



Ask SCORE for Business Advice

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Social Media Assistance by Tina Dettman-Bielefeldt

A few weeks ago, this column reviewed social marketing Internet sites like LinkedIn and Twitter. As entrepreneurs look to SCORE for advice, we are finding increasingly that there is confusion regarding the utilization of these and other social marketing sites. It is important that business owners gain a general knowledge in order to keep in step with the competition. For some, that might mean hiring a firm that specializes in this area.

David A. Sauter, owner of Envano, Inc.(www.Envano.com), a Green Bay interactive marketing firm, is one of those companies. Envano means “that which infuses creative innovation and applies new concepts and techniques.” With a wide range of specialists on his staff in positions that were mostly unheard of a decade ago, Sauter has advice for businesses that are just starting to use interactive marketing. Times are changing.

He explained, “A few years ago, it was mostly a Corporate Site, maybe a store, some banner ads and email marketing and some Search Engine Marketing. There are many more tools and “outposts” available today. Outposts are what we call other places you have chosen to support your brand and its Fans. It may be a Facebook FanPage, a LinkedIn Group, A Flickr PhotoStream, a Twitter Feed, A Yahoo Sponsored Ad Campaign, A Ning Community, a Blogger Blog, an eBay or Amazon Store, a Wikipedia Listing, or a YouTube Channel.”

It might sound imposing, but Sauter believes that the interactive components of social marketing provide the benefit of two-way communication with customers. Whereas traditional marketing tells or pushes a message, social media provides actual customer interaction and a captive experience. “It is location based marketing. You don’t draw them to you. You go where they are,” Sauter said.

In crafting a social media plan, he recommends examining business objectives, learning about the options, and researching what competitors are doing. “Depending on the business, look at email marketing then probably something in Facebook or LinkedIn. Consider a blog if you have valuable info in your industry you are willing to share. The simplest is to just advertise in Social Media Venues. It provides targeting.”

The ability to target a specific audience makes it less costly than a traditional ad that requires advertising to a broad audience in order to reach a select group. That doesn’t

mean, however, the companies should abandon their other marketing efforts. A comprehensive plan should include both components. While Envano uses a variety of metrics to track effectiveness of all aspects of social marketing, a business owner can review areas such as site visits, shared photos, and increased site linking. This will allow the business to assess the effectiveness of various venues and modify usage accordingly.

Once the decision is made to take action, Sauter says that it's important to stick with it and stay current. If this is difficult to do, he recommends selecting a company that can manage or guide you through the process.

If you'd like to learn more about social media, contact the Green Bay Chapter of SCORE. Visit www.greenbayscore.org or call Cindy Gokey at 920-496-8930 for information.

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