



The SPECIAL REPORT:

The FIVE Biggest Mistakes in Small Business Marketing

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Here they are...

But first, before we dive in, some caveats and disclosures.

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So...

Before we dive in, a little about what we're doing here. See, Real SMM started as a business helping Realtors® with their Social Media Marketing. As we launched that product – to great acclaim, lots of phone calls, wrote a book, all that fun stuff – we noticed that there were some bad things that were NOT just done by real estate professionals.

By bad things, we mean, well, egregious marketing errors that transcend time and space. Or at least make them look kind of foolish.

Tiny mistakes we can forgive. Spelling errors. Maybe an occasional “it’s” instead of “its.” Perhaps not spending enough time on Social Media – or spending too much time playing games.

Those are tiny mistakes. We're not going to dwell on them here.

The BIG Mistakes, though, can impact how the marketplace perceives you.

And if the marketplace perceives you as being a goofball, or not on top of your game, or someone selling Amway (apologies to those who do sell Amway, but that dilutes your small business message), then you're toast.

And we don't want you to be toast. We want you to be successful.

So we'll be quiet with this intro and move on to other stuff. These are the 5 Biggest Mistakes in Small Business Marketing.



Mistake #1...

A Press Release = Your Marketing Plan

I had a phone call recently with a very smart guy whom we'll call Gary. (That's his real name.) He talked to a local business in his city and said "let me get you some press."

Then Gary went ahead and got them some press. He used a couple of really simple methods to get this press – he picked up the phone and called influential people, then he pinged a couple bloggers with notes about this guy's business.

Within an hour, he had, like, 5 press hits. (They weren't "like" 5 press hits. They WERE 5 press hits.)

Point? He didn't need no stinkin' press release.

"But all we need to do is write a press release and send it to reporters!"

Work with me here: NOT EFFECTIVE.

My mug once got on the front of the Sunday Business Section for a Top 5 Paper in the USA. No press release. It was a relationship-building phone call or two (or, in this case, TEN, as well as a couple meetings for coffee or lunch).

Oh, and did it get me business?

Yes, and no. Which will bring us to the next point. But first...

It's not how you get coverage, it's the right coverage. Just make sure you're not assuming that your press release will get you coverage. Onto mistake #2.



Mistake #2... Not Focusing On Your “Market”

Had another call recently with another smart person, whom we’ll call Ezekiel. (That’s not his real name.)

“Get me on the front of the Wall Street Journal, or on FOX News, and I’ll sell a lot of stuff.”

Sure you will, Zeke. If your market is reading, or watching, or listening.

Welcome, people, to the world of “Nichification™.” We like that word so much, we’re trademarking it.

Sure, you might have a mass-market product. Men’s boxer shorts. Dog collars that emit cologne. Whatever. Good on ya, mate.

The beauty of the World Wide Web (we should trademark that, too) is that you will find competition in every single product category. Getting on FOX News will only get you so far. Then you need to use that credibility to find buyers of men’s boxer shorts. Then you need to target them. Directly.

They call it “The Long Tail,” after the Chris Anderson book. Selling a lot of stuff to a small group of people.

The world doesn’t care how cool your product is, or your service is, or even how cool you are. They want to know “WIIFM” – “What’s In It For Me?”

The dog owner who wants his dog’s collar to emit cologne? He wants to know benefits of your product. He’s your market. Sell to him. Nichify. Onto item 3...



Mistake #3... Not Knowing WHY You're Using Social Media

Quick primer on the “Grand Slam” of Social Media Marketing:

Twitter: quick messages shared with the world

Facebook: everyone and anyone you've ever known sharing all sorts of personal and business stuff

YouTube: where the world goes to watch videos of all kinds

LinkedIn: a business networking tool that's entirely online

Okay, now that that's covered, do you know WHY you're using any of these sites?

We had a chat recently with someone at a large company that we'll call “Bob's Fortune 500.” At Bob's (for short), they were trying to figure out how to use Twitter to drive sales.

Sales of what? From whom? Who's in charge of your Twitter time? Who's gonna follow up?

Actually, the team at Bob's deserves some credit. Not only did they name their company so that it's near the top of the phone book, they also knew they wanted to sell SOMETHING using Social Media Marketing.

Some companies aren't even THAT far along.

Smart companies – even really smart small businesses – don't say “we need an EMAIL strategy.” They say stuff like “we need to drive more feet into the restaurant, even if we lose money, because once they try our Jambalaya they'll rave about it and come back.

THEN...figure out what to do with Social Media. Onto #4!



Mistake #4... Forgetting It's NOT About You (with SMM)

“Engagement Marketing.”

Two-way sound to it, right? Me, customer, and you, company.
Talking. Interacting.

Ignored by many, many, MANY small businesses.

*Look, for instance, at the Twitter stream. Is it all a bunch of
“broadcast messages?” Or are there “@ replies?” “RTs?”*

When we've worked with Not-for-profits on their social media strategy, we'll often advise the 30-day rule. Spend your first 30 days on any social media site just talking WITH people. About stuff that is not business-related.

Small business owners should consider the same. Getting into the habit of back-and-forths with people, of having a little (GASP) fun, of seeing what the world is talking about.

Once you form this habit of interacting and engaging, you will find that your Authentic Self shows through. (This isn't mumbo-jumbo – if people can't figure out what kind of person you are, they aren't going to be all that likely to try your product or service.)

Twenty Mintues A Day Interacting, Engaging. That's All We Ask.

This dovetails nicely with our next, and final mistake – one that can be crippling to any small business.

That final mistake? Next page!



Mistake #5... Ignoring YOUR “Personal Brand”

“Brand.” “Personal Brand.” Gee, which one to put in quotes.

Step one is to remember the following.

Your brand is NOT your logo.

Brand: A series of experiences, of expectations, of behaviors that people associate with your product or service. Or your company. Or YOU.

Your Personal Brand = the series of experiences that people associate with YOU.

When small business owners dive into social media, they start to find people finding them – whether they like it or not, and whether they’re prepared or not.

Your restaurant, your coaching practice, your real estate practice, your dry cleaning business...the list goes on...these things are extensions of you, the business owner. And the sum total of all that stuff you say and do online will be attached to YOU AND YOUR BUSINESS.

BUT, watching your P’s and Q’s – well, that’s what you do anyway with your business. If you think of your online social media marketing time as an extension of what you do at the front of the store (greeting customers, providing excellent customer service, making a great product), you’ll go far.

And so will your personal brand.

Final thoughts...



Don't Be Afraid... To Make Mistakes of Your Own!

One thing is constant – change.

“SMM” stands for “Social Media Marketing.” But it could also stand for “Search & Mobile Marketing.” Or something else. We know that will change over time.

But there's a constant set of behaviors, on- and off-line, that sets average businesses apart from stellar businesses. That keeps average people from breaking through and becoming huge successes.

Do we have all the answers when it comes to those behaviors? Heck no. And don't hire someone who says they do.

BUT...

We've watched this space evolve – from small business marketing to social media marketing. From the “send out a bunch of emails” world of a few years ago to the “how many followers do you have?” world we're in now.

Engagement Marketing, Authenticity Marketing, whatever you want to call it...it asks YOU to get involved. To have conversations. To share with others. To build real relationships. To get real.

Go get 'em!

Dave

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