

MARKETINGMAN



BY LARRY SIEGEL

The basics of modern marketing

Some of you are going to think what I am about to mention about marketing are no-brainers, but, unfortunately, they are not.

If you've decided brick-and-mortar retailing is where you want to invest your time, energy and money and expect people to walk through your doors, launch a website!

When someone who just moved into your neighborhood Googles for a local cleaners, no website, no new customer.

When someone upset with their current cleaners is looking for a new one, same result. Yes, websites cost money, but they are a wise investment, so just do it!

Your website doesn't have to be fancy but it needs to have basic information, like your address, phone number, hours

and services offered.

A nice photo of your storefront with signage (you have a really visible sign, right?) would be a good way to show people what to look for.

Don't have a website de-

signer? Call your local Chamber of Commerce for great contacts.

If you have a website, make sure all links work. Also, do your links to Facebook and Instagram actually go to your Facebook and Instagram pages? Make sure because if you haven't claimed your

Facebook page, for instance, potential customers may be hijacked to a competitor's website! It happens!

Have someone you know navigate your site, open all the pages, call the phone number

you are open when issues arise. This is now a vital part of customer care and relationship marketing and you can't farm it out.

Do you enjoy posting on Instagram? Love feeding Face-

able" in an e-mail since you are taking someone's valuable time to open it... they'll get upset pretty quickly if the information isn't pertinent and there's no reward.

Also, most people I know

If someone takes the time to reach out to you, especially on your website e-mail, have the courtesy to respond. If you don't care, they won't care to give you their business.



Arnie's Cleaners in Albuquerque, NM, purchased a Columbia 400VGH cleaning machine through Mustang Enterprises. The owner, Chau Pham (left) is pictured with Chris Hogard of Columbia/ILSA.

and check directions.

If you put an e-mail connection or post your e-mail address on your website, monitor incoming e-mails on a daily basis then — here's a crazy idea — respond to them! All of them!

Bitch 'n moan or high praise, if someone takes the time to reach out to you, especially on your website e-mail, have the courtesy to respond. If you don't care to respond, they won't care to give you their business.

Let me emphasize "daily basis." Once you have a web presence, dealing with e-mails and social media must be done in a timely manner or else you'll be buried.

You need a "point person" on your management team who is there every day and knows your business inside and out.

Even if you hire an outside company to manage your social media, they still need someone to contact every day

book? If so, please have a plan!

Once you start, if you don't continue posting on a regular basis you're going to fritter away all the brand impressions you're creating!

Know what services you want to promote every week or so and it helps to check a promotional calendar to see if there are any advantageous tie-ins coming up.

By the way, don't have your kids and/or neighbors do this unless they're actually professionals because 1) they are not reliable, and 2) you don't want to mess with your brand identity.

If you like e-mail marketing, hopefully you're using it as another layer of marketing and not in lieu of other promotions because it's cheap. If it's the latter, don't inundate your customers constantly unless you want to be relegated to their spam folder.

My rule of thumb is that there must always be something "relevant" and "valu-

able" in an e-mail since you are taking someone's valuable time to open it... they'll get upset pretty quickly if the information isn't pertinent and there's no reward.

Also, most people I know don't open promotional e-mails immediately, so time-sensitive e-mails easily slide down the timeline.

If you think direct mail is dead, you are dead wrong... people still love getting mail with their name on it, especially when it's from someone they know with something likely valuable enclosed.

Think about this: do you think someone receiving an envelope the shape of a birthday card during their birthday month is going to throw it out without opening?

Of course not! That's why this isn't the first article I've mentioned adding birthday loyalty programs to your marketing plan.

So, here's one of my biggest peeves: expecting one ad, e-mail blast or promotional postcard to turn a business around. There is typically a lengthy time span between getting someone's attention and then getting them to do something, time when they may be driving by your location, seeing some posts on social media, and perhaps seeing your business name pop up on the internet.

Sure, one promotion may precipitate a visit if it shows up at the perfect time with an offer they can't refuse, but most likely, it will take several "hits" before someone says, "Hey, I need to check this place out!"

If none of this applies to your business, great! And, if you actually did send out a promotion that turned your business around, please send it to me because "one can never learn less about anything, one can only learn more."

Larry Siegel is a marketing consultant/graphic designer and believes that "marketing is everything!" He specializes in helping businesses with branding, bringing in new customers and loyalty programs. He can be reached at (818) 241-3042 and larrysiegel@charter.net.

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