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MARKETING MATTERS

Marketing never takes a holiday

Everything we do in business – from our business cards to the way people answer the phone – is marketing. Each action establishes our brand and the way we communicate with actual and potential clients draws us nearer or further from the end sale.

In other words, businesses are marketing 24/7 in everything they do.

Jay Conrad Levison, who coined the term guerilla marketing, believes there is a difference between traditional marketing and guerilla marketing. People consider traditional marketing the slick advertising campaigns, focus groups and elaborate digital images that make your website pop. That definition implies that marketing is the responsibility of a designated segment of the company rather than every employee.

Here are some guerilla marketing points that we often overlook.



Your website should address a customer's problems and how you would go about solving them. Coming from that position, businesses offer advice and tips for addressing problems. Most websites focus on how great a business is without coming from the perspective of a customer's needs.

Marketing continues after the sale is made.

That means you must keep in touch with past customers on a regular basis. Did you know that nearly 70 percent of repeat business is lost because a client believes his service provider has lost interest until the time comes to renew a deal. In the meantime, competitors are communicating with your customer.

Focus your marketing on specific niches.

Whereas traditional marketing is geared toward reaching the masses, guerilla marketing is targeted toward those who can most use your products and services.

The sale is not the end. It is the end of the beginning. You must continue to remind people that you can solve their problems so they will remember you when the next problems surface.

Beware of pirates in your office

Pirated software on company-owned computers is a major liability for your business, even if you are unaware that some of your employees are using illegally copied software.

Software giants and business coalitions like Microsoft have started reward programs offering up to \$1 million to employees who report software piracy.

Keep your business safe with some controls that can greatly reduce your liability with technology.

- Develop some software policies as part of your employee manual that takes a firm stand against pirated software.
- Consider having your IT people block websites that offer illegal downloads of software.
- Audit your computer network to be sure that all software is properly licensed. Immediately delete any unlicensed software.
- Maintain detailed records of software purchases.

The Business Software Alliance (www.bsa.org) has sample policies and memos as well as other tools to help you keep your company software legal.

MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Advice on rehiring laid-off workers

You've had to lay off workers because of the recession. What obligation do you have to laid-off employees when business picks up and you need to add workers?

It depends according to Kara Shea who writes for the *Tennessee Employment Law Letter*.

If your reduction-in-force (RIF) employees are covered by a collective bargaining agreement, that document will address what you are obligated to do. However there is no "right of recall" for non-union employees who have been downsized or laid off by private employers.

Suppose you want to hire some of your former employees but would like to replace some of the deadbeats with new workers? That's when you need to think before you re-hire.

If you tell employees they are being laid off because of decreased business and perhaps laid them off on the basis of longevity, you should watch for actions that would get you in trouble when you bring



people back on board. Although you may have no obligation to hire back the same people, if you bring back some but not others, you have to be careful.

Don't make it appear as if you are favoring a particular group – young white males, for example – as opposed to older minorities in bringing people back. That is especially true if the RIF is of short duration.

Bottom line according to Shea: seek legal advice before you take action if you have any concerns about who should rejoin your firm.



Q: What are Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter and why should you care?

A: Because that is where your future clients and current competitors are hanging out.

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Nuts & bolts
- Working smarter

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NUTS AND BOLTS

New buildings can withstand 327-mph gusts

Developers of a new Miami high-rise are claiming that its office building, 1450 Brickell, is the most wind-resistant glass-sided building in the world. Alan Ojeda is that developer and he was shocked by the damage Hurricane Wilma thrust on Miami's business district four years ago.

Ojeda was astonished by the piles of glass shards that ended up on top of his 36-story building after being deposited there by Wilma's winds. The glass had been stripped off higher glass-encased structures.

The developer said that existing building codes are not sufficient to address how extreme winds can impact tall buildings. The code currently requires strengthened glass for homes but only for the first 30 feet of taller buildings. "Small missile" windows – tested by firing pea-sized ball bearings at panes – are the standard for high rises above 30 feet. "Large missile" impact glass, as is used on Ojeda's structure, can withstand hits from a nine-pound 2x4 stud.

The upgrade added millions to the \$250 million project. The building is expected to open early next year.



How secure is your password?

If you're like most people, your password is very guessable given the software hackers can use to crack password codes.



Few people change their passwords every 90 days as recommended. Most people use the same password for several sites – a big no-no according to security expert Bruce Schneier.

If you have to add a number or special character to a password, it's most likely "1" or "!". That makes you easy prey for those trying to get past your password.

Schneier has an easy trick for creating highly secure passwords. Create an acronym out of a sentence you can remember and use some Characters or symbols to replace letters such as @ for a or 1 for i.

For example, If your sentence is "I was born in 1973 in Virginia," your password might be 1wbi1973iV. "My favorite food is spaghetti and meatballs" could be mffiSaM.

Try it. You'll be more secure.

The devil is in the details

Getting stimulus money on infrastructure projects is slower than anticipated because of logistical delays and red tape.

States moved quickly to qualify for their share of the money for roads, bridges and other transportation projects. But **as of July 10, only 2,000 of the 5,600 road projects approved by Washington have been assigned contractors.**

Austin tries energy inspector to cut waste

Austin, Texas, which has one of the toughest building codes in the country, is now requiring an energy inspection on new construction before a building can be occupied.

It's a novel approach that has yet to be copied in other areas. The move is hailed as a way to save energy and reduce the city's impact on the environment.

At least seven states have no rules regarding energy conservation in construction and little has been

done by governments elsewhere to beef up requirements on insulation, water heaters and roofing materials to limit wasteful energy consumption. The Energy Depart-

ment reports that buildings and appliances account for almost 40 percent of the carbon dioxide emitted in the country.

Some states have shown significant improvements with stronger energy codes. Florida, for example, reports that homes built today are nearly 70 percent more energy-efficient than the same size homes built 30 years ago.

Coalitions of builders have fought stricter codes, stating that such restrictions could burden homeowners with an additional \$2,000 bill added to the cost of a house.

The debate continues with groups like ClimateWords arguing that energy building codes are the best opportunity to save the environment and save the consumer money. "If you build a building well, it is an asset for 100 years; conversely, if you build a shoddy building (in terms of energy use), it can be a 100-year liability," said Hal Harvey, chief executive of ClimateWorks.



Working Smarter

Is your self-talk hurting you?

Psychologists say that even highly successful people often have a harsh critic running inside their head. It's a healthy thing

when that inner voice makes you get up early to exercise or stop procrastinating on a complicated project. But many people allow their self-talk to make harsh judgments, rendering them miserable, fearful or immobilized by indecision.

Perfect becomes the enemy of good; because it is not yet perfect, a good plan stays forever in draft stage and never gets completed.



Men and women both suffer from the I'm-a-fraud syndrome according to Psychologist Daniel Seidman. How can you bring the inner critic under control?

Write down your negative thoughts as they occur. This simple action may help you spot patterns or make your inner critic less apparent.

Evaluate your judgments. When someone acts negatively toward you, it may have everything to do with what is going on in their lives and nothing to do with you.

Reframe negative thoughts. A stockbroker who laments that his portfolio is down 30 percent could just as well ask, "What's wrong with this market?"

Focus on goals rather than shortcomings. If you go off your diet, don't tell yourself you're a fat pig; think, "I'll do better tomorrow."

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