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The Update: Small Business News, Tips & Ideas

Helping You Reach Your Goals!

August, 2017

Whenever an individual or a business decides that success has been attained, progress stops –
Thomas Watson

And when progress stops, our business will no longer be sustainable.

This is a good reminder that, although your business will achieve certain milestones, changes in the world around you keep shifting the bar. What once seemed like the pinnacle of success are really just a road sign towards the next step.

Woolworth's and Sears were examples of companies that were once on the top. But, things changed, new opportunities and technologies came along, new markets opened and audiences evolved. So Walmart came along. And once again, it seemed like a company had reached the pinnacle. But now we have Amazon and others who are challenging the status quo. And things won't end there.

As small-business owners we define success and select our goals. What we fail to realize is that either the pinnacle in front of you, your goal, is blocking our view of even taller pinnacles behind. Or we become fixated on what we believe is the ultimate goal and fail to see other opportunities around us. The elite buggy wheel makers excelled in their craft but many failed to see the changing world of transportation.

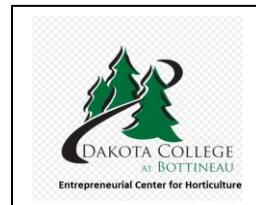
What all of this means is you can't ever stop changing. And it's not just major shifts. Take, for example, how people want to pay. Where we once had a cash-only society, checks came along, and then credit and debt cards. Today, several electronic payment methods are becoming the norm.

Bottom line – Goals are set and achieved but success is always in the future.

Have a great month.

Till next time,
Glenn Muske, Editor
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Quotes of the Month

Laughter is the sun – Mark Rohrick, Sunflower Farmer

You will get all you want in life, if you help enough people get what they want – Zig Ziglar

This Month's Tips for Farmer's Market Managers and Vendors

Having an Online Market

This is a good article looking at the possibility of an online farmers market. The article discusses how it benefits both shopper and the farmer. <https://www.farmanddairy.com/top-stories/online-farmers-markets-a-new-trend-in-local-foods/434827.html#>

This Month's Tips

Business Strategy

It doesn't get much simpler than this

A satisfied customer is the best business strategy of all – Michael LeBoeuf

Test Your Marketing

To get the most from your marketing dollar, it is important to know who the intended audience is. And you should test your copy, pictures, titles, etc. This article discusses doing this for a Facebook Ad but the same holds true for any other marketing.

<http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/facebook-ads-how-to-split-test/>

Hiring Effectively – Ask Better Questions

Anyone who has been involved in the hiring process would probably admit how difficult it is to find the right person. This post suggests that one thing that might help is to rethink our questions. Keep reading. <http://ideas.ted.com/5-interview-questions-that-will-help-you-hire-better-people/>

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A Narrative is Not Your Story

You have probably heard a lot about the need to tell the story of your business. As this article notes, however, just talking about dates of what happened when is not what draws people in. As you will find at the end of the article, there are several pieces to making a story such as empathy and drama. So what's your story? <http://wildstory.com/blog/storytelling/telling-narrative-business-story/>

Take a Vacation

But you say you can't because you are self-employed. Some might argue that you can not NOT take a vacation. Everyone needs some time to unwind. So how can it be done? With some planning. Think about this. <https://quickbooks.intuit.com/r/freelancer/take-vacation-youre-self-employed/>

Starting a Business

Here are seven things you should do when starting your business. First, learn about your industry and being in business in that industry. Second, never stop learning. And don't forget networking. Love what you do, know what you want from the business, identify strengths and weaknesses and get started. Waiting won't get you anywhere.

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/293368>

Got a New Product

Lots of people have product ideas. And lots of those ideas never make it off the drawing board and those that do often don't go anywhere. It may be that you are too focused on the design or that you never considered what the customer wants as opposed to what you plan to provide. And what about price? Three entrepreneurs explore these issues.

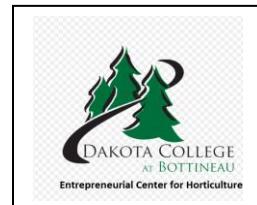
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/lizlong/2017/08/10/makers-beware-3-product-entrepreneurs-share-their-biggest-rookie-mistakes/#37a6e24854e1>

Don't Make These Online Mistakes

As this article notes in the beginning, the time for thinking of being online is gone. It's a requirement. The Z generation, born starting in 1997, are turning 20. And they have never known anything but a digital world. And they are not looking back. When online, don't post the same thing in every account. Have a business account, Just 2 of 10 mistakes commonly made.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/briansutter/2017/08/11/10-classic-small-business-social-media-mistakes/2/#598aecaa7be5>

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Hiring Your Spouse

Often one of the first person brought into the business is a spouse. Yet, that brings some unique challenges. Here are some tips on how to make it work.

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/298741#>

When Your Marketing Doesn't Work

What do you do when your marketing plan isn't performing like you want? (But first ask if you put out expectations so you know if that was the case.) Should you start over, give it more time, tweak it, etc. Here is a deeper look at those thoughts and more.

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/298641>

Color and Marketing

Not all colors are equal when it comes to influencing behavior. This article looks at how different colors seem to influence people in different ways. This information should be something you consider when developing your marketing program.

<https://smallbiztrends.com/2014/06/psychology-of-colors.html>

Online Tools and Tech Tips

Make Reviews Part of Your Marketing

Reviews are important marketing. More and more people turn to them as they make consumer decisions. Here are some tips to help you get more, stronger, and better reviews. Also discussed is how to handle negative reviews. <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/293368>

Facebook Watch: Something to Watch

Facebook continues to add new elements to maintain its strength. Watch may be another useful tool for small business owners. Here are some early thoughts.

<https://smallbiztrends.com/2017/08/facebook-watch.html>

Best Social Media Advertising

To begin with, a disclaimer – What works for one company or product may not necessarily work for you. Also, note this article's comments about lead time and time consumption. That said, there is a lot of information about the best platforms and how to make the platform perform best. Good information. <https://www.bigcommerce.com/blog/social-media-advertising/>

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Getting Your Website to Perform

So you have your website up and running but nothing is happening. Do people know it exists? Are you optimized for mobile? Does it work smoothly and quickly? These are just a few of the ideas that Inc. discusses. <http://www.inc.com/jayson-demers/11-reasons-your-website-isn-t-making-money.html>

Effective Blogs

Blogging can be a useful marketing tool. FedEx offers some thoughts on how to make yours even better. The article discusses making it easy to find and easy to market. And of course you want to use images. Be conversational and talk about things people want to hear.

<http://outoffice.van.fedex.com/2016/01/14/13-ways-to-make-your-blog-better-than-awesome/>

Working On the Go

Do you need to work remotely? Is some, or all, of your work being done with teams? Then you may want to look at these apps to help you get your work done efficiently.

<http://www.inc.com/lolly-daskal/32-of-the-best-apps-that-you-need-to-work-remotely.html?cid=em01011week05day01a>

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