

## **HOW SMALL COMPANIES ARE COMPETING SUCCESSFULLY AND PUNCHING ABOVE THEIR WEIGHT**

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Small company equals small resources – especially small budgets - so the internet has been a godsend to small businesses who can now have a similar presence on the net to the large corporates – all it takes is some understanding and commitment. A bit like being at an exhibition where only shell scheme stands are available – the internet is a great leveller and those that stand out do so because of how well they present themselves and how they address the needs of their customers - not because of how much money they throw at the “problem”.

Which raises an interesting point – what exactly is “the problem”? – And how are small companies addressing it effectively?

Essentially the problem is to find, meet, inform and engage customers - and then to make their buying experience as satisfying as possible so that they will come back; A process that calls on all aspects of a company in various ways – but usually begins with the motivation to sell - whether that originates with the M.D. or the production dept. – it is usually channelled via a marketing/sales pipeline. With this separation of function comes separate budgets – leading to the question – how to be effective on a budget?

Well the most successful small companies I know leverage their understanding to make the most of those activities which have proven to be the most cost effective.

They recognise that they must have an attractive and easy to use website – it can be as expensive in the first instance to produce a rubbish site as a good one – and certainly more expensive in lost business over the long term. The difference is the thought that goes into it and the quality of the content. A good site will be full of useful information that is easy to find – presented in an attractive way.

But there is limited value in a website unless you promote it. So what are the key promotional activities?

- 1) Directory entries (free if you do it yourself)
- 2) PR – giving 3<sup>rd</sup> party links (free if you do it yourself)
- 3) Blogging (set up hosting is low cost – on-going posts are free if you do them yourself)
- 4) Social media (free again if you do it yourself)

- 5) E-mail marketing (again blog updates and newsletters can be free or at least very low cost if you do them yourself)
- 6) Advertising – enhanced entries, pay per click, buttons and banners (all cost – but you have spent very little so far so you can afford these)
- 7) Exhibitions – niche exhibitions can be low cost and very effective – a one day show is quick and easy for one person to do and you are pretty much certain to meet the right kind of people. (Again these cost – but your budget is hardly strained and there are not many really good ones so you can pick the one that focuses best on your market place and be sure to do at least one a year).
- 8) By now you have got a lot of publicity for free and/or very cheap and even if you got a 3<sup>rd</sup> party agency to do your promotion for you then the whole budget could easily be well below the cost of employing a sales engineer – indeed it could easily be around half – cheap really – and it works 24/7/365.
- 9) That just leaves the Sales function – which is pretty core to any company and you can choose what kind of sales people you employ in what role – in-house telesales, external sales engineers. Whatever you decide you should have plenty of enquiries to feed through.

Most companies find that is an awful lot of work for a small company – which is where we can come in and do it for you. The chances are that most of your competitors will be doing very little of these and we can put a package together that is appropriate to your business and won't involve a corporate mega-budget - after all what we do is to specialise in growing small companies into big ones - by working smarter.