

Ask SCORE for Business Advice

“Ask SCORE” Column

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Crowdsourcing is Effective Strategy by Tina Dettman-Bielefeldt

When a SCORE client needed a business name, students of Paul Lotto, a SCORE volunteer and Marketing/ Business Teacher at Ashwaubenon High School, put together a list of creative possibilities. We didn't realize it at the time, but this was a prime example of crowdsourcing, one of the newest and cheapest business strategies.

Crowdsourcing allows an entrepreneur to complete projects or jobs inexpensively by leveraging groups of people to come up with solutions.

Using LinkedIn, a member of the Marketing and PR Innovators Group, started an on-line discussion. “Please help me come up with a tag line for my music company,” Jeff Gold requested. “The name of my company is Jeff Gold Music, and I compose and produce music that is great for relaxation. I'm not quite as good with words and I have struggled with a good tag line.”

In response, ideas have been coming in for months. In fact, more than 350 people have responded with their recommendations. There are so many good tag lines that it will be difficult for Gold to select the best. What he has done is obtain exceptional assistance at no cost. The savings are huge.

This is just one of the strategies that can be employed. There are some sites that help entrepreneurs get their businesses going without the cost of employees. Some to consider include:

99 Designs – this site offers graphic design work to a broad network of artists and designer who compete to submit the best idea. The entrepreneur offers a payment price for the best logo and picks a favorite from the submissions.

Kickstarter – this is a funding platform for artists, designers, filmmakers, musicians, journalists, and more. You name the amount of money you need to do something; people in turn pledge amounts in support of this project or business. If you receive enough pledges, your donors' payments are processed and you receive the full amount.

TopCoder – runs competitions with prizes that enable participants to compete for the best

software, development and employment services solutions.

Trada – a search engine marketing and optimization company that lets the crowd pick the best keywords for your company or campaign.

Jigsaw – provides leads in the industries you are targeting by allowing you to upload contact information in exchange for the ability to download other people's contact information.

LiveOps – if you aren't ready to hire sales people, this company specializes in call center outsourcing.

InnoCentive – as your business grows, this company allows you to outsource research and development to discover the latest new product or service.

Samasource – a socially responsible site, this will enable your business to send microtasks to youth, refugees, and women in developing countries.

There are hundreds of similar sites available that will perform services at little or no cost. It's hard to put a value on 350 free ideas from a group of peers or on the enthusiasm and creativity of a class of marketing students. It's easy, however, to see the advantages for your business. Bring on the crowd.

If you'd like to learn more, 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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