consider what the cost would be to your business if your data were no longer available. Ransomware is becoming a greater threat each day.

Ransomware may enter your computer in several ways, although the actual method is not always clear. A common

method is through redirected traffic from one web site to another. Often the redirected traffic originates from an adult content related website. Malicious advertisements, known as "malvertisements" can also release malware if clicked upon. Spam email has always been a source for malware, especially opening attachments in unfamiliar emails. Criminals pose as potential customers in order to gain attention to their email. Some emails will even employ capabilities to spread to all your contacts and seek to infect them as well. Downloaded infected software may also be a source.

Ransomware is not limited to personal computers and may also infect servers and mobile devices. Criminals seeking to extort money update their malware and techniques on a daily basis. Are you doing the same in terms of prevention? Do you have backup and disaster recovery plans? Often these plans do not extend to individual end users who may operate the most vulnerable equipment. Does the developer of your ERP software have safeguards in place? Is the data backed-up automatically? Is it stored safely in the cloud? If you are a

victim of Crypto or Locker Ransomware, can your ERP provider have you up and running immediately without paying the criminal? Have you tested your plans to see if they operate as envisioned?

Ransom paid averages \$300.00, however the demands are usually far greater. Amounts have been negotiated. Criminals often release a few files to demonstrate their control and ability to do so. Payment must be anonymous and is typically in Bitcoins or Litecoins. Although many ransoms are not reported, a study found that Ransomware had infected 68,000 computers a month.

As the industry moves to become "Trusted Advisors," security and Ransomware are excellent areas on which to counsel your customers. However, that is the second step. The first is to secure your own devices and systems. Create backup and disaster recovery plans and test them regularly. Avoid clicking malicious links or attachments, and patch exploitable software vulnerabilities. There are numerous tools available to remove Ransomware, but it is more important to prevent it in the first place. **c**



IoT comes to retail:

An STS Technology Profile

By Vanessa Foden with Kevin Kogler

Today we are living in a data-driven retail world. A world where a network of physical objects, such as devices, vehicles, buildings, etc, can be embedded with technology that enables them to communicate, collect and exchange data. This next wave of Internet development in which everyday objects have network connectivity — allowing them to send and receive data — is commonly called the Internet of Things (IoT).

Retailers are very well positioned to benefit from the IoT. In fact, some of the solutions we see in IoT today have been a part of the retail market for years. For example, RFID tags were patented in the 1970's and have been used in the retailer supply chain since that time. But recent advances in embedded sensors are changing the way retailers manage merchandise and learn about their customers. By combining RFID tags with a smart platform, brick-and-mortar retail stores can streamline inventory tracking, collect in-depth intelligence on customer behavior and preferences and dramatically reduce losses from misplaced items and inventory shrink. Other benefits of implementing RFID tags with real-time analytics is the ability to:

- Track exact inventory with near-100 percent accuracy to meet fluctuating in-store demand,
- Reduce losses from overstocked, out-of-stock, or misplaced items and inventory shrink,
- Get replenishment alerts when inventories are low at designated locations in the store,
- Maintain inventory in the appropriate locations, understand what items are touched, tried on, and eventually sold, and
- Increase salesforce efficiency and effectiveness while protecting customer privacy.

But retailers are also living in a world where speed matters when trying to quickly understand the patterns hidden among millions of daily transactions across many channels — and give shoppers what they want, when and where they want it. The challenge is often not the availability of data, but rather that most retailers today lack technology that can deliver and react to this data on a real-time basis. The ability to make real-time business decisions can improve the bottom line for retailers, but this ability requires real-time data and analytics.





RFID IN REAL LIFE

Levi Strauss & Co. recently deployed an RFID product of RSPA vendor member, Intel, which includes RFID tags and sensors, network gateways and analytics software to leverage IoT technology in some retail stores. Levi's attached small RFID tags to all items in the store and deployed Intel-powered gateways and ceiling-attached RFID sensors as well as an end-to-end cloud-based retail analytics application integrated with Levi's CRM and ERP systems. Through this solution, Levi's salespeople are able to instantly access information on item availability

via the store's POS system and hand-held mobile devices. As a result, the Levi's store team gained real-time visibility into what was on the shelf or in the backroom and what might be running low — making the process of inventory management more effective. This has helped create a more engaging and positive customer experience — as clerks can now spend more time delivering a great shopping experience to the consumer and less time checking the shelves and backroom for a specific sized item. This retail sensor platform improves inventory accuracy and visibility,



Levi Strauss & Co. integrated the Intel® Retail Sensor platform into some stores.

better supports omni-channel buy online/pick up in store transactions, improves basket uplift and product placement decisions, and reduces inventory carrying costs in the supply chain. **c**

So why are retailers slow to invest in these technologies? Because it's a major investment for the average retailer, and the pace of change is overwhelming. Another challenge is understanding the value of IoT and knowing where and when to consider an IoT implementation. The key is to take advantage of real-time analytics by consolidating data analysis onto a single real-time analytics platform and obtaining a 360-degree view of customers, supply chain and channel partners. This holistic view requires a significant acquisition, upgrade and/or integration of numerous technologies — including IoT technologies. This has led to a huge growth opportunity to Value Added Resellers (VARs).

Is the IoT all hype? Retailers continue to deal with the pain points of inventory distortion and an uneven customer experience. In a recent 451 Research survey of 200 SMBs retailers, 15% of responding SMBs indicated that they have already deployed one or more IoT initiatives while another two-thirds are planning or considering an IoT deployment. Considering that 75% of the SMB retailers surveyed by 451 Research either have or are planning on deploying IoT technologies, it's tough to argue that "IoT is all hype."

HOW BIG IS THIS OPPORTUNITY?

Industry research firms IDC and Gartner forecast IoT growing across multiple industries. Research firm IDC estimates that global spending on IoT devices and services will rise from \$656 billion in 2014 to \$1.7 trillion in 2020. That growth is expected to be fueled by growth in devices, connectivity solutions, and IT services. IDC believes that devices, which include modules and sensors, will account for 32% of that

total. That growth will boost demand for "purpose-built" IoT platforms, application software, and cloud-based "as a service" solutions for device management. Gartner, Inc. forecasts that 6.4 billion connected things will be in use worldwide in 2016, up 30 percent from 2015, and will reach 20.8 billion by 2020. In 2016, 5.5 million new things will get connected every day.

To their credit, many top VARs and distributors are already engaged in or pursuing IoT opportunities. This IoT activity can generate additional business in cloud computing, data analytics, mobility and security. Both enterprise and SMB retailers can realize the value of implementing IoT into their businesses. But successful VARs must be able to anticipate and address questions on the value and cost of IoT technologies. Becoming educated on IoT will be instrumental in helping VARs lead the buying process and ongoing support with retailers.

In today's market, we are seeing IoT growth and revenue opportunities across all markets. Retailers are implementing IoT solutions to help solve inventory distortion, increase customer satisfaction and brand awareness. If they are not already, VARs who have areas of expertise in inventory tracking and management, payment processing and supply management should be engaged with their retailers in exploring IoT implementations. For VARs without such expertise, there is an opportunity, but these VARs must become educated and position their businesses to take advantage of the IoT opportunity. **c**

INDUSTRY EVENT CALENDAR

JANUARY

15-17 **NRF**
New York, NY

19-21 **ASI Annual
Conference***
Phoenix, AZ

1/29-2/1 **INSPIRE®***
St Kitts

FEBRUARY

12-15 **The NGA Show**
Las Vegas, NV

26-28 **Restaurants
Canada Show**
Toronto, Ontario

28 **BSM ISV IQ**
Santa Ana, CA

MARCH

20-22 **Southeast
Acquirers
Association**
Charlotte, NC

3/30-4/1 **NCC Dealer
Conference***
Daytona Beach, FL

** indicates RSPA presence at event.*

Have an event you'd like other RSPA members to know about? Submit to us (at least six weeks in advance) at Publications@GoRSPA.org.

Our members have news to share:

- Visa, MasterCard Postpone 2017 Fuel-Pump EMV Liability Shifts for Three Years
- APG Cash Drawer Announces Leadership Change Within its European Operations
- Department of Labor's New Overtime Rule Blocked
- Future POS Press Release V6
- Auto-Star Offers Retailers the Latest in Mobile POS Technology
- RSPA Launches New Member Business Resources Site
- NMI's FACe Platform Offers PayFacs Real-Time ACH and Account Updater
- NCC's Reflection POS Processes \$30 Million in Transactions at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games
- POSSible POS Launches Major Software Upgrade with Version 2.4.5 Release
- ID TECH and Datacap Systems Inc. to Deliver Simplified EMV Solutions to Developers and Retailers for Attended and Unattended Transactioneading POS Manufacturer, Celebrates 15th Anniversary

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Plan, prepare, prosper: Leadership transition success at North Country Business Products



By Chelsey Paulson

Ten years ago, North Country Business Products began to develop a leadership transition plan. Today, our three executives have retired, our new President and CEO Kris Rydberg is leading the organization and we have made strategic changes within the organizational structure. North Country developed a transition plan, and we have been implementing that plan for several years.

Sounds easy, right? When you have Dean Crotty, past president, Curt Crotty, V.P. of Sales and Service and Darlene Geller, V.P. of Finance and Administration, with a combined tenure of 109 years, transition is not easy. In 2010, Dean had the idea to add associates, who he felt were leaders, to the Board of Directors. He wanted to expand their horizons and give them opportunities, insight and experience on a Board in addition to challenging them to think strategically. Some of those associates are now senior leaders at NCBP and have transitioned into the roles that Darlene Geller and Curt Crotty once had.

North Country wanted to promote the next CEO/President from within the organization. That was the goal. However, the board had set a strategic plan to double in size within 10 years, which was going to require skills and expertise that were beyond the internal candidates, and self-admittedly, beyond Dean's own expertise and stage in life.

How do you replace a (at the time) 39-year associate who had been president for almost 20 years? It was a very slow and thoughtful process. Six different executive search firms were interviewed. They were great recruiters, with impressive references. However, when it came down to hiring one of them, it was determined that no one understands the culture and strategy better than internal associates (i.e., the internal recruiting team) and so the search began without outside assistance.

The President/CEO position was posted utilizing executive-focused online job sites and also by reaching out to passive job seekers through LinkedIn. Surprisingly, we received a large number of qualified resumes. In order to narrow the candidate pool, we followed this process:

1. Phone interview with NCBP recruiter to discuss job history and listen for excellent communication skills. The length of the phone interviews were in the one hour range.
2. Phone interview with the current president that focused on applicable experience. These interviews generally lasted about an hour or less.
3. In-person panel interview with the executive team (Dean, Curt and Darlene). These interviews lasted up to three hours.
4. Lunch with the president — a more casual, get to know each other, meeting.
5. In-person panel interview with executive team and outside Board of Directors. These interviews lasted two hours.

6. Corporate psychologist assessment and interview. This was a leadership assessment designed to identify the qualifications and characteristics of the candidates. The steps included — mental ability, personality inventory and a personal interview. Total length of time for the candidate to spend on taking the assessment and in an interview with the corporate psychologist was up to four hours.
7. Reference and background checks.

After 11-12 hours of conversation with the top candidates, 5-6 hours of conversation with references and dozens of pages of interview notes and discussions, we felt we knew who would fit our culture and be able to take NCBP in the strategic direction we envisioned.

The executive team, HR and the Board of Directors determined Kris Rydberg would be our next president and CEO. Today, Kris often jokes about the grueling process he was put through, but he does understand the tremendous responsibility we all felt, especially Dean, to select the best candidate for the position.

The onboarding process was equally as important as the recruiting and hiring process. When Kris started in May of 2014, the focus for the rest of the year was primarily getting to know the associates and our customers along with industry/product education. A three-month schedule was developed for Kris. Friday's were left open and used to debrief with Dean and H.R. and to allow Kris to catch his breath! Kris met individually with each director in the company and several of the managers as well. He went to most of our locations with Dean on his "road



show” to meet the associates. Kris also met with the outside board members one-on-one. As time progressed, he would determine what areas needed more of his attention than others.

Kris attended RetailNOW just three months after he started, and this was where he was introduced to many of our vendors and partners in the industry. Being new to the POS industry, RetailNOW was instrumental in Kris’ industry education as he was able to walk the show floor and get a better feel for the variety of products, services and solutions.

At the end of 2014, Kris held a strategic planning session with over 20 associates to update the plan we developed in 2012, as many of the tasks in the three-year plan had been accomplished. This was a great forum for Kris to get to know the leaders on a deeper level and to work as a team to set the direction of the company.

2015 was the year of transitioning Dean’s financial and administrative responsibilities to Kris. Dean and Kris had a chart listing the major responsibilities (for example signing employment agreements, purchasing company vehicles, 401(k) review, benefit review, financial statement review, etc.) and

the timeframe when each would be transferred to Kris or delegated to someone else. The goal was to extend the transition period to allow adequate training and to allow Kris to focus on the strategic direction of the company.

After all the interviews, assessments and training, you may think nothing could possibly go wrong. One thing we underestimated was the real impact change would have on the associates — at all levels. We thought we had done everything right — the associates knew of the transition plan (since 2010), and they were updated throughout the hiring process. We announced the new CEO and gave an overview of who he was, including his qualifications and areas of expertise. Of course, we all knew change was inevitable, but I’m not sure we all knew what that actually meant. Kris was stepping into the role of someone who, at the time of retirement, had been here 41 years — 20 as president. It took time and patience on everyone’s part to accept and embrace change at NCBP. Today, we have a new leadership team and it’s an exciting time for North Country and for our future in the POS industry!

The associates at North Country are extremely grateful for the 109 years of combined extraordinary service, determination, hard work and vision that Dean, Curt and Darlene contributed — words can’t express our gratitude. We would not be the company we are today without these three individuals. They were our visionaries for many years. They set the plan and we, in Dean’s words, “hailed the mail!” While many things have changed in the last two years and will continue to change, our core values will always remain the same.

If a leadership transition is in your future, start planning early! Then implement the plan, communicate often to your associates and expect some bumps along the way. Leadership transitions are not easy, the impact of the change needs to be considered from all viewpoints. If you create a team of strategic, hardworking and capable people (who also like to have a little fun!), your company will find opportunities to grow and prosper! **C**



Dean Crotty (center, holding award) honored by the associates at NCBP.



NCBP’s Beloved Triumvirate: Dean Crotty, Darlene Geller and Curt Crotty in 2016.

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The secret to effective marketing begins with the approach.



The reseller's approach to writing a marketing plan



By Greg Aiken,
Partner Marketing
Manager

Making the decision to invest in marketing is a no-brainer for some, but for many small businesses, the choice between investing in business infrastructure or bonuses and running a marketing campaign can be difficult.

So let's start there. Make a list of what you are planning to accomplish during the next 6 months

to a year. What are your business and sales objectives? Are there any specific programs or technologies you'll want to focus on? Any specific geographies? Industry verticals?

IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE

Who are you talking to? What are the challenges and interests of this group of people? The more you can segment your audience, the more effective your campaign will be. A good marketing campaign meets their audience where they are: It's a guy walking around selling umbrellas to people while it's raining.

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PLANNING

continued from page 15

Specific to many resellers, there are some basic audience segments you might want to speak to this year: top prospective customers, existing customers and all other prospects.

Top prospective customers refers to the list of customers you and your sales team have worked to identify this year. This group represents your customer “wish list,” wherein you include any big fish and focus accounts where you know you’ll be spending a lot of your time.

“Net new” is not always the way to go. Some focus needs to be given to growing your existing customers. This audience will represent a large opportunity for upselling and cross-selling, as well. There are probably a lot of customers who would benefit from the purchase of complimentary products to what you have already sold them. Same goes for any end-of-life products you have already sold them. But we’ll get to that in the next section.

Finally, the “all other prospects” category represents every other prospect, outside of your top prospects, whom you would like to bring into your circle. This would be lists you have acquired and perhaps some prospects who aren’t as high on the priority list, but whom you would still like to sell to. We will talk a little more about how to approach this group in the next section.



The more you can segment your audience, the more effective your campaign will be.

Each of the audiences above can even be split into industry verticals and geographies. This way, you can personalize a marketing message to the group of people who are purchasing digital signage equipment from you in Denver, CO. The closer you can get your messaging to your audience, the better chance of success you’ll have. That brings us to the next thing you should be considering when writing a marketing plan: determining your messaging.

HOW TO AVOID COMMON MARKETING PITFALLS

For many resellers who might be seeing a string of ineffective campaigns, you’ll notice that consistent themes begin to arise. We have captured some of the most common mistakes people make when approaching their marketing campaigns. We share these with you with hopes that you will beat the learning curve:

DON'T:

Send an email (or even an e-newsletter) without a reason.

Example: “Thanks for attending our event.” Also – do you have enough content for that weekly e-newsletter? Lots of valuable emails will become white noise or may even lead to the dreaded unsubscribe, so be sure to have a clear goal in mind before sending an email.

DO:

Always begin with the end in mind. Set your campaign goals and determine your message. Once you have nailed those two items, then you can decide whether you need to send an email. There is nothing worse than someone not taking advantage of the time they have acquired with their audience.

DON'T:

Conduct a single marketing project and expect leads. It’s not too often that we pick up the phone to call someone and the prospect on the other end replies with, “Thank you for calling! You are just who we needed to talk to. We just got a huge budget and we were waiting on someone to call us.” What a

perfect world that would be! Because we rarely get that lucky, some longer term marketing tactics are warranted. We strongly encourage you to consider running longer term and multi-part campaigns. Rarely will one tactic turn out a bunch of leads. Leads come from a concerted sales and marketing effort that happens over a longer period of time.

DO:

Understand that marketing takes time, just as sales does. It may require several passes before you receive a response – particularly if the audience you’re speaking to doesn’t know you yet. A variety of factors need to be in place in order for a prospect to agree to make a purchase from you: Among



DETERMINE YOUR MESSAGING

Your messaging should address your goals and the needs and interests of your target audience. For example, if you are communicating by email with existing customers who are up for renewal or whose products have gone end of life, make sure your marketing is doing an effective job at communicating just that.

Another important thing to consider when it comes to messaging is the amount of business challenges or frustrations your prospects or customers are having in the space in which you're trying to sell. You're speaking with customers on a daily basis: What are some common objections they are having about the technology? Marketing is a handy tool to be able to start the conversation around solving those challenges. Don't be afraid to build your marketing campaign around answering the problems of others. You are in the unique position where you understand why the technology you're selling is great. Now, you just need to be able to communicate it to others.

You also want your messaging to reflect your business goals for the year. Whatever you determined you are trying to accomplish or sell this year should be merged with what you're communicating to others. For example, if you're wanting to encourage your customers to buy more total solutions, instead of individual products, your marketing should be heavy on what solutions you offer.

Something else to consider in messaging is that while a lot of marketing is, by nature, a one-way conversation, ease up on the self-promotion. Your end customer does not want to hear about anything that doesn't directly impact them. That's why getting the target audience correct is so critical.

Speaking of target audiences, assuming you're wanting to craft messaging to each of the audiences we outlined earlier, here are some examples of how you could consider approaching each:

1. **Top prospects:** What is the long-term approach? How long are you willing to chase this prospect until you give up? How long will it take to sell the solution you're wanting to sell? Use that time frame information to back into the length of your marketing campaign.

What would you like to tell them most? Prioritize your messaging and be patient, but consistent. A good lead generation campaign takes months.

2. **Existing customers:** Your existing customer base represents plenty of opportunity to split your audience into "sub-sets." For example, if someone purchased scanning equipment from you, you can talk to them specifically about scanning. You can inform them about what's new in the scanning world and furthermore, what else they should be including in their total scanning solution.

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these, they need budget, they must have the need and the timing must be just right. A good marketing campaign will meet them where they are and nurture them through the sales funnel until they are ready to make a purchase. So just be patient and keep at it.

DON'T:

Forget to segment your audience.

Once you know who you'll be talking to, you need to figure out how best to narrow your audience so you can talk to them individually. If you are selling scanning equipment, your message will be different to those who currently purchase scanning equipment vs. those who have never purchased it before.

You'll have a lot more success when you segment your audience and focus your messaging to their specific needs.

DON'T:

Forget to follow up after you run a marketing campaign.

You spent time and money on putting together a marketing program. You and the executives huddled and decided to make the investment. You pooled subject-matter experts and got the messaging just right. The tactics seemed to have a successful engagement rate. Don't neglect your progress by moving on to your next task. Those leads need to continue to be nurtured until they are interested enough to make a purchase. Leads

need to be handheld through your funnel until they are ready to have a conversation.

DON'T:

Forget to track the success of your campaign.

There are a variety of ways to track success. Here are a few: open rates, click through rates, total responses, appointments and resulting sales. Even when campaigns are not perceived as successful, make sure you document the suspected reasons so your future campaigns will benefit.

Avoid these pitfalls and be mindful of your audience and you'll be turning prospects into leads in no time. **C**



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You can also take a look at this audience to separate those who are purchasing a lot from those who haven't purchased in a long time. You would certainly speak to these audiences differently if you were to have a conversation with them in person.

- 3. **All other prospects:** This audience can be tricky, but use the audience segmentation rules we discussed earlier in order to break down messaging to this audience. The more you know about them, the

more those facts should be used. For example, if all you know is their industry vertical, start there. Why is your solution so great for their industry?

Additionally, take note of what your competitors are saying. If they are saying the same thing you are, it's time to change what you're saying, or else you're just another company trying to sell something.

Create tactics that align with your goals. The final step you'll need to take in

Addressing concerns or challenges is a good way to get the attention of your customers and prospects.

creating your marketing plan is to determine how you'll get your messaging out to the selected audiences. Be sure this is the final step. You don't ever want to decide the medium of communication before you decide the message.

Listen to your audience, too! If your target audience has told you they like live education, you'll want to be sure that you are creating plenty of opportunities for live education. If you're having trouble determining your medium, take a look at it from your own perspective: How would you like to be communicated with?

Diversify your tactics, too. If email isn't working, move on to something else! An old fashioned phone call can still open a lot of doors!

Once you have segmented your audience, determined your messaging and created the tactics you'd like to use, you can start customizing your marketing plan.

Your plan can be as simple as this: mapping out your year and what you'll be saying to who and when. Once that plan is in place, make sure it aligns with what your sales team is doing.

And finally, don't forget to measure success. Each marketing campaign will get smarter once you apply what you have learned to each new campaign.

This should give you the framework from which to begin your planning. Give this the time it deserves. Your marketing is a direct reflection of your company to people who aren't as familiar with all of your services as you are. Happy selling! **C**



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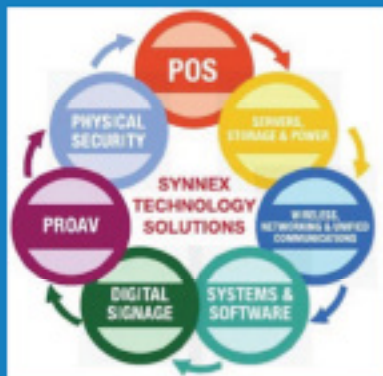
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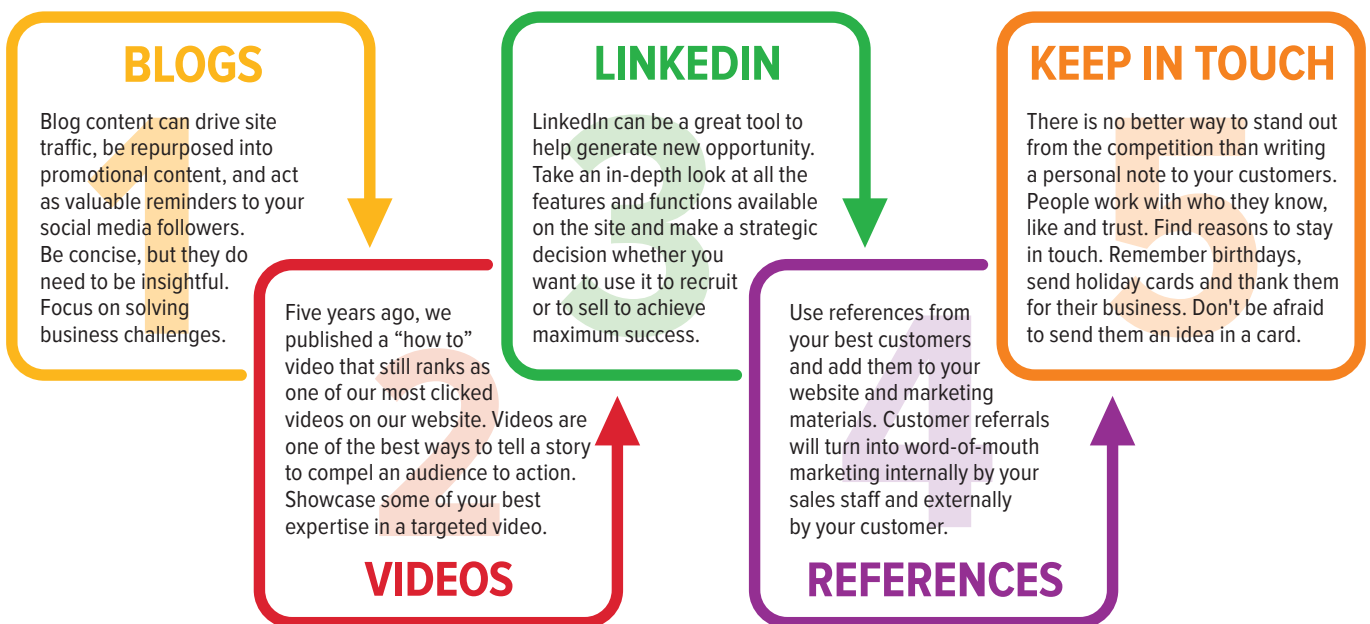
5 SMART marketing tactics for small biz

By Brenda McCurry, Vice President, Merchandising

Marketing can do a great job in helping you keep new business coming in and nurturing existing customer accounts. When you tie your marketing to growth in these accounts, future campaigns become smarter and your sales team is truly extended by your marketing efforts.

Knowing where to begin can be daunting, like boiling the proverbial ocean. Select a few areas where you can start and move forward from there. Even with tight budgets, there are some cost-effective tactics you can focus on while you build your case.

HERE ARE A FEW THAT WE LIKE:



To many resellers, MDF and co-op funds may be available through your vendor and distribution partners, if you are willing to give your vendors some due promotion.


No matter how you plan to finance your marketing campaigns in the future, you should view marketing as an investment. And like a good investment, your dollars should work for you as an extension of your sales team, pushing prospects through the sales funnel until they are ready to make a purchase. Your marketing should also act as a brand advocate, informing others of how you can help them. If you can show success here, making future investments in marketing won't feel so daunting.



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TIPS to help your company's SEO and online marketing

What many people don't realize is that SEO is not a "set it and forget it" project. It requires careful planning and a long-term vision for your website. Here, we'll attempt to give you a few things to consider to maximize SEO results for your company.





Crafting the right social media strategy



By Jennifer Clark, Content Strategist

When you think of social media, what comes to mind? Teenagers taking selfies? Sounding boards for customer complaints? Forums for celebrities to share their latest endorsements? What about a platform for engagement, sales development, lead generation and distributing company products and information? If the latter was not part of your initial definition of social media, then keep reading.

Social media no longer falls to giants Facebook and Twitter as the catch-all for sharing any and everything, but instead, it's now segmented by age and audience. The youngest demographics have shied away from the old standards and now use more conversational apps. Instagram and Flickr are more for photos; Tumblr and Wordpress fall into blog categories; YouTube is for videos; Facebook is for longer and mixed social content; Twitter is for shorter content; and LinkedIn is for businesses.

STRATEGY

Before you sign up for a Twitter account or start posting content to LinkedIn, you need to sit down and design a strategy. You'll need a dedicated person or team to keep up with your content and identify what type of information you will be disseminating. In order to help you determine the right platform, you'll want to see what resources are readily available to dedicate to this undertaking. Look at what kind of posting frequency you can realistically manage. It's okay for your Facebook page to go a week without anything, but not your Twitter page. If you can realistically put out content on a daily or weekly basis, that can help determine which social site might work best for you.

NOW, HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT CONTENT TO GENERATE?

While company news and awards are easy go-tos, don't forget about product launches, new hires and external interviews or places your name is mentioned outside of your own organization. Social media is a place for people to be social with the media. Anything that can spark conversation or prompt people to remember your name, comment and engage with you is helpful. Don't shy away from controversial issues, either. If you're not afraid to put your stance on a certain issue or topic, you could potentially gain new followers or customers. But, the adverse is also true, so be strategic about what your content says about your mission and value statements as a business.



SOCIAL HURDLES

The biggest hurdle to developing any social media strategy is understanding that it requires a lot of time. Content and dedication to developing said content is the biggest hurdle. Committing to a social presence, and to have it succeed, is better left to quality content versus having a presence on every platform. If you have a Twitter page, a Facebook page, a YouTube page and so forth, but really only have the time for one, it can make your business look out of touch or uncaring to put anything on your page. Having a page that isn't regularly updated tells users you don't really care what they think about you and is an instant reputation killer. Just like your website is similar to your storefront, your social presence also tells people who you are and what you're about. Twitter users won't necessarily know your Facebook page is filled with great deals and news and vice versa, so pick one or two sites and develop rich, timely, engaging and routine content for it.

WITH SO MANY CHOICES, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

Let's start with LinkedIn. When LinkedIn first arrived, it appeared to be more of a digital resume for job seekers to connect with other professionals and share their experience. There wasn't a news feed and you didn't typically engage with other users. Today, it boasts 450 million profiles and is the ideal place for businesses to network with employees, customers and future customers.

LinkedIn truly is a social network. It proves the adage of, "it's not what you know, but who you know," can be true when people see how you're connected to others they may know. This instant referral system aids job seekers in a completely new way. Think of it as your personal CRM, complete with referrals and testimonials.

But LinkedIn isn't totally for those seeking new employment. This platform attracts customers and resellers, vendors, employees and those in the tech community looking to share information about both their individual achievements and overall business' accomplishments. Think of it as an easy way to boast about your latest and greatest awards without having to frame a certificate in your lobby.

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NOW, LET'S LOOK AT HOW THIS MIGHT BENEFIT TECH-DRIVEN BUSINESSES.

Your company wins an award that puts you ahead of your competition. While your marketing team might think to write a press release or perhaps take a photo, you might not realize the promotional value a post on LinkedIn could have for you. Tooting your own horn gives you the opportunity to see who else might be interested in this news. From there, as people engage with

your post and profile, they become potential leads. Are they repeatedly liking your content? Do they comment when you share company insights? Why not reach out to them via LinkedIn or their professional email?

The key to this, however, is distinguishing yourself as someone who is truly interested in them personally and professionally and not just generating mass-produced emails that come off as dishonest and impersonal. As you

begin to track the potential leads based on who likes your content, why not turn that group of individuals into a new lead nurturing database?

You've now got a new platform from which to track and cultivate leads all while spreading the word about your business and keeping in touch with colleagues and industry competitors. This, in theory, is the crux of how social media can work as a lead-generation tool.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I TRY?

If you're asking, "So, what else is out there for me besides LinkedIn," the answer is both easy and hard. First, you need to understand the commitment that comes with managing multiple social platforms. While LinkedIn certainly isn't the only answer to social media, it's an easier entry and the most professional of all social networks. However, if generating lots of content in short-form quickly is more your speed, Twitter is perfect. If combining photos and specials, longer narratives and status updates that need more longevity, Facebook is ideal. Also, if you're able to say more about your products or business through stunning photography and only need captions or a link, consider Instagram. Having a dedicated social media employee or team will help with the strategy behind what content should go where.



While it may seem overwhelming at first, the biggest mistake would be to not take advantage of any social networking. Having an audience at your fingertips, who often read news across social sites rather than via emails, means you have yet another avenue for spreading your message. **C**

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Proof of a concept: building brand awareness



By Brianna Moriarty,
Marketing
Communications
Associate

Marketing is truly the heart and soul of converting sales. With every marketing effort, you are working to sell a product or service and build a level of brand awareness for your company. Brand awareness is quickly defined as the extent to which consumers are familiar with the distinctive qualities or image of particular brand of goods or services.¹ Creating brand awareness, especially within the point of sale industry, requires following a certain set of steps.

First and foremost, you must decide how you want your brand to be associated with your products. When a company sells multiple products or offers multiple services, often times they must focus in on one important good or service (likely the one which generates the most profit), and associate their brand with that. For example, when you think of Coca-Cola, most people think of the soft beverage that everyone refers to as “Coke.” People often forget that Coca-Cola generates an entire line of beverages including Sprite, Fanta, Dasani, and many more. Coca-Cola, recognizing that Coke is the product that is most associated with their brand, uses this product as the base of their marketing efforts to build brand awareness.

That part is done, and now people know what goods or services your company offers. Now you must work to associate your brand with thought. What adjectives do you want people to associate with your brand? Do you want to be thought of as innovative?

Do you want to be thought of as reliable? Do you want to be thought of as trendy? Associate these types of adjectives with your brand is what really draws people in to your company’s product. Now, the challenge is associating those adjectives and thoughts with your product itself.

When building brand awareness, a company must first associate their brand with their product, and then associate their brand with thought. The next step in the process is to associate those thoughts with your products. It is important to make sure that the two match. For example, a company that makes garbage cans would not want define their brand as being innovative. The two do not match. Apple, a brand well known for their sleek smart phones and laptop computers, is the perfect company to define themselves as innovative, because they offer a modern and creative design for their products. After you associate a certain thought with your brand, you must

make sure that those thoughts are associated with products as well.

Now, prove it. Modern-day marketing has a huge focus on content creation from social media content, to blog content, to web content. The problem with brand awareness and content creation is that content does not show people that your product is the best; it only tells people that your product is the best. Once you have created brand awareness through content, it is time to prove that what you are saying is true. There a number of ways to do this.

A very common and very effective to display your company’s success and help support your brand awareness is through customer success stories and testimonials. People tend to trust brands that have success stories and testimonials from their customers because it proves that the product is what the brand says it is, and it proves that customers are satisfied with the product. This goes back to





the association of product and the association of thought with your brand.

People feel more comfortable with a particular brand when they see it become a commonality in their market or peer group. Generally, people tend to follow the crowd and common trends, and that is no different with brands. When you see someone effectively using and satisfied with a specific product, it makes you more trusting of that product and brand. We can say it all we want, but seeing is believing.

Understanding what brand awareness is, is just the beginning to creating it. Companies often have a clear vision of how they want to define their brand, but do not know how to efficiently execute a marketing plan to build their brand awareness. First, it is important to understand the marketing channels and tools available to you to build your brand. It is also important to keep in mind that the number one way to create brand awareness for your company is through forming connections.

The number one way companies build their brand awareness and form connections in this industry is through trade shows. Trade shows are a great opportunity to build brand awareness because they allow you to form immediate connections. This allows the customer to actually get up close and personal with your product before purchasing, and creates a more trusting relationship between the customer and your brand. Through trade shows customer can have the opportunity to ask questions and form a valuable connection to the company they are taking interest in.

Another way to form connections is through social media marketing. Social media marketing is one of the top places where companies go to create brand awareness. Building brand awareness is especially appealing through social media because it allows you to give your company a “brand voice.” Brand voice defined is the purposeful, consistent expression of a

brand through words and prose styles that engage and motivate.² Interacting with customer through social media creates a trusting experience, and helps you to prove that your company’s brand is what you say it is.

Lastly, it is important to remember that building brand awareness for your company is a marathon, not a sprint. Building a brand starts with a vision of what you want your company to be, followed by a strategic marketing plan for how to achieve your goals

and a dedicated team who is ready to go out and show the world what your company and your brand stands for. It is about more than the products you offer; it’s also about the thought and feeling that consumers associate with your product. Building a brand, and associating thought with your company is only the beginning. The real challenge is proving it. **C**

¹ <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/brand-awareness.html>

² <http://larsen.com/insights/creating-the-right-brand-voice/>



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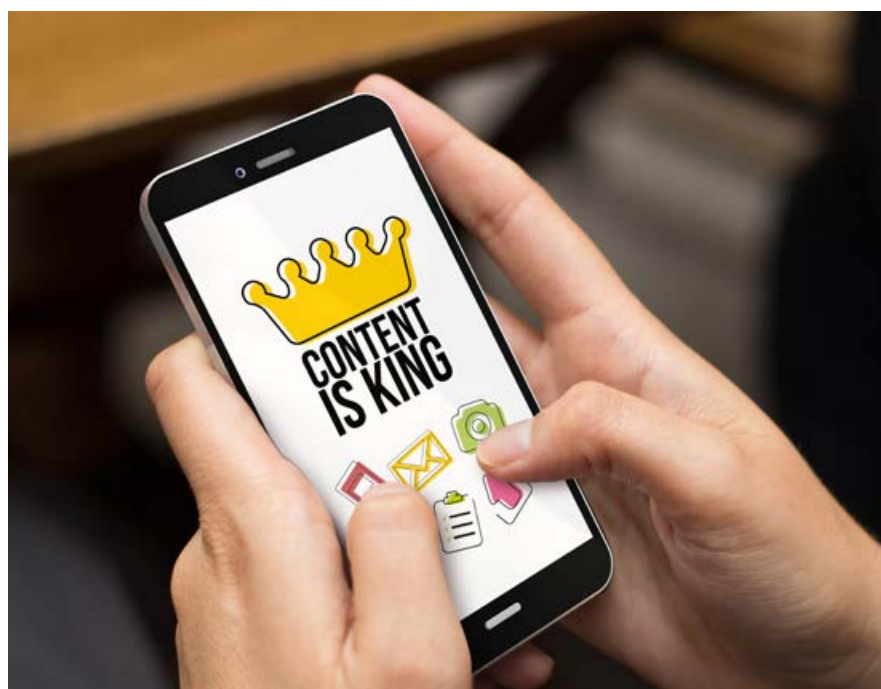
Follow these steps to generate great content that keeps readers coming back

By Jennifer Clark

Have you ever been reading an article, whether in a magazine or online about a competitor's business and thought, "Why didn't I think to write that?" Unfortunately, great content doesn't come easy, or naturally, to most. It's more than just writing a blog for your website or pushing out a Tweet or LinkedIn post. Generating content that people want to read includes resources and time that hinder many people from even trying.

Becoming an expert at content generation doesn't have to stop you before you get started, however. Whether you prefer using an editorial team or a smaller operation including freelancers, it's not impossible to be the thought leaders in your industry. But writing content, and great content at that, is a challenge for most businesses. Whether you're the owner of a small business, or the product manager at a bigger company, it's not easy to continually produce content that your customers, or potential customers, will want to read.

So, if it's not easy to do then how do you do it? Start off by thinking about what you and your business do best. What distinguishes you from your competition? If you offer a service or program that stands out, or have an exclusive product no one else can sell, think of the best ways to advertise that through a subtle sell. All too often people think of content as just a way to tout their own internal products and values, without giving much thought to the message's vehicle and the message itself. Instead, why not set yourself apart as a trusted resource for industry-related information that ultimately points people back to you?



Does your website do a good job of selling your products? If so, you probably don't need accompanying content about the physical products in, say, a newsletter. Instead, create a case study or video that shows how customers use those products in real life. Content isn't limited to something tangible you hold and read. It can also be visual. Consider telling a story of how a product might solve a common problem your customers are facing. Host a web seminar or podcast that walks users through set up or configuration. Showing your products in action, especially with real people in real scenarios, carries more weight than just touting the products' specs.

Once you have your ideas and have written the first draft, you'll want to follow this checklist. If you can't answer these questions, then it probably isn't worth publishing.

1. IS IT PROFESSIONAL? Did you have a professional writer (either in-house or a freelancer) write and edit it? There's no quicker way to ruin a reputation than with typos or poor grammar.

2. IS THE CONTENT READABLE? Hopefully after answering yes to number one, number two is a given; however, if you were unable to have something professionally written, remember what you learned in grade school. Try to use the inverted pyramid, bullets, a single font, and short paragraphs. The latter is especially useful if publishing content online, as no one wants to read long paragraphs on the internet.

3. IS THIS CONTENT USEFUL? Would someone want to send the article or email to a friend? Is it worth sharing or linking to? Will your customers learn something from it after reading?

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Although being personal and targeted helps in campaigns, try to think about a broad audience and how they may interact with your content.

4. IS IT ACTIONABLE? While most great content exists to help make you a leader among your competition and should shine a light on your industry, you still want the readers to take action. Does it link to an email or your website? Can users comment directly on the page or reply back to you personally? Think about what your readers will take away from each piece of content you create. Ultimately, your overall call to action should be for them to get in touch with you to make a sale, but it must be done with subtlety.

5. CAN PEOPLE FIND IT? There is no reason in going through the work of writing great content only to have it buried on a website that no one ever reads. If it's on a blog or somewhere

they may not stumble upon easily, make sure you promote your pieces via email pushes, social media links and front pages on your website.

6. ARE YOU USING IT TO ITS GREATEST POTENTIAL? Too often people feel that one piece of great content is just a one-time deal. But did you know you can recycle a long-form e-book into several different pieces of content? A well-written e-book will contain 10+ pages of content that can be reduced to one blog post or expanded upon to a web seminar. Further, a series of social media posts can follow any expert advice and an email that points to some of the e-book's highlights is a great way to reach out to a customer and share the rest of the content. Make sure your content is used to its fullest and you haven't spent a lot of your resources on a one-time use. Further, if you did pay a lot for an e-book to be created, you'll be able to get more for your money by expanding its uses across multiple platforms.

7. ARE YOU TRACKING THE CONTENT PIECE'S PERFORMANCE?

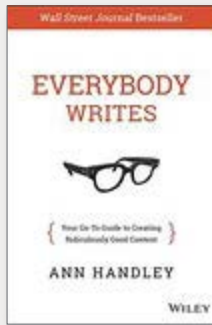
While you may have generated a great blog on how to configure a payment terminal, it might be a hit and you have no idea. Without any measurement or analytics, like Google analytics or social media tracking tools, you have no idea what your readers are engaging with and what they're not. If you see a trend in one topic over another, there's your direction from which to produce additional pieces. If no one is engaging with your content then you'll also have a clear-cut answer as to what NOT to do. Shooting in the dark is no longer acceptable in today's digital world thanks to the myriad tracking tools and vanity metrics that exist.

Following these tips will no doubt help you assemble content that your customers are interested in, keeps them coming back for more, and will position you as a leader in your industry. Now get out there and write! **C**

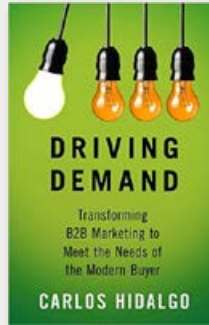


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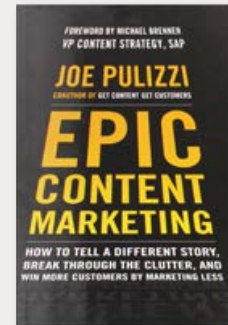
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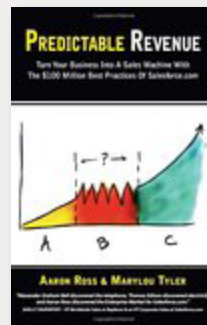
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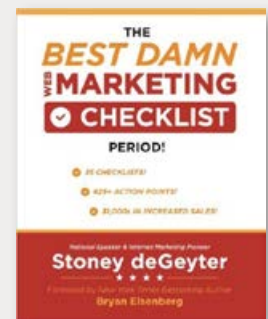
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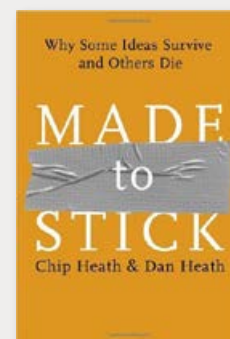
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How to track the **success...** or **failure...** of a marketing campaign



When you founded your reseller business, you built it knowing you could provide great solutions and services. If you are like most VARs, you probably didn't do it because you're an expert in marketing.

Most resellers are technical, and marketing is a part of business that may fall by the wayside. Whether you choose to believe it or not, marketing plays a role in the success of any business. It's not something you can simply ignore. You may have the best solution in the world, but if the right people don't know about it, you won't sell it.



By Jason Firment, Director of VARCOM and POS Vertical

Most resellers are technical, and marketing is a part of business that may fall by the wayside. Whether you choose to believe it or not, marketing plays a role in the success of any business. It's not something you can simply ignore. You may have the best solution in the world, but if the right people don't know about it, you won't sell it.

VARs are also often challenged with limited resources. With a limited amount of time, manpower and funds available for marketing campaigns, resources have to be invested in something that works. The question is, whether you can know if the marketing activities you choose are working and are the best ones for your business.

METRICS AND DATA COLLECTION

Just like any other area of your business, you need to establish goals, define key performance indicators (KPIs), collect relevant data, track performance and make necessary adjustments to reach your goals. Collecting data from a marketing campaign, however, may seem impossible. After all, exactly how do you track valuable sales gathered as a result of print ads? As solutions providers, you have the advantage of using your expertise to solve the challenges marketing data collection poses.

Today, most SMB Resellers choose traditional, outbound marketing activities such as:



Direct Mail



Email marketing



Newsletters



Cold Calling

Solutions providers can measure the effectiveness of these types of campaigns by adding a specific PURL (Person URLs), QR codes, or a unique phone number that prospects can use to show the campaign was their influence. This allows the ability to track where the responses are coming from.

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More sophisticated marketing companies that work in the channel are using inbound marketing or a combination of inbound and outbound activities. This category of marketing includes:

- Content marketing
- PPL/PPC (Pay Per Lead/ Pay Per Click)
- Website search engine optimization (SEO)
- Social media marketing
- On-site event marketing

Inbound marketing is designed to direct prospects to you, rather than responding when you reach out to them. It's much easier to track because they are searching and finding your asset/content online and providing their contact information on a landing page.

Whether it is outbound or inbound, monitor the campaigns that are working for your business, continue what works and stop investing in things that don't.

UNDERSTANDING THE NUMBERS

You got a lead from a marketing campaign. After celebrating, you may still be wondering if the campaign was truly successful. This is not uncommon.

Question: Did you meet your campaign objectives? Campaign objectives must be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely. So for this campaign, imagine you had an objective of collecting 10 quality leads. You set that number because you calculated the customer lifetime value (CVV) and the cost of the campaign fell within a range for a result of 10 leads.

Conclusion #1: You get 10 leads, the campaign is successful. You know your team is strong enough to close 3 out of every 10 leads. If you close 3 leads, then you know for a fact that the campaign will drive incremental revenue.

Conclusion #2: You only got one lead, the campaign was not successful. CVV, campaign costs and costs per lead are all numbers you need to determine for your business. A business can't survive

if marketing return on investment (ROI) isn't there, leaving you with the cost, but not enough prospects to show for it.

DOING BETTER NEXT TIME

At the end of each campaign, it's time to investigate what went right or wrong. Again, leverage data to help you draw intelligent conclusions. You cannot rely on your instincts. Remember, you built your business to provide solutions, not because you were an expert in marketing. The results of a campaign tell a tale, regardless of how much you or your team supported the idea.

Different markets respond better to different types of campaigns. Did an e-book draw as much attention as a case study on the same topic? Does your market respond better to infographics, a direct mailer or video — or does your product catalog always deliver the most leads?

Design elements can also play a part in the success of a campaign. Did the design on the landing page of the newsletter contribute to better results than the design on the social media landing page? Running comparisons

Channel marketing agency, The SkyRocket Group, reveals that an email targeting channel resellers can result in an open rates just over 25% and a click-through rate (CTR) of 3% - 6%, versus an open rate of just over 8% and a CTR of about 1.5% to end-users.





are useful when you want to test specific elements of a campaign; using a different email subject line with the first email, then changing it up on the second will help define what your target market is reacting to more. It's important to change only one element at a time so there isn't any question why one version performed better than the other.

It's also important to make sure you are monitoring the right metrics. If you want to collect leads from landing pages on your business' website, just counting leads without knowing where they are coming from won't give you all of the information you need. Referrals from social media or leads from a newsletter will let you know if specific campaigns are working (or not) and help you to consider continuing or cancelling them.

Speak with your sales team about quality of leads. Did the campaign result in interest from your target market or did it return leads that couldn't be qualified as prospects? Are they decision-makers at their companies or just information gatherers? You may need to adjust your messaging to attract the right people, otherwise you won't get sufficient ROI.

HOW DO YOU COMPARE TO YOUR COMPETITORS?

Another way to gauge whether your marketing campaigns are successful is to compare them with industry benchmarks. If your competition is spending the same amount on marketing and getting twice the return, it's probably time to take another look at how you can improve your campaigns.

You can search the Internet for benchmarking data by industry on sites like MarketingSherpa, which publishes average website conversions.

Be aware that marketing to the channel is slightly different than marketing to end-users. For example, companies

that work with both channel partners and end-users may see differences in their campaigns.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Even if you compare well to industry averages, never stop working to improve your numbers. Achieving marketing campaign success means you have achieved your objectives for that campaign, whether it was increasing website traffic, getting more people to open an email or watch a

video, or collecting a specific number of leads from a landing page to add to your sales funnel.

Determine the costs of meeting those objectives, based on ROI that's acceptable for your business. Successful campaigns produce what you need within the budget you have set.

Ultimately, marketing success looks like business growth! **C**

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Creating a successful event to showcase your business

By Toshiba Marketing

Are you a small to mid-size company with a limited budget for events? Need to select the best option to introduce a new product or service to your customers? Need a demo that sales can show to prospects? Let's face it, an event can make or break a customer's experience and particularly your budget, so here are some handy planning tips and a variety of event options to kick start your next debut.

BRAINSTORMING A PLAN

Start by deciding on the core fundamentals:

- What's the objective of your event?
- Who is your audience?
- What is the best way to reach your audience — a virtual session, roadshow, industry tradeshow?
- What is your theme?
- Do you need a speaker?
- Will you seek sponsors? If so, be prepared to show what they will get in return for their investment, whether it's a list of contacts, branding or building awareness.
- Do you need to show a live demo that will have power and connectivity requirements?
- Do you have co-workers or vendors who will assist?
- What is your promotion plan?
- What return on investment do you expect?
- Importantly, what is your budget?
Establishing your budget early on, but reserving a small percentage to address coverage for last-minute items, will help you achieve your budget boundaries.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Once you have your plan, the next step is to select the type of event that will best meet your goals. Prepare a detailed event spreadsheet, with deliverable dates, assigning owners to key tasks. To keep on track and ensure that

your investment pays off, you'll want to assign one person to take charge and map the overall event planning and process. Just be sure that your overall plan includes a wrap-up assessment to measure your outcome.

VARIOUS EVENT OPTIONS

There are a number of options, with varying costs, to reach your target audience.

Virtual Events, such as web-based presentations, online conferences, live Q&A chats or virtual demonstrations can often be quick, cost-effective ways to reach many people across many locations. You'll need to ensure the registration process is simple and definitely send reminders. Sounding the trumpet and promoting your content are the most critical aspects to help your audience decide if they want to participate and to keep them engaged once the event begins. Follow-up, perhaps with a "thank you" and downloadable brochure after the event, as a refresher, will to keep your messages top of mind.

Roadshows can be very effective for smaller, regional events and allow your experts (whether your master inventor, engineer or salesperson) to directly engage with your target audience. Think bigger than a chart deck. Seeing is believing, so demonstrations are recommended. By providing targeted and technical information and resources tailored to the specific sector, ideas can easily be exchanged and any questions answered on the spot, demonstrating a higher degree of intimacy and enthusiasm for your brand as well as building confident advocates.

Tradeshows, whether specific to your company, an industry association, or even large recognizable industry events such as NRF, typically come with higher price tags but can produce a strong list of contacts and brand recognition. Tradeshow events tend to



require more advance planning, including a wealth of logistics, such as contract negotiation and space selection, 3rd party management for technical aspects (lighting, electrical, bandwidth) and a dedicated person to manage the event planning and financials. Marketing considerations include a theme, company branding, drive-to activities and marketing materials. However, the return can be great — whether it's a strong contact list, prospective partners or recognition from the media or industry pundits.

AN AMAZING AND OUTSTANDING EVENT

Just remember — every event company will mention the importance of buzzwords for people to remember and a nice feeling. What you ultimately want your audience to walk away with is that great experience, the one they want to share with others. It's not that the person attended an event (everyone does that), but the engagement with your brand created a lasting memory. A good rule of thumb for each of us is to always strive for the anticipation that Steve Jobs garnered when he first announced the iPhone — that special feeling of excitement. Just remember to thank your incredible team afterward and then get your calendar out to plan for your next performance! **C**



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