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Facilitation Focus

**PROVIDING A RANGE OF TIPS, IDEAS AND STRATEGIES
FOR YOU TO USE OR PASS ON TO YOUR CLIENTS**

Helping you achieve your business goals in 2019

Well, where has it gone?

We are almost at the end of January 2019, and it seems like only last week that we were celebrating Christmas 2017.

However, the main question arises: are you on track with your 2019 business goals?

Although they are fairly up-beat about it, the economists are still claiming that consumer confidence is on a long-term low and with that comes tightened belts and people tend to be far more accountable for their money.

So have you given any thought at all to what will be the trends and ideas that will continue to shape your plans and strategies for 2019?

As a business facilitator or a business owner, you are probably aware of where your activities could improve. It's a given that we are always wanting to improve, but maybe we are not sure how to start the process.

And the first step to wanting to improve is recognising that something needs to improve or change.

However, before you start implementing changes, it's a good idea to make sure you have a full understanding of the factors impacting on your current situation.

These factors may include your current business practices, market trends or changes to the wider environment in which you operate.

A company is only as good as its people, their ability to deliver, and the promises they keep.



MARKET WATCH FOR 2019

Does Your Marketing Strategy Need a Revamp?

As we surge into the New Year, have you looked lately at your marketing strategy?

Did you implement all of the marketing plans that you intended to do in 2018, or have you still not managed to get around to doing it? Perhaps you could use this little note as a reminder to refresh your organisation, revamp your marketing and tie up loose ends.



Why Marketing Matters



Every business owner shares one thing in common: the desire to create a stable, steady business that achieves profitability and grows over time. But not every business owner knows the secret formula that makes that possible. So what is that secret formula? In a word, it's marketing.

"But what does the word 'marketing' mean?" you ask. "Is it just getting the word out about my business? 'Cause I've done that, and I can't really see any difference."

In its most complete form, marketing is about much more than letting people know your business exists (although that's an important piece of the puzzle.) In fact, in many ways, getting the word out is one of the last steps in a good marketing plan.

A strong marketing campaign goes much deeper, and provides benefits that help you attract customers at the same time as you clarify achievable goals and create realistic plans to meet them.

At its best, a marketing plan helps you understand:

- Your business
- Your customers
- Your competition
- The full range of opportunities available to you
- The optimal way to attack those opportunities
- Appropriate pricing
- The marketplace in which you operate

..... and a whole host of other issues that will help your business grow dramatically.

Whether you run or own a small or

large organization or business, if you're in the game to succeed, a well thought out marketing plan is one of the best tools you can employ along the way.

"In order to sell a product or service, a company must establish a relationship with the consumer. It must build trust and rapport. It must understand the customer's needs, and it must provide a product that delivers the promised benefits". -- Jay Levinson, The Guerilla Marketer's Handbook

In order to succeed, companies must establish relationships with customers. The strong, lasting relationships that will ensure a company's success are built on:

- Establishing trust and rapport
- Understanding customers' needs
- Providing real benefits

In many ways, these three imperatives all reiterate one central concept: The relationships between successful businesses and their customers depend on careful understanding and reliable fulfillment of human needs.

The business owner understands what people need, and does everything he can to meet those needs.

Beyond that, however, Levinson argues that the successful business owner (i.e., marketer) also:

- Understands that the impact of the message is more important than the number of people who hear it. "The guerilla would rather reach ten people with a message that works than 100 with one that doesn't."
- Understands that providing real benefits is the only key to long-term success. Promising benefits is great, but if you don't come through, you'll lose customers faster than you can say, "boo!"

Moreover, you must provide something people want, not simply something you want to sell. If you're the best fur coat maker in the tropics, you can advertise all you want to a local market and never make a sale.

Instead, you'll have to broaden your market to colder climes, or put your skills to work making something people in your local can use.

Understands the importance of positioning a business in relation to competitors and market leaders in the same field. If you make a great cola, good luck going up against the big guys.

To make your mark, you'll need something special to make yourself stand out. For instance, a cola sweetened with a sweetener that has no calories, no aftertaste and that's actually good for your teeth!

Understands the importance of budgeting wisely, but spending where it counts. For instance, if a good marketer decides to run a newspaper ad, he or she will make sure to hire professional designers, etc., so that the businesses best face is always forward.

Understands commitment. Even the best marketing campaigns will bring immediate, lasting improvement. Building trust and rapport takes time. Great marketers are both diligent and patient, and they don't change course midstream just because they aren't seeing results fast enough.



Understanding Your Customer's Needs



Most business owners have an intuitive understanding of their customers needs -- but that intuitive understanding becomes a much more powerful tool if you articulate and analyze it.

Only then can you fully understand how to most effectively build the kind of customer relationship that will help your business succeed over time -- this principle is central to the very heart of the formulation of marketing.

As a starter step in your marketing plan, ask yourself the following questions:

- Who are my customers?
- Who are my potential customers?
- What kind of people are they? What are their incomes? What are their needs?
- Where do they live?
- Can they buy? Will they buy?
- Am I offering them real benefits, when and how they want them?
- Is my business in the best place?
- Is my pricing right?
- How do customers perceive my business?
- Who are my competitors?
- How does my business compare with my competitors'?

Every customer's satisfaction (and dissatisfaction) comes from what they expect and anticipate expectations – *what your customer thinks he or she should experience* – and the reality of what you deliver, or endeavour to deliver to them. If the experience you deliver

exceeds those expectations, you can expect customer loyalty, customer lifetime value, and brand equity to flourish.

Meeting (*or exceeding*) customer expectations is the most valuable aspect of customer satisfaction. A satisfied customer is one that has had their expectations met.

Over the past 10–15 years, businesses are placing a renewed focus on customers. They're doing this because they see that customers have more choice than ever before, particularly with the dynamic growth in Internet sales.

If customers don't perceive that what your business is offering is worth what they've paid for, they'll take their money to a competitor who offers better value. That competitor may be right next door or on the other side of the world.

What is definitely lacking in most organisations is a real understanding, empathy and focus on their customers, and a genuine understanding of what value they can provide to their customers.

However, the goal here is to not just meet customer expectations; it should be to 'wow' customers and exceed them. When you exceed your customer's expectations, you create an experience that the customer remembers.

This experience is often passed onto friends which generates word of mouth referrals and can help create a positive impression of you and your business.

Understanding the needs of your customers is the key to giving them outstanding service. To give good customer care you must deliver what

you promise. But outstanding customer care involves getting to know your customers so well that you can exceed their expectations.

To really understand your customers well, you need to always make them feel welcome, and illustrate that you look forward to helping them whenever you are in contact with them.

The potential rewards are huge: You can dramatically increase customer loyalty, and they in turn, will help create a strong referral system through positive word-of-mouth feedback and recommendations to their friends.

Two of the easiest (*and best*) activities that you can undertake that will definitely help you to understand your customer better are as follows:

One way is to simply put yourself in their shoes (*after all, as well as running a business, you are also a customer to many other businesses*) and try and look at your business from their point of view.

The second way is simply to ask your customers what they think ...

Are they happy with the service you provide? What do they think you can do to make their experience better? Would they recommend you to others?

Many of your regular or loyal customers are complimented when you ask them for genuine feedback to help you improve your business.

TRY IT!!



Fine-Tuning Your Business Identity

On page 2 (“Why Marketing Matters”), I discussed the proposition that in order to succeed, businesses must establish relationships with customers.

The strong, lasting relationships that will ensure your success are built on:

- Establishing trust and rapport
- Understanding customers' needs
- Providing real benefits

In many ways, these three imperatives all rotate around one central concept: The relationships between successful businesses and their customers depend on careful understanding and reliable fulfillment of human needs.

The successful business owner understands what people need, and does everything he or she can to meet those needs.

Now, let's add another layer to that proposition:

In order to build a strong relationship with customers, a business must be able to communicate what benefits it offers in one short, powerful statement.

Your “Elevator Pitch” or Mission Statement

Do you have such a statement? If not, it's time to put one together.

This statement might be called your elevator pitch. (It should be short enough that you can explain your business in the course of an elevator ride from the first to the sixth floor.)

Alternately it could be called your mission statement.

Either way, the statement should answer four key questions:

1. What does your business (or product) do?

2. What is the core benefit you provide?
3. Who is the recipient of that benefit?
4. What is your unique selling proposition?

Example

Say you have a business called *FamilyAlbum.com.au*. To construct a mission statement for your business, you'd need to answer each of the four questions above, then fold the answers into one brief, compelling statement.

Let's take a look at how this works:

- What does your business (or product) do?

It offers an easily accessible, private, web-based site for posting family photos, movies, news and other significant information.

- What is the core benefit you provide?

Families stay in closer touch.

- Who is the recipient of that benefit?

Families who live in distant locations and who have web access.

- What is your unique selling proposition?

There are several options here. FamilyAlbum.com.au could offer several months free access, or they could offer services such as digitizing photos on site then returning them to the owners, while waiving start-up fees.

Based on these answers, FamilyAlbum elevator pitch might read something like this:

FamilyAlbum gives families their own private corner of the Internet to share photos, news, recipes and family history, get automatic email reminders of birthdays and other events, or send alerts in case of a family emergency. Staying in touch has never been so simple!

**KEEP
YOUR
CUSTOMERS
HAPPY**



Sixty eight percent of customers who leave do so because they feel unappreciated, unimportant, and taken for granted.

Understanding how the products or services you sell will match these benefits, will help you craft a marketing message that reaches your target customers, and promises them something they really want! ...and that, of course, is the first step toward building a lasting relationship with them.

So, If you're trying to be everything to everyone, you're probably setting yourself up for failure.

“The only products or services that succeed are those that offer a benefit to consumers that is greater than their cost.”

-- Jay Levinson, *The Guerilla Marketing Handbook*

Instead, what you need to do is identify the market segment or segments that you want to reach, figure out how the products or services you offer match the needs the consumers in that market have, then craft a short statement that explains your benefits to that particular audience.



Welcome to “Facilitation Focus”

The Australasian Institute of Business and Enterprise Facilitators (AIBEF) was founded in 1997 as a result of the recommendations of the Industry Task Force on Leadership and Management Skills.

In their report, entitled *Enterprising Nation*, the taskforce recommended that: “.... a comprehensive accreditation process be established for small business trainers, educators, counsellors, mentors and advisers so as to upgrade the quality of small business advice.”

It's a fact that, at the moment, the business advice industry in Australia is self-regulated, and virtually anyone can call themselves a business or enterprise facilitator, advisor, coach, mentor, trainer or consultant.

Check out Google for instance; there must be a dozen (or more) sites on “*How To Start Your Own Business Consulting Venture*”.

The AIBEF is the Peak Body for Business Mentors, Coaches and Trainers, and we, the AIBEF Committee, hope to continue the association's great work to further promote the professionalism and quality of our members, and to endeavour to act as a respected voice and advocate for the wider community.

The AIBEF represents a profession that is proud of its independence and confident of the service it provides, committed to continual improvement in the skills and knowledge of our members and Business and Enterprise Facilitators in general, who ably assist in the professional guidance and support of business, enterprise and community development.



Welcome to our Newsletter

Facilitation Focus is an opportunity for Business Facilitators, Coaches, Mentors, Trainers and Consultants to ask questions, offer answers, and become part of a group where we can all join in peer-to-peer discussions and conversations about challenges, experiences and outcomes. ***It is also worth noting that ‘Focus’ can be included in your Continuing Professional Development (CPD)***

Facilitation Focus is a publication for a rapidly changing world.

Almost daily, SME's are facing constant changes, and it is vital that the Business and Enterprise Facilitator is current with their expert advice and guidance.

Facilitation Focus has as its main aim to access to a professional network of peers through the AIBEF, and by gaining more insight into business and industry best practices, as well as increasing the focus on the important aspects of their own business, an AIBEF Focus member can accomplish amazing results.



Something To Say?

Letters and Article contributions from readers are most welcome

Please send your letters to info@aibef.org.au



WHO ARE BUSINESS OR ENTERPRISE FACILITATORS?

Virtually any professional, qualified person or organisation involved in assisting entrepreneurs, organisations, or communities to improve their Skills; Knowledge; Business; Staff; and/or Life.

The role of a Business and Enterprise Facilitator is to promote local economic growth by providing support to local entrepreneurs, groups or entire communities wishing to start or expand a small business enterprise or to assist to develop a concept where the community will benefit

The concept of Business and Enterprise Facilitation is a model of development that supports the creation of wealth from within a community by nurturing the resourcefulness of its people.

The Australasian Institute of Business and Enterprise Facilitators is an international not-for-profit institution that works with entrepreneurs, small groups and / or communities to establish sustainable, grassroots enterprise projects.

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