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# OnSite

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## MARKETING MATTERS

### Revisiting popular marketing myths

With changes brought about from the internet, some are labeling the old marketing rules as no longer applicable.

Randy Vaughn, a Duct Tape Marketing spokesman, disagrees. Here is his list of

marketing rules worth remembering.

- **You have to spend money to make money.**

Spending money on marketing is not an expense – it is an investment. You cannot make money on what you don't have. Vaughan uses the analogy of asking a broker how much money you made on that stock you never bought.

- It is true that you can do much with an investment of time (in blogs, social media, etc.) to get exposure that used to cost money, but one way or the other, you still must pay for exposure.

- **Don't forget traditional marketing venues.** If someone on your marketing team says the only thing that matters is online



marketing, question everything they do. Why? Because, Vaughn says, they are planning based on trendy copycat marketing. Your marketing decisions should be based on who you are targeting. Such things as newspaper ads, signs or billboards may be exactly what you need to reach a certain group.

- **Websites are not the be all and end all.** If you build a great website but do nothing to promote it, you'll be like the person who builds a new house in the middle of a busy neighborhood. People know it's there but that's about it.
- **You need to promote your website in all your collateral materials.** Do online press releases to provide fresh content or provide special coupons in a flyer that drives people to your website to take advantage of your offering.
- **You can't take customer loyalty for granted.** Once a customer buys your product and is satisfied, you will have to work to keep them. The consumer is finicky and fickle. You must keep engaging your loyal clientele with great service, personalized attention and other bonuses that keep them coming back.

### Is there something positive about this economic slowdown?

When times are tough, people tend to turn to their relationships with others as a source of comfort. Quality of life becomes measured by the pleasure of associating with others.

The analogy applies to the business world as well. Small businesses have one major advantage over large corporations: their ability to develop personal relationships with those who buy their products.

Work on extending relationships beyond taking an order or asking for a payment. Here are some ways to do that:

- Add an extra line or two to your emails to personalize them.
- Tell your customer something additional about your company that will give them a more personal connection – perhaps about service changes you are considering or the person who has been with you the longest time.
- Put your business at the heart of your community. If possible, let community groups use your conference room as a meeting place.
- Consider who are your best and worst customers and go the extra mile for the good ones.

## MANAGEMENT ISSUES

### Social networking and your employees

You may have heard about the Domino's Pizza incident where two employees uploaded what they thought was a funny video spoofing what goes on in the kitchen. The two workers in the N.C. franchise did it as a joke but Domino's did not laugh. The manager promptly fired the workers and started an all-out damage-control campaign to restore confidence in the brand.

Marketing issues aside, the social networking activities of employees can have repercussions on their employer. And many employers are screening sites such as Facebook and Googling prospective employees before hiring to be sure there are not any problems lurking in cyberspace.

Those looking for jobs are beginning to get the message and are cleaning up their online personas. Though you can still find the occasional financial planner with a photo showing him chugging a beer, people are beginning to clean up their online personas.



So how far can employers go in screening applicants' social networking sites?

The issue is still unclear according to The Employer Law Newsletter. Employers could be subject to invasion of privacy or discrimination lawsuits if they make decisions based solely on what they find on those sites. Also, some states have statutes that

prohibit hiring decisions based on a candidate's lawful leisure time activities.

The best approach is to create a company profile on social networking sites that connect with potential recruits. The sites give your company the opportunity to establish a relationship with young job applicants online.

Also, be sure that you inform applicants if you plan to look at their social networking sites. If you screen one applicant, screen everybody. Should you decide not to hire someone, document everything carefully to prevent problems that may arise.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Nuts & bolts
- Working smarter

### NIR helps you boost your business

From networking to education to marketing assistance, the NIR supports restoration specialists. **434.973.4200**

## NUTS AND BOLTS

### New concrete can heal itself

Researchers at the University of Michigan have developed some new concretes that have the ability to heal tiny cracks as they occur.

The product, known as bendable engineered cement composite (ECC), is more flexible than traditional concrete.

Unlike ordinary concrete which is so rigid that it breaks under extreme or repeated stress, the flexible ECC can bend without breaking.

Tests show that ECC can heal very small cracks because of the way the cement particles react when first exposed to water and carbon dioxide in the air. The particles in the crack form enough calcium carbonate to fill a tiny crack and create a bond on both sides.



These healed cracks appear as white scars on the concrete surface.

The healed concrete has properties which are equal or better to those of the original ECC.

Engineers are excited about the potential for the new concrete to reduce maintenance requirements on buildings and bridges. Also, since ECC does not require any reinforcing steel, it will virtually eliminate the corrosion problems that plague reinforced concrete infrastructures.

### E-verify requirements delayed till June 30

The Obama administration has postponed until June 30 a requirement for federal contractors to validate the eligibility of their employees to work in the U.S. The E-Verify system, the source for the required verification, was put in place by the Bush administration in November. It compares information supplied by employees with government records.

Implementation of the rule was delayed to give government contractors and subcontractors more time to review the requirements.

Business groups have challenged the rule on the grounds that the government does not have the authority to make use of E-Verify mandatory. They argue that Congress set up the system as a voluntary program.

More than 117,000 employers now use the Web-based system.



### Stimulus will help construction industry but there is still a long way to go

The Associated General Contractors of America estimates that the stimulus package will fund 650,000 construction jobs and another 300,000 jobs in materials and equipment supply.

Meanwhile, the National Association of Home Builders believes the home-buyer tax credit in the

plan will lead to 500,000 additional home sales, creating 255,000 jobs in residential construction in the next year.

Industry observers believe, however, that the construction industry will still need time to stabilize after the layoffs of 1.8 million workers since

the recession started in early 2008. Construction workers have suffered the greatest job loss of any sector of the economy.

Economist Ken Golstein predicts that it will be the last part of 2010 before the industry will see net job increases rather than decreases.

The stimulus money designates funds for construction projects ranging from bridge, highway and sanitation system repairs to green jobs building a new digital power grid and making structures more energy efficient.

## Working Smarter

### Back to the basics of time management

Some people have more money, power or prestige than others, but the one thing everybody has the same amount of is time.

Making the best use of your 24 hours each day will determine, in large measure, how successful you can be.

Time management is not about working more hours but about using those hours wisely. Anything you can do to help you prioritize what must be accomplished in a given day is a plus.

Although there are many approaches to time management, the grandfather of all such tools is the simple to-do list. Write down your tasks that need attention and then prioritize those that must get done. You need something to help you focus and give you a sense of accomplishment when a task is completed.

If you like to use technology, check out [www.TimeTiger.com](http://www.TimeTiger.com) for a web-based list that helps you keep track of your project and non-project activities.

Remember, too, that delegation is an under-utilized tool, especially for small business owners. Even if



you're a confirmed do-it-yourselfer, there are plenty of tasks that others can handle. If you have a small shop, you can outsource bookkeeping and payroll for a reasonable fee. And the more you can turn over to employees, the more you'll build their confidence and boost their morale while freeing time for you to handle those things you should be doing in the first place.

Try to minimize distractions, phone calls and walk-in office visits.

Remember, minutes matter. Keep track of how you use small blocks of time and compare this use of time to your goals, expectations and priorities. If the two do not match, you need to make adjustments.

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[nir@nir-inc.com](mailto:nir@nir-inc.com)