

*"Why join the navy
when you can be
a pirate?"
- Steve Jobs*

boxfire marketing

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Marketing - It's all about thinking laterally

One of the biggest mistakes most business owners make - when it comes to marketing - is regardless of economic conditions, the subject is an afterthought ... at best. And, when they do think about marketing, they think about what has 'worked before' and they refuse to think laterally.

During good economic times, business is hopping, and managers are lulled into a false sense of security. "We're busy, as it is," is one common reply. "We don't need to do any extra marketing."

Conversely, during an economic downturn, the reply is often, "We just don't have the money to do any advertising or marketing."

In both scenarios, the business owner is doing what they think is best for their business. Either they are too busy managing the workload during the good times, or they are too busy watching the pennies during the down times.

Both are laudable, and to an extent, both are necessary.

But, quite frankly, both are dead wrong.

The good economic times should be used for sustained and consistent growth and preparation for the inevitable 'slow times' that happen to every business. The bad economic times should be looked at as more of an opportunity to seek out new revenue streams and a different demographic of clients/customers.



It takes different thinking to properly market your business and assure continued success - regardless of how much money you throw at the problem. Take, for example, the British Postal Service. (We're going to use the postal system in the UK because, quite frankly, the postal system in the U.S. is almost beyond rescuing.) The British Postal Service a few years ago boasted a 98 percent guaranteed next-day delivery rate throughout the country. Most folks would say that 98 percent is something of which to be proud.

Well, that wasn't good enough for the postal officials in Great Britain. They wanted 99 percent.

So, they spent millions of dollars and still only got to 98.2 percent. At the same time, a nationwide survey was conducted, and the vast majority of postal customers said it was their impression the postal service's next-day delivery rate was between 50-60 percent.

Instead of trying for an expensive percentage point, the postal service should have spent at least some of its money and worked on turning around its image.

Perception is reality, and the reality was that most of the mail customers in the United Kingdom thought the post office was running with half-efficiency.

Sometimes, the marketing guys really do know more than the engineers.

Another mistake a number of business owners - especially small business owners - make is either taking the do-it-yourself route or knowing a guy, who knows a guy, who has a nephew ... who can do website design and marketing.

Let's look at it through the eyes of a homeowner instead of a business owner. For most of us, fixing little things around the house is no big deal. Replacing a door knob here or fixing a broken window there is no big deal. But rewiring the entire house is probably something one needs to leave to the professionals. They have the expertise, the tools and the training to do a professional job.



Or, you can also look at it as if your child is sick. You wouldn't take him or her to the local pharmacist for a proper diagnosis, you would pay a little bit of money and take the child to a proper physician.

That's where professional marketing comes into play. Just like the physician and the electrician, a professional marketer has the knowledge, training, education, experience and tools to properly advise you on marketing your business - in both good and bad times.

Professional marketing requires a very specific skill set - a skill set that one can surmise the 'friend's nephew' probably doesn't possess.

One of the items the 'frequently asked questions' section of this website deals with is the expense of professional marketing.

True, professional marketing services can be, and often are, expensive. But, they don't need to be. As you will learn in the 'You need boxfire marketing' section of this site, professional marketing services can be as costly or inexpensive as is needed and wanted. A professional marketing plan does not need to break the bank.

One of the main tasks of the professional marketer is to assess a business' needs and determine what kind of marketing will get the owner the most 'bang' for their buck, regardless of whether one has unlimited funds or a very conservative marketing budget. In short, the professional marketer's job is to find ways to help you use your money in the places it will do the most good. For example, if your business is a local tailor shop, you probably won't get much business by advertising in USA Today. (Don't laugh, there are actually people who have paid the high-five-figure amounts for ads in the national publication.)

As you will learn, using a professional marketing service - such as boxfire marketing - can be both cost-effective and extremely beneficial for your business.

It is our job to help you help yourself in either climbing the ladder to success or keeping your position on top of the heap.

