

BUSINESS

Best-Kept Marketing Secrets

Editor's Picks

By Readers of Small Business Trends, 2009

We've taken our popular Best-Kept Marketing Secrets document and turned it into a shorter version with our Editor's picks.

Table of Contents

Part 1 – Relationship Marketing	3
Part 2 – Marketing Strategy	4
Part 3 – Selling	5
Part 4 – Communicating and Messaging	6
Part 5 – Online Marketing	7
Part 6 – Social Media	8

Contributors by Name

Brian Clark, CopyBlogger.	6
Brian Moran, Publisher, Small Business Edge	6
Christopher Knight, ChrisKnight.com	5
Daniel Sitter, Idea Seller	3
Dharmesh Shah, Hubspot	9
Drew McClellan, Drew's Marketing Minute	4
Eric Kuhen, Marsh	3
Jennifer Laycock, Editor, Search Engine Guide	8
John Battelle, Searchblog	3
Jonathan Fields, Awake at the Wheel	5
Liz Strauss, Successful Blog.	7
Mack Collier, The Viral Garden	8
Matt McGee, Small Business SEM	7
Michael Port, Author of "Book Yourself Solid"	5
Michelle	9
Rachelle Matherne, Five by Five PR	3
Scott Shane, Author of "Illusions of Entrepreneurship"	4
Seth Godin, SethGodin.com	3
Susan Oakes, M4B Marketing Software	4
Susan Payton, The Marketing Eggspert.	6
Vikram Rajan, 365 Marketing Thumb Rules	6
Yaro Starak, Entrepreneurs Journey	7

Part 1 – Relationship Marketing

Rachelle Matherne, Five by Five PR www.fivebyfivepr.com

“Don’t be afraid to give stuff away, whether it be helpful articles, lists of resources, credit to your peers, or a little something extra to your clients. Be generous.”

Daniel Sitter, Idea Seller www.idea-sellers.com

“While important, the price we ask for a product or service is far less important than you might think. Our customers want value. They are paying for solutions. They expect results and they are not put out by paying a fair price to get what they need. We entrepreneurs are often guilty of prematurely lowering our prices, perhaps out of a sense of fear or perceived competition. We need to be in the practice of adding so much value that our customer does not even blink at our price. We must learn to present our expected price with confidence, without flinching.”

Eric Kuhen, Marsh www.marsh.com

“One way to build a relationship with a client is to refer business to them. Lead them to someone who will buy their product/service. No better way to show you understand their business than by referring them to someone who can help them grow... you become more important to them and they appreciate your efforts. Also, ‘no’ means ‘not yet’.”

Seth Godin, SethGodin.com www.sethgodin.com

“Make promises and keep them. So obvious, it’s become a secret.”

John Battelle, Searchblog www.battellemedia.com

“The best kept secret in marketing is to invest your time in eliciting and responding to your customer’s feedback, even if it’s negative. It’s the secret to building a network of evangelists who keep on giving back to your business”

Part 2 – Marketing Strategy

Scott Shane, Author of “Illusions of Entrepreneurship”

<http://yalepress.yale.edu/yupbooks/entrepreneurshipquiz.asp>

“The data show that most entrepreneurs compete on price, but doing this leads companies to perform worse. New companies are better off competing on service, quality or some other dimension.”

Drew McClellan, Drew’s Marketing Minute www.drewsmarketingminute.com

“Do Less. One of the most tempting aspects of marketing is the veritable smorgasbord of different marketing tactics that you can toss into a marketing plan. It’s almost overwhelming.

Many marketing professionals make the very understandable mistake of believing that more is better. But they’re wrong.

You will be vastly more successful if you do less, but do them better. Pick 3-4 marketing tactics that you think are really going to be valued by your audience and drive the behavior/action you’re looking for. Then, figure out how you can do them in an extraordinary way.

100% consistency. 100% relevancy. Do less. But do them better.”

Susan Oakes, M4B Marketing Software www.m4b.com.au

“As they say - keep your friends close and your enemies closer. In a marketing context, it is essential to know all about your key competitors as the information you get, will allow you to take advantage of their weaknesses and defend against their strengths.

By analyzing your competitors it helps you to work out your key point of difference and what you do better. Sources of information to find out more about your competitors include their website, trade associations, internet search engines, your customers and don’t forget to buy their product to experience their customer service.

Remember they would probably love to have some of your customers for their business and they are probably keeping a close watch on you.”

Part 3 – Selling

Jonathan Fields, Awake at the Wheel www.jonathanfields.com

“Decide whether you want to feed your ego or your family. Sexy, expensive image-building campaigns might win your ad-firm a Clio, but, with rare exceptions they don’t put money in your bank or food on your table... at least at the level small businesses can afford. So, drive your branding efforts with free PR in the early days and spend your money on measurable direct-response marketing that delivers X dollars of revenue for every dollar spent on marketing.”

Michael Port, Author of “Book Yourself Solid” www.michaelpport.com

“All sales start with a simple conversation. It may be a conversation between you and a potential client or customer, between one of your clients and a potential referral, or between one of your colleagues and a potential referral. An effective sales cycle is based on turning these simple conversations into relationships of trust with your potential clients over time. We know that people buy from those they like and trust. But as Sir Winston Churchill once said, ‘It is a mistake to look too far ahead. Only one link in the chain of destiny can be handled at a time.’”

Christopher Knight, ChrisKnight.com www.chrisknight.com

“Marketing is about demand creation.”

Part 4 – Communicating and Messaging

Brian Moran, Publisher, Small Business Edge www.smallbusinessedge.com

“LESS IS MORE: In today’s cluttered world, your customers are being bombarded with thousands of messages every day. In order to rise above the noise level, you need to capture their attention immediately and then hold it while giving them your pitch. You must be able to deliver your message, if necessary, in 25 words or less. Include your main feature and the main benefit in the message. If you hook the potential customer, they will gladly ask you for more information.”

Susan Payton, The Marketing Eggspert www.eggmarketingblog.com

“Never say no to a customer. If you don’t know how to do something, you can find out how or hire someone who can do it. Customers like hearing yes, and they love it when you can meet all their needs.”

Brian Clark, CopyBlogger www.copyblogger.com

“Take an educational approach to marketing, and people will actually pay attention. Plus, the more you can teach people about the subject area surrounding your product or service, the more of a market you open up in those prospective and existing customers.”

Vikram Rajan, 365 Marketing Thumb Rules www.marketingthumbrules.com

“Find an overlooked target market, and market to them using their kind of jargon and/or colloquialisms. Yep, it’s in my new book.”

Part 5 – Online Marketing

Yaro Starak, Entrepreneurs Journey www.entrepreneurs-journey.com

“There’s something I do that very few other bloggers do - build an email list. My secret tip isn’t to build a list though — that’s pretty obvious to anyone who markets online. It’s how you use your list and your blog together that is my secret.

Here’s one simple example. I write product reviews to my blog now and then. I write a solid review, with my honest opinion and what I think is good and bad about the product after using it. I post the article to my blog and usually make a few affiliate sales as a result.

I then write a short email to my list designed to bring people to the review and add the email to my autoresponder sequence. From that point forward at some point everyone who joins my list eventually receives the email and visits the review. This ensures I have a steady stream of traffic to that review, even long after it is hidden in my blog archives AND I continue to make affiliate sales.

This is a formula for passive income from just writing one blog article and one email, though of course you want to do it again and again with new products to multiply your earnings. Good luck!”

Matt McGee, Small Business SEM www.smallbusinesssem.com

“SEO is just like traditional marketing. In the ‘real world,’ you want to create a great product and get people talking about it. Online, you want to create great content and get people linking to it. Same theory, and often the same techniques. Develop relationships with journalists offline; do the same with bloggers online. Engage with customers offline; engage in social communities online.

Give people something to talk about (and link to), join the conversation, and you’re on the road to SEO success.”

Liz Strauss, Successful Blog www.successful-blog.com

“The best promotion is to promote other people. Promote your customers, their friends, and yours. Always be looking for what other folks do well and be the first to talk about it. Be the first to point people in their direction. There’s no better way to show that you’re a generous team player, a great judge of skill and character, and completely confident about the work that you do.”

Part 6 – Social Media

Jennifer Laycock, Editor, Search Engine Guide www.searchengineguide.com

“One of the least utilized social media sites for subtle marketing is Flickr.com. I think people picture Flickr as just another place to store their images. In reality, Flickr is filled with vibrant communities of highly engaged users. There’s a discussion and photo sharing group for nearly any topic you can think of. Now it’s easy to write that off and say “there are discussion groups everywhere” but that would be a mistake. You see the discussion groups at Flickr are made up of people who not only talk about these topics, but care enough about them to take pictures and upload those pictures as well. That means the members of a Flickr group tend to be more fanatical about their topic than your average discussion board member.

There are several great ways to leverage Flickr.

- 1.) You can join a group and post in the discussion threads to establish yourself as an expert. This will lead people back to your profile where you can easily promote your web site, blog, etc.
- 2.) You can geotag your images. Flickr is owned by Yahoo!, so in my opinion, it’s only a matter of time until Flickr’s geotagged images get meshed with Yahoo Travel. Anyone who owns a tourist destination would be crazy not to be uploading geotagged photos of their hotels, grounds, nearby hiking trails or any other scenic spot.
- 3.) You can add descriptions, tags and even in-picture captions to your photos. You can also add links. This creates new links from a valued site and drives direct traffic to your site. The key here is to make sure you aren’t adding links to more than 10 or 15% of your photos. As with any social community, you HAVE to add more value than you pull.
- 4.) You can build relationships with other passionate bloggers in your niche. I’ve found Flickr can really fast track your attempts to network. When you’re talking to people via Flickr with an avatar and a photo it’s much easier to stand out.

The key here is that Flickr is only going to work for companies who have a visual component. Landscapers, gardeners, custom car detailers, chefs, salons, tourist spots”

Mack Collier, The Viral Garden <http://moblogsmoproblems.blogspot.com>

“Success in blogging is dependent upon having a built-in direct benefit to others. For example, many companies want to approach blogging as a way to sell products to customers. But blogs don’t work well as a direct-selling channel. The key is to first provide a benefit to readers by creating content and community that offers them value. By giving readers a direct benefit, the company then benefits indirectly by seeing sales increase as a result of their blogging efforts. But if the company instead tries to directly promote themselves, readers will see no value in this, and the blog will die.”

Michelle

“Blog, Even though you may step on some toes without that politically correct filter in mind all the time - you just might start something. Don’t let fear or ridicule hold you back. And you don’t have to blog about your industry. Blog about gardening or pets and share links to your products and services in mentions with visitors.”

Dharmesh Shah, Hubspot www.hubspot.com

“The power of second-order Internet Marketing: Small businesses should consider the positive marketing impact of “second order” effects in Internet marketing. A second-order effect is when you do not promote yourself directly, but help promote others who have mentioned you, linked to you or referenced an idea or concept that you agree with.

The simplest example is when a blogger mentions your business in an article they write (even if you are mentioned only incidentally). If you like the article, you should help promote the article in the social media sites (Digg, StumbleUpon, etc.). This is better than trying to promote yourself and can often create significant traffic, PR and marketing good-will.”