

Marketing in the 21st Century

When I first started in business, marketing was easier and less complicated and had a local focus. That was in the 1970's.

Marketing for my first business, a temporary secretarial bureau, took little effort. All I did for was:

1. Find secretaries that wanted to earn more money, have a flexible schedule and be willing to temp.
2. Find the attorneys who needed to hire temporary secretaries due to overload work, vacation or sick time. What could be easier?

Things have changed quite a bit since then. Now just getting in to *meet* with an attorney is a whole heap of a lot more trouble. When we do get in, we get just a tiny window of time to talk, and one of their first questions is "Do you have a website?"

Psychology of the web

Today, unless you have a web presence, you are not in business. Our websites have become, in effect, our business card. We're just expected to have one. Our customer wants to see a picture of a skylight, if our business is installing skylights, before they will think about doing business with us. They want to see the testimonies of happy clients. The website has become the medium that *legitimizes* our business.

Marketing in the 21st Century is a bit more complicated than my very first marketing experiences. Unlike my first small area of business that was centered geographically on a couple of central streets in London, we now have access to the world market. Now I can hire a secretary anywhere and have them do the work via e-mail.

In 21st Century Marketing, we are no longer limited to the area we can physically reach. Whether we are constructing buildings, coaching or manufacturing product, we can reach people around the world and still create an effective business relationship via the web.

What is Marketing?

When I ask this question in seminars, I get a range of responses from "letting people know where you are" to "educating people on why they should buy your product." They are all right. Marketing is a large skill set that each



business owner uses several pieces of at any given time. The larger topic of marketing can be broken down into a number of major areas:

Market Driver

Market "*driving*" is getting someone to your place of business. Whether you are a storefront business or use only a website, you must get people to view your product or service.

Web Optimization

One way of driving people to your website is through what's called "optimization". This is done by using descriptive language designed to bring you to the top of search engine lists such as Google, Yahoo and MSN.

21st Century Branding

Branding is name and package recognition. Branding should be a large part of your market driver plan. The goal is to familiarize your customers with your product or service, and then have them select *your* product or service because, why? *They are familiar with it!*

Branding is everything from having a website where every page has a familiar look to McDonalds "*golden arches*" or the Nike Swoosh. Let's look McDonalds.

They took the 'M' of their name, painted it yellow and called it "*The Golden Arches.*" McDonalds does not sell hamburgers, they sell recognition of their golden arches. They have taken the lowly hamburger and created an experience around eating it under the *Golden Arches*. Their hamburger is the secondary marketing focus. Marketing in the 21st Century is centered on branding.

Tracking your 21st Century Marketing

One of the most costly mistakes business owners can make is not tracking the effectiveness of their marketing dollars. No matter which medium you choose to use for your marketing, you must track the results.

Too often business owners throw money at a marketing campaign thinking that the person who sold it to them will take care of everything. Whether you choose newspaper or web advertising, networking, or team marketing, tracking the impact of your efforts and dollars is vital to your marketing success.

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