

Digital Marketing Newsletter

For Entrepreneurs, Small Businesses, and Professionals

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Talking to David Walters

David J. Walters, Owner, Steam Powered Marketing is an engineer-turned digital marketing consultant, based in Houston, Texas.

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“At Steam Powered Marketing our motto is to help business owners develop and execute, effective and profitable online marketing strategies.”



You hold an engineering degree, have been a product head for Siemens Small Gas Turbine fleet . How did you get pivoted into digital marketing?

From a core engineering workspace, I moved into marketing support during my tenure at Siemens. We were looking at marketing the whole product line in North and South America.

Marketing is trending in the digital direction. It is just as simple as that. This year there will be a higher spend on digital advertising than all other traditional forms of advertising combined. For any business - small or large, you have to be actively pursuing a digital marketing strategy.

I saw that this was where the industry was growing and to market effectively in the future you have to have a successful digital marketing solution as part of your marketing mix.

What kind of businesses do you think would be most beneficial with digital marketing?

Every business has to have digital marketing married to their marketing mix. Having said that, one

thing I would like to clarify is that we don't propose that anyone goes solely digital.

One of the things we teach our clients is that if you say you are B2B or B2C, you are wrong. Your marketing is always H2H - Human to Human. So, if you think that you can just throw some money at Facebook or you can throw some money at some SEO company to have people flocking to your doorstep, then you have completely missed the point.

The digital element must be integrated into your existing marketing mix, unless you have got a pure ecommerce or pure info-preneuring product, which can be successfully sold via digital media alone. Anybody with a more complex sales structure have to have an H2H advertising model.

There should be a human to human interaction. It has to be built in to your marketing mix and you have to combine online and offline - digital and face to face and all of that have to be brought together.

That what we give to our clients - something we call the customer value journey and it is a complete end to end process, integrating both online and offline activities.

Your LinkedIn profile has an interesting quote “There are only three ways to grow a business

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but there are several marketing tactics which you can apply". Can you please elaborate?

Sure. I wish I could claim that that was my quote. That is as per one of the great marketing gurus of this generation. He said that there are only three ways to grow your business - get more customers, sell more to them, or sell to them more often.

When it comes to the clients that we work with, we see them only focusing on that first part of getting more customers. That is a real shame because getting a new customer is the most difficult and the most expensive of the three elements. So, when we work with a client, we will map out, as part of the customer value journey, an 8 step process.

Step 6 - what we call the ascension ladder - is where you take an existing client's offer and help them create complete range of different products and services - different bundles, which are expansions of your existing product range, complementary products, or subscription-based services.

When we first work with the client the very first thing we do as part of marketing analysis is to look at step 6 - the ascension ladder.

What is the entry point offer? What is the offer that is going to get people most interested to get into a relationship with you? Once you are into a relationship, how can you improve the transaction value for your client by offering them a bundle of products and services? Can you give them better products? Can you give them more personal attention? Can you give them a discount for buying in volume?

Another thing is looking at subscription services - can you set them up on an annual service where you charge monthly for certain amount of products or service?

This whole bundling and packaging of the products and service is done first before we even try and think about what message we want to send to the clients.

The 73 different tactics give you the steps to arrive at a decision about the tactic one needs to employ to best present our offering for a specific client, to arrive at a specific bundle.

Interesting! When a new client approaches you, typically how advanced are they with their current level of digital marketing ideas or initiatives?

Regrettably, in majority of the cases, it is typically a tragic discussion when we first start. I mean, I know that they have to get online, get digital because that is where the market's heading. But I get to hear comments such as, "I paid the SEO Company all that money but nothing happened."

If you have an honest assessment - organic SEO in a competitive market, you are probably looking anywhere between 3 to 5 thousand dollars a month for over 6 months before you see any improvement. Most small business owners don't expect to pay 20-30 thousand dollars before they get a new lead. They don't know the complexity. There are 10 different disciplines in the digital marketing arena and they don't understand that SEO is just one of these 10 elements.

We spoke to people who said they've tried SEO, it didn't work and so they took to Facebook advertising. It's great that you have the Facebook ads and the clicks. But what are they clicking through to? Your website! A website which is not optimised to capture your lead.

To make digital marketing sustainable, it should be a process that integrates their existing offline marketing functions as well. So, to be successful, it has to be H2H.

Your website is your brochure - it is pretty pictures, a narrative of your business, etc. But there is nothing on the website to capture the lead so all that money you paid for pay per click, is wasted. The lead comes to your website, reads what's in it; but, there is no vehicle to grab the contact information of your potential customer. Hence, that will be a wasted lead capturing opportunity. All that pay per click money and no new client.

A generic website probably has a conversion rate, has a lead capture rate of around half a percent. So, if you are paying 5 dollars a click thinking you can get a customer for 5 dollars- you are wrong! You only get a click for 5 dollars.

If you have a generic non optimised website, you need 200 customers to come to your website before you get a lead. It is tragic how much money small businesses and entrepreneurs throw into this because they don't understand digital marketing.

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I think an entrepreneur's dilemma would be if he/she would be better off by just doing all this by themselves or with a group of less expensive freelancers, rather than approaching a full service digital marketing services firm. Is this assessment wrong?

I would say it is very expensive to spend money on something and not get anything in return. That is the worst source of expense.

We would much rather that people be successful, even if they don't use our products and services. So, we have an ongoing programme of free training. We do webinars. In fact, we just completed

a 7-week series wherein we covered 21 different topics in digital marketing. This program is free for people who subscribe to the webinar series. Also, on our website, we have a whole set of [free tools](#). Most of the tools that we use in our practice we give away for free. We much rather see a business get the understanding about how the process works and then download the tools and try it themselves rather than throw money against the walls and not get anything in return. Nobody wins when people lose money. We, of course, want people to say that this is great stuff and we love it when people appreciate what we do for them and then contact us when they need more help.

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To start with we would much rather assist an entrepreneur who comes to us and say that they do not know what to do, by asking them to sign up for our free webinar series, download the tools - we will explain how it all works. If they want further consultation or have a formal approach

for things, we'd be glad to help.

I'd rather business understood the industry and not just waste money and never get a new client.

What digital marketing services do you provide online businesses?

There are two divisions - I run the consulting division and so I would work with a new client to create their digital marketing strategy. We have a very aggressive program - one of the complaints about marketing companies is taking so long to deliver everything.

As per our policy, we deliver in 30 days. That is from initial discovery, assessment, presentation and finalization of the process. This is a package we offer. The idea of being quick is to give the new business - the entrepreneur - a sense of momentum and when

it comes to the deliverable, we will write out a 60-day action plan which the business can take away and implement in the next few weeks.

Alternatively, if they want more support, they can get us to coach them through the implementation phase, give them project managers, etc. We can provide a whole spectrum of services that they need. But, it is always best that they test the waters in a non-threatening way - get the information they need, come to an understanding of what is going on and then from there they can come back and seek help when they are ready. I don't want to send out a message that they must do certain things and that they better stay with me for a 100 years and pay me a \$1000 a month for the next 20 years.

I would rather set somebody up for success, make a happy customer and then when they are ready they will come back to me because by then they would trust me. There is a lot of trust built during a low cost engagement. I'd rather not try and take a load of money off someone and maybe even end up building something that they may not even be in need of. That, is the honest way to run the consulting side of the business.

On the operational side, most small businesses, I am not sure how familiar you are with Google My Business (GMB), but most small businesses having a brick and mortar presence, have a physical address allowed to go in for a GMB profile, and if they optimise their profile, then they get in the top three positions. The click through is free, if you know the 7 basic things you need to do for a GMB profile.

What is the profile of the clients you work with?

Being a chartered engineer for 30 years, I relate well with engineers. My personal niche is engineering and technology companies and that is really on the consulting side of things.

In most cases the decision maker, when we deal with a B2C or a large company, the ultimate decision maker is a non-engineer. So, for an engineering company to market their product or service successfully, they have to be able to transform their technical message into a marketing message. That is the normal area that I work in and that is the focus for our consulting division. Having said that, we are not going to turn away people if they have a non-engineering business and need to put a strategy in place. We will help people who need our service. But, my speciality is engineering with technology companies.

On our operations front, we focus on small and medium size companies and it is helping them implement their digital marketing strategy. There are 8 steps in the process and each step has a different requirement - each step uses different tools.

Video marketing is huge, we have a complete video marketing program. It is designed to give 8-9

touch points to clients before they are even ready to become a customer. You need to touch somebody 7 times before they become a customer. We give them such a solution in one go. It is really about what is best for your business.

On the operation side, we would be looking at things like, Google My Business, website optimization, pay per click, video marketing, local SEO and email marketing.

One of the things that frustrates me terribly is people's mind set about email being dead. Email is not dead! Spam is dead. One of the statistics I always show my clients is that if you have an in house email list, with people who have said yes, we want email information from you; the ROI from email marketing is 4300%. That is for each dollar spent on email marketing, you get to make \$43 profit. That is, if you give it correctly to an inhouse mailing list. If people say they want to receive your email, they are on your side. Treat them with res-

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pect and you can make a huge amount of money with email marketing.

What are some of the challenges you face after you start working with a client ?

The biggest challenge is that a client can choose to pay us to do all of what we have to offer. But that can prove expensive and doesn't help them understand H2H marketing. On the contrary, I'd much rather they let us teach you how to do this and set you up for success.

For example, on Google My Business, one of the best practices is to post weekly updates to your GMB profile. This gives you visibility and credibility. Another good practice is to actively harvest 5 star reviews to give you that social proof. We can do all this - we have the tools to do this on behalf of the client. But, these are things that your secretary or your admin person can do. So we set them up and we keep a check on them. Two months later we let them know that they do not have any reviews, for instance, or that they haven't posted anything. We challenge them! So, it is not just the tools that you need to be successful. They also need the coaching, the motivation or the overseeing etc. We help them get responsible for their own success. This is one of the big issues we face.

Digital marketing is evolving and that too at a fast pace. How do you keep up with all these technology changes?

You are absolutely right! Things are changing even with existing companies like Google and Facebook - their algorithms keep changing, regularly. Each time that happens, you go back to square one. The

escape route for this is to stop thinking about the tool. That is the tactic.

This is why we go right back to the first principle - get your strategy first. This step, in the process, involves me to get my clients aware of the changes. The very step is all about creating awareness.

We will then engage our clients in advising what works based on the demographics. That way, even if that tool changes, it doesn't matter - we simply try something else. If SEO doesn't work, go for pay per click. If that doesn't work, try video marketing. If that fails, hit social media. The trick is to cease focusing on the tactic and focus on the strategy.

“My biggest piece of advice to any small business, or any business for that matter is, you have to go digital. If not, it is like burying your head in sand.”

Honestly, the fact that there are 73 tactics is an understatement. There are so many different things now. Focus on the objective and strategy and keep picking the tactic that is best suited

for that time. Then you feel less pressured about changing the tactic.

Is there anything else that you feel we should have talked about?

My biggest piece of advice to any small business, or any business for that matter is, you have to go digital. If not, it is like burying your head in sand.

You will be left behind, especially with the millennials. They live in an internet environment, so, you have to be online. But, don't throw the baby out on the bathwater. Go digital with whatever you have been doing all along.

Amplify your existing techniques with digital marketing! It is always Human to Human that works! ■

Excerpts of a conversation with Kartik Isvarmurti, Managing Editor.

David Walters can be contacted at <https://www.steampoweredmarketing.com/>

To avail the free resources offered, visit: <https://www.steampoweredmarketing.com/free-resources>

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