



The Update: Small Business News, Tips & Ideas

Helping You Reach Your Goals!

April, 2016



It's time to celebrate our small businesses. Thanks for all you do. Check out my article discussing what they offer to our communities and our economy. [Go here.](#)

Till next time,
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In Cooperation With



Quotes of the Month

One of the most important things I have learned in life is to ignore most of what people say. I watch what they do instead – Amanda Patterson

Waiting for perfect is never as smart as making progress - Seth Godin

There is nothing quite so useless as doing with great efficiency something that should not be done at all – Peter Drucker

Upcoming Events

May 10th, Fargo and May 11th, Mandan – Farm to School – Getting local foods into the schools. For more information, contact crystal.grenier@dakotacollege.edu.

This Month's Tips

Build Your Brand

You know you should be developing a brand. But you don't know what steps to take. Here is one place for some ideas such as: get a logo; make it visible on everything (give things away); and use it on social media. <http://searchenginewatch.com/sew/how-to/2388727/5-ways-small-businesses-can-build-their-brands-in-2015>

Logo vs Brand

Confused about the differences. Seth Godwin's short blog may help to clear up the confusion. A quick, easy to understand comparison. http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2015/01/logo-vs-brand.html

Stand Out From the Competition

Often business owners look at the big names they are up against and feel powerless. There seems to be no way they can carve out a niche in a market that seems all sewed up. See how these 11 companies did just that. <http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/brands-that-differentiated-themselves-from-the-competition>

Resources and Starting a Business

You don't need a lot of money but you need to: know how to bootstrap, avoid debt; be prepared to put in the time; and take opportunities among other things.

<http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/240331>

Deciding on Your Business Structure

Often times the business structure decision is done based on what we hear other people doing or a single issue such as liability concerns. Yet this decision can have significant effects across the business. Here are some of the things to consider and then a look at various types.

<https://www.sba.gov/offices/district/nd/fargo/resources/how-do-i-choose-business-structure>

Business Structure: The LLC

Some basic information regarding limited liability companies and why they might be right for you. <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/241546>

And the Corporation

<https://www.sba.gov/offices/district/nd/fargo/resources/6-things-consider-incorporating-your-business>

Partnerships

<https://www.sba.gov/offices/district/nd/fargo/resources/business-structures-partnerships>

Sole Proprietorships

<https://www.sba.gov/offices/district/nd/fargo/resources/business-structures-sole-proprietorship>

Small Business Success Pillars

People starting out in business often ask what it takes to be successful. Many assume it is marketing or selling. That is certainly one key. This article from the SBA suggests it takes people, plan, process, product, and profit. Get the background on each one of these.

<https://www.sba.gov/blogs/5-pillars-small-businesses-success>

How Much Cash Do You Need?

This is a good article discussing why you need a cash flow statement and how you can use it. It also looks at where you can get more cash, acknowledging that it takes time to make that happen. <http://blogs.constantcontact.com/business-planning/>

Expanding Your “Handmade” Business

The time comes when you need to find ways to add new lines and ideas into your business. You certainly can train others or offer “how to” classes (which means you are giving or selling your unique idea). What about complementary products, or customized products or one of the other ideas found here. <http://www.indiebusinessnetwork.com/complimentary-business-models-by-indie-business/>

Be Real with Your Time Promises

We all like to think we can get something done in a certain time frame. Sometimes we can but more often it seems like we miss our deadlines. How often have you heard that it will take twice as long as planned. Well, not only do you get frustrated with time commitments but so do your customers. Be real in your promises. http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2015/01/optimistic-time-vs-honest-time.html

When to Quit Your Day Job

Many owners start their business while still working another job. The question they have is how to know when you quit your day job so you can focus on your business opportunity. Here is some guidance on that issue. <http://under30ceo.com/know-time-quit-day-job/>

Online Tools and Tech Tips

Yelp and Review Filtering

Business owners need to know they are online, sometimes without them doing anything. Third-party review sites, such as Yelp, are telling your story whether you want it or not. So it is important that they get the entire story. Yet automation means that some of your reviews aren't getting through. Learn more about the process and what you can do. <https://www.revlocal.com/blog/reviews/why-is-yelp-filtering-my-reviews/>

Prepare for Mobile

I know you have heard this chant before. But it's so true for several reasons. First, there is the idea of what mobile is. We think pads, smartphones, and tablets. But what about smart TVs and wearables (can we say FitBit). And then there is the whole “Internet of Things.” It's here and it's growing. Get ready. <https://moz.com/blog/battleground-mobile>

Internet Use and Rural Small Businesses

Report on a survey of small businesses and how they use the internet (email is #1 followed by buying products and services). It includes information on whether or not they have a website. Listed barriers to ecommerce use were highest because of no time and too expensive. Check out the rest of the findings at: <http://www.joe.org/joe/2014august/rb6.php>

Effective Marketing with Infographics

Infographics are becoming more popular as a marketing tool. They get the message across quickly and are colorful and enjoyed by readers. Are you using them? Here are some tools to help you get started.

http://www.prdaily.com/Main/Articles/20_tools_to_help_you_craft_irresistible_infographi_19298.aspx

Shopping Cart Abandonment

Are people selecting items but never making it to the checkout? Hubspot offers some ideas such as minimizing distractions and making them feel safe. Another big issue is time constraints. Sure you would love to catch their name and have them register but a guest option might help. <http://blog.hubspot.stfi.re/marketing/cure-shopping-cart-abandonment-issues-infographic?sf=aazddy>

Who is Your Website Designer?

Are you willing to let your customers build your website? I mean really build it. That is going outside of the box but one company is trying it. <http://www.convinceandconvert.com/social-media-case-studies/corporate-website-design/>

Google SEO Rankings

According to this report, domain-level links, page-level links, and page-level keywords and content lead the factors to improve your Google ranking. Get the rest of the report at:

<https://moz.com/search-ranking-factors>

Social Media Statistics

It doesn't help your marketing if you don't know what is working. Here are some tools to help you figure it out. <http://siteber.com/11-analytics-tools-to-supercharge-your-small-business-social-media-marketing/>

How to Keep Developing Content

If you are trying to use social media, you may have hit the problem that many people do, what do I write about today. Well, it isn't necessary to always have something new. Repurpose previous content. You can also add pictures or perhaps explore another writer. Here are some ideas for repurposing - <https://u.osu.edu/extensionedtech/2015/09/22/10-ways-to-repurpose-content/>

Local Awareness Ads

The online world is opening all sorts of new marketing avenues. Facebook has local awareness ads. How might you use those for your business? Check it out.

<http://www.socialmediatoday.com/social-business/adhutchinson/2015-09-22/facebook-releases-guide-how-maximize-local-awareness-ads>

What's Going on in the Office?

April has been a good month. You can tell its spring as local food producers are gearing up for the season. Already some of the local food producers, those using high tunnels, have been producing various greens. I have been lucky to get some of that bounty. Plus I have enjoyed other local foods such as eggs, home-cooked meals, and various meats.

And speaking of high tunnels, NDSU and the Entrepreneurial Center for Horticulture (ECH) at Dakota College in Bottineau are working together to help producers get the most out of their high tunnel operations. Today, April 29th, there is a [high tunnel demonstration](#) going on at the NDSU Horticulture Research Farm in Absaraka. [ECH has seven high tunnels](#) already in operation and can discuss what they have already learned from their operation.

During the month, I had a chance to be a part of the [Field to Fork webinar](#) series offered by Julie Garden-Robinson and NDSU Extension. These are all recorded and posted on the site. Learn more about this effort at the [Field to Fork website](#).



Also had the opportunity to travel to Cando this past month to talk about business transition and business development in the community. Had a great session. Thanks to those who spent some time with me.

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Websites: www.ag.ndsu.edu/smallbusiness

<http://powerofbusiness.net>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NDSUextsmallbiz

www.facebook.com/eXtensionentrepreneurs

Blogs: <http://powerofbusiness.net/blog/>

<http://smallbizsurvival.com/>

Pinterest: <http://pinterest.com/gamuske/>

Twitter: www.twitter.com/gmuske

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