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FEATURES

BEWARE OF THE BINGE

We have all heard about the dangers of bingeing. Sometimes, for absolutely no apparent reason we find ourselves uncontrollably hungry and we go on a wild binge, eating everything in sight. The result is a stomachache and a promise we make to ourselves never to do that again. Most of us do it again though. The business equivalent of the eating binge is the marketing binge. Sometimes we feel an overwhelming need to get our name out there...

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SEO FOR THE SME

The word Google is now a verb. The relevance of this grammatical oversight is that it demonstrates the extent to which the action of engaging an online search engine for information has become embedded in our daily lives. The good fortune for Google, as opposed to Yahoo and MSN, is that they have become the standard bearer and the go-to site for online information. But whether you Google or not, the fact remains that there is an excellent chance that a great deal of the information you are getting, and the data you use to formulate a significant percentage of your buying decision making, is coming...



DULY QUOTED

"Sometimes it is better to lose and do the right thing than to win and do the wrong thing".

- Tony Blair

WISH WE SAID IT

"Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime. Teach a man to create an artificial shortage of fish and he will eat steak".

- Jay Leno

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH

Hail to the Entrepreneur

This month across the United States there are events celebrating the entrepreneur. At the Pino Entrepreneurship Center at Florida International University the spirit of the entrepreneur is molded and nurtured, as is becoming the practice at many universities around the country. The push to encourage the entrepreneur stems from our awareness that it is this group of daring and creative individuals that have brought us our most significant advancements, our most astounding business successes, and as a nation, our technological and economic edge. And so we salute the entrepreneur. Hail to thee.

To Tudog, the spirit of the entrepreneur is only half the story. The qualities of the entrepreneur tell the rest of the tale.

The entrepreneur has a strong belief in the path they have selected. They are able to maintain focus and push toward their goals regardless of the obstacles and the inherent emotional and financial ups and downs. They are able to brush off unhelpful criticism and embrace suggestions that make them better at what they are.

The entrepreneur is always on the lookout for new ideas and new ways to expand our capabilities and experiences.

The entrepreneur is able to accept and adjust to change. They are not afraid of it, but rather recognize it as inevitable. They try as often to cause change as they do engage it, and they see in change opportunity.

The entrepreneur is ambitious and competitive and able to push people to excellence because they demand excellence of themselves. They are at once their toughest critic and their most loyal ally. They maintain themselves during hard times on faith in the project and belief in their abilities.

The entrepreneur is optimistic about the future. They see the potential of the human experience as boundless and they poke around with capabilities and limitations seeking to expand the boundaries and make the world all the better. While Tudog has dedicated time to teaching entrepreneurs it is this optimism, alongside all the other incredible traits, that we have learned from them.

VOEX

Central America
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ADAM
International



BEWARE OF THE BINGE

By Craig R. Frank

We have all heard about the dangers of binging. Sometimes, for absolutely no apparent reason we find ourselves uncontrollably hungry and we go on a wild binge, eating everything in sight. The result is a stomachache and a promise we make to ourselves never to do that again. Most of us do it again though. The business equivalent of the eating binge is the marketing binge. Sometimes we feel an overwhelming need to get our name out there and we go on a completely random and highly uncoordinated spending spree. Sometimes we are aided by PR or Advertising agencies eager for the client and unsophisticated in the need to make certain your efforts are synchronized, so that you can gain some benefit. Instead you suffer the equivalent of the stomachache, which is the walletache, and you vow never to do that again. But without an alternative approach for effective marketing, you probably will.

The urge to splurge is understandable. There are times when business is slow and we get anxious and look toward marketing as the answer. We figure if we run some ads, hire some experts, and make a couple special offers we'll liven things up a bit, and once they're back up and running we can cut back again.

But this is not how marketing is done. It cannot be effective when implemented in desperate spurts. Marketing is an on-going process of conditioning that is achieved through value and presence, identification and dedication.

The anti-binge is remembering that marketing is something you engage in every time you interact with a customer, every time someone buys your product/service, and every time you connect with the market. In fact there are daily, weekly and monthly tasks you should be completing in order to be certain that your marketing is up to the standards you require.

Imagine what your marketing would be like if:

- Every day you made the effort and added one prospective customer to your database. This is done by understanding who your customers are, why they are your customers, and who else fits the profile. Once you have the lead it is important and effective to validate it, making certain the person or company genuinely meets the criteria of your profile.

- Every day you engage in an act of networking to expand your base and meet new people who could serve to drive business your way. This can include attending an event, inviting someone to lunch, speaking with customers about other people they know, etc.
- Every day you review 10 people in your database and make sure the information you have is current, that their buying habits are stable (and if not what are the changes and how they can be further encouraged if buying increased or reversed if buying has decreased), and that they are being communicated with regularly.
- Every day you mail out via email at least 10 messages to customers/clients asking them if their needs are being met and offering to be of service.

The total time daily required to engage in these core activities is about 2 hours. Yet, if you do them daily you will find that you have created the system within which you stay in touch with customers and feed the prospect channel that creates new customers.

These activities are supplemented by dedicating an additional 2 hours weekly to engage in the following:

- Telephone calls to prospects to introduce yourself and let them know the solutions you provide and the dedication you have to serving their needs.
- Emails to the customers you served the past week making certain that they were happy with the service they received and providing them with the opportunity to make suggestions for additional services and improvements. You should use this exchange to check the efficacy and customer friendliness of your processes, procedures and other passages through which your customers must pass.

Once you have your daily and weekly marketing activities worked into your schedule and you are growing more comfortable in engaging in marketing, you can begin to spend an additional 5 hours monthly making sure your communications to the market are constant, coordinated and effective. You should be engaging in some forms of external communications, including:

- Website – it is simple enough to make sure your website is as effective as possible. There is absolutely no excuse for a website that is not excellent in terms of meeting all your needs and communicating the style and quality of your company.
- Business Cards – your business cards need to be effective tools in drawing and maintaining attention. When you give out a business card you need to make sure the recipient will remember it (and you) when they go back to their office and go through the cards in their pockets.
- Brochure – too many companies are confusing website and brochure these days. The brochure is the leave-behind piece that is skillfully designed to communicate your company's products and benefits while saying something about the character and values of your company. The confusion stems from the fact that websites should accomplish these things as well, but the web provides the opportunity to expand on these elements and give the visitor a lot more. Perhaps the best way to view the difference is that the brochure is something you give to your prospect so it does not require any specific action on his/her part. This is an opportunity to make a first impression. If the brochure does its job it will drive people to your website, where you have the chance to expand on the positive first impression you made (through the brochure).

- Market Knowledge – the pity of the marketing binge is that so many companies do it in such a wasteful way. Lacking any intelligence on the market – their competitors and customers – they throw money away with messages that are either repetitive (a competitor is already saying what they now are starting to say) or ineffective (the customer base is unmoved and unimpressed with the message). You need to have some understanding of where your competitors are and what your customers want before you start marketing.
- The Little Things – the little things go a long way when it comes to marketing. For example, you need to make sure your emails have a signature. Not a big deal, but it reinforces the professional nature of your operations and leaves the recipients of your emails with a good impression. Similarly, the messages on your office and cell phones need to be professional and helpful, showing appreciation for the call and a commitment to return the call (which you must do in a timely fashion). All these little things count because cumulatively they create an impression, and that impression creates a perception, and it is that perception that will drive the success of your business.

Binging is never the answer. When you feel the need to market, whether because your sales are down or a competitor is making noise that you need to counter, the way to go about it is through a carefully planned and properly executed marketing plan. Throwing money at the market will only lead to you having less money. Marketing properly is an investment. Binging is a fruitless exercise in the pursuit of instant gratification. It doesn't work, and it never will.

Craig Frank is Tudog's CEO.



ASPIRING TO LEAD

By David Gilad

It was a scene most adults have seen a thousand times. The restaurant was packed, the servers frenzied, and one family was unable to place the order because the child at the table wanted something the parents knew he would never finish eating. The old adage “your eyes are bigger than your stomach” was the lecture of the moment. And yet the child believed he would finish his dish. In fact he promised he would. Needless to say, they had quite a doggy bag that night. The temptation for some to lead is no less powerful than that little boy’s desire for the adult portion. And for some, the ability to lead is no more genuine than that boy’s capacity for food. And yet, everywhere we go there are inadequate leaders failing miserably at leading. Their “eye” for power is far bigger than their “stomach” to lead.

Tudog sees the appeal in leadership. There is certainly a higher level of reward that goes along with the role. So too is the ego better fed by the respect a leader may command and the authority he/she may have the power to yield. It makes sense to aspire to be a leader.

Except if you are lacking what it takes.

Bad leaders have it much worse than those who never rise to the role. True, the followers of bad leaders are not in for much of a picnic, but the leader him/herself is in for much more of a horrible time. First of all, the lousy leader loses the rewards he/she may have become accustomed to. Further the respect he/she relished has been replaced by ridicule and scorn. And the authority? Most people simply smirk when told by a lousy leader what to do.

What this all means is that one should not aspire to leadership unless one truly has the capacity to lead. It is not only unfair to those called upon to follow, but it is also a surefire way to make sure that you fail. Even if you have what it takes to partially lead, your weaknesses will ultimately expose themselves and you will be called upon to bear the consequences. Why put yourself through the rigors of responsibility and the prospect of failure just because your appetite is greater than skills?

All this is of course a bit tongue-in-cheek and a light way to suggest that the glories of leadership come with the tremendous risk associated with the need to constantly

perform. When we look at leaders, we look at what they have achieved and we admire (and perhaps even envy) their accomplishments. What we don't see is the heavy price they have had to pay to get where they are, and perhaps the equally heavy price they continue to pay to remain there.

If all of this hasn't convinced you that maybe leadership isn't all it's cracked up to be, and despite the best faith effort to urge you otherwise, if you still want to be a leader, here's what you have to do to get there:

1. Set Your Path

If you really want to lead you need to set up your path to the top spot. Most people who rise to the leadership position have held key roles prior to getting there. You need to determine which roles are necessary so that when the time comes and you are being considered for the top job, you will have all the requisite experiences. There is a good chance that your candidacy will be enhanced by positions that include management, finance and marketing. The more you can show that the intricacies of the top job are not alien to you, the better off you'll be. So if you aspire to the top job, make sure you select your career path carefully and make sure that the jobs you accept along the way are those that will serve you in your leadership capacity.

2. Understand What Leadership Is

Abraham Lincoln once said, "you cannot build character by taking away a man's independence and initiative". If leading for you is synonymous with being able to tell people what to do, you need to change the way you think. The task of leadership is combining the unique skills and thoughts of others and directing them into a cohesive set of ideas that share a commonality of purpose and direction. Your job is to provide vision and structure, to set guidelines and parameters.

3. Be Good

The word "good" has two meanings and if your aspiration is leadership you need to demonstrate and adhere to both. Meaning one is good as in behave yourself. Nothing will offset a rise to the top like a scandal or a pattern of poor behavior that can be seen as shedding light on your character or judgment. Meaning two is good as in excellent at what you do. You need to show that in any and every situation they thrust you into, you achieved the objective in a way that showed imagination, courage and will. You need to show that your commitment to excellence is brought by you to every task you encounter.

4. Get Things Done Right

Leaders are selected – and retained – because they get the job done and they get it done right. Right usually means in a way that is cost effective and efficient, without compromising any other values, like quality or reputation. If you are able to show that you can get things done right, and you can get others to fall into place behind you while you do it, you will most likely get noticed during a search for leaders.

5. Lead Boldly

One of the most important things a leader needs to do is make decisions. A leader frozen by indecision is not only ineffective, but also a traitor to his/her position. The decisions made must be well formulated, carefully calculated, and possible to implement. You need not be reckless in order to be bold. Every decision has elements of risk. You lead boldly when you decide a course and do all you can to make certain it was and remains the right path.

Leaders are special people. They take on responsibility because they seek the rewards that come with it. The role of leader is distinctive in that it comes with authority that is both legal and moral. When aspiring to leadership, the consequences of these mandates need to be considered. In the end, we only remember the leaders that were either great or disastrous. If you get to the top, make sure we'll keep thinking of you fondly.

David Gilad serves on Tudog's Board of Directors



BE ATTRACTIVE TO ATTRACT CUSTOMERS

By Ofer Kahane

Studies have shown that the more attractive a product the better it will sell. Many of us like to think that we are too sophisticated to be drawn in and influenced by the basic marketing tactics of packaging and branding. We know that the contents are more important than the package. We have been raised on the principle “you can’t tell a book by its cover”. And yet they continue to sell books by their cover, and we continue to buy them that way.

There are physiological reasons we are drawn to things that are attractive to us. There are reactions in our brains that activate a level of excitement when we view something we deem attractive. We desire it. We sought it out. And in the end, if it within our power, we attain it.

So, if we buy products because we like the way they look, is the same true for companies we buy from? Could it be that the preferences we have to certain brands and companies comes from our appreciation for the way they look? Could it be that looks, together with what the company stands for (brand meaning) make up the entirety of our decision making when considering product partiality? And if this is true, does what’s in the box matter at all?

The challenge to branding is to make the contents of the box come to stand for the message and image of the package. The unison of these two elements is what transforms shoes into great athletes and electronic devices into symbols of freedom. And the best part is that you can do for your company what great companies have done for their products.

Wanting to make your company attractive to customers is a basic desire. Most companies realize that the more attractive they are to their customers the more likely their customers will remain loyal and buy. Perhaps they’ll even buy more.

The attractiveness of a company is a blend of product, image, policies, attitude and image. Making your company more attractive includes doing the following:

1. Stand for Something

People will not understand how you fit into their worldview if you do not stand for something. This does not need to be a political statement or even a statement of cause. Volvo stands for safety. M&Ms stand for fun. The Gap stands for casual fashion. Each one of these may, from time to time, use their brand power to help a cause, but none of them stand for any particular cause. Yet we all know what they “mean” and through that we know how to understand them. This helps us create a relationship with them.

2. Promise and Deliver

You need to be making promises to the market. Your customers need a measure with which to judge whether or not you are succeeding in providing them with the very best you can. The way they judge is by measuring you against the promises you make. Therefore, promises are not some sort of marketing tactic. They are a marketing imperative through which the market can determine how you’re doing. The downside is you’re being judged. The upside is you get to set the bar. Naturally, if you set it too low you open yourself up to competitive challenges, not to mention consumer ridicule. If you set it too high, you run the risk of failure. Therefore, the best way to set the bar is by determining what you can actually deliver – and then actually delivering it. This rapidly eroding concept should be apparent, and yet companies decline to adopt it all the time. Seems the temptation to over promise and under deliver is too great for some. This just leaves more opportunity for you. Promise what you can deliver and deliver what you promise.

3. Embrace Quality

Quality is, of course, a subjective matter and gets further complicated by the price of your product/service and the distribution channels you deploy. All this aside, however, quality is also a statement of your own self-image, how you perceive your product/service and how you see yourself serving your customers. Therefore, within the scope of your price, distribution, etc., you should be striving to demonstrate the best possible quality so that you are communicating to the market that you are proud of what you do and strive to be the best (within your price range, etc.).

4. Look Good

Looking good is also perhaps somewhat subjective, but it is not, like quality, vulnerable to varying standards based on perceived value. In most cases there is a consensus regarding what looks good and what does not. Within the scale of looking good may be degrees of looking good versus looking better, but as long as you’re somewhere within the consensus you’re okay. The reason you want to look good is because it is scientifically proven that people respond better (more positively) to something that is pleasant to their eye versus something that is not. Insofar as we are seeking positive responses, we need to look good enough to earn them.

5. Feel Good

People do not only respond to what looks good, but also to what makes them feel good. In this sense, your ability to communicate a positive message that makes people feel good about your company or product/service will also contribute to making your

company more attractive. Some feel good possibilities include being optimistic, adventurous, bold, and civic minded. Sometimes if you make people feel good they are willing to overlook some weaknesses you may have in your appearance. So if you only have resources for one tactic, it is better to make people feel good over looking good. The only caveat to this is that you must make sure you look good enough to provide credibility to your feel good approach. If your appearance is too much the opposite of your feel good message, people will not believe it, and you will lose the benefit of your efforts.

6. Be Generous

Generosity has become an endangered specie in business. It seems that every point of contact with the customer is viewed as a potential profit center. So, for example, Starbucks charges for internet access. This is a petty and unnecessary policy that opens them up to competitive challenge and leaves their customers with a bad taste in their mouth (beside the one left from the coffee). There are, in all our businesses, opportunities to be generous to our customers. There are areas where we can deliver a service or product in such a way that the customer feels not only a bit of extra value, but also your appreciation for him/her being your customer. The cost to Starbucks to bring free internet service to its customers is minimal and yet the appreciation would be enormous. Don't view every interaction with your customers as a way to grab a bit more money from them. Instead, view each contact as a way to serve them, and you will find that they will be happy spending money with you.

7. Be a Leader

There are all kinds of ways you can be a leader in your sector, and not all of them require that you spend a lot on advertising or become the best known brand. All it means is that you have to be willing to shake up your sector from time to time and gain the reputation as the company that keeps coming to the market with new products, new applications for existing products, and new offers to engage the products. Leadership can be a function of imagination and boldness, effectively neutralizing the power of those companies with deeper pockets.

Being attractive is not all about how you look, but also about how you act and how you interact. The power of being attractive is that people will want to be involved with you, and you will have the opportunity to engage them in your products/services in a way that is meaningful to them, and profitable to you. Making yourself attractive isn't that difficult. It only means paying attention to detail and delivering on value. If you are able to embrace being attractive you will notice your company growing. And any way you look at it, growth is a beautiful thing.

Ofer Kahane works with Tudog in Israel.



RULES FOR BUSINESS GROWTH

By Ilan Sarid

Tudog has been around for a long time and we often get the sense that when it comes to business we have seen it all. Certainly the mere number of companies we have worked with (approaching 200) from varying industries (approaching 30) from different countries (currently 18) leaves us with some understanding of the fundamentals of business.

At least we think so.

True enough that we have been able to come up with systems and processes that generate certain results, And our tagline “original thinking” announces to the world that we pride ourselves on doing things our way. Yet by way of confession, our approach to business is no different than an artist’s approach to a new painting or a composers approach to a new song. You start with what already exists.

So, when Tudog sets out to codify the rules for business growth we begin with what we already know, the fundamentals we know to be true across industries and across borders. They are:

1. **Growth is Not Optional** – for a business to sustain itself and justify its existence it must generate profits and demonstrate its market relevancy by showing growth in its revenues.
2. **Businesses are Living Things** – some people view businesses as inanimate vehicles competing against other inanimate vehicles. Tudog disagrees. Businesses are comprised of people and the dynamics of these people form a community that then comes together for the purpose of meeting the objectives of the company. If the community can’t function, neither can the company. This makes the business an extension of its people. Moreover, change in business is inevitable, and therefore in this sense too a business is alive. A company must be alive to the changes around it and acting diligently to respond, as well as making certain to cause a bit of change itself.
3. **Your Competitors Hate You** – sure we are in an era of competitors cooperating, but this is only because, up to a certain point, there are benefits to all sides in combining resources. At some point the nature of business will take over and those same people cooperating with you will decide the time has come to compete and their objective will become overcoming you, and if possible, eliminating you. Your job is to make sure you never become so seduced by the sweetness of the cooperation that you are caught off guard or completely unprepared when the competition begins.

4. If You Don't Plan It, It Most Likely Won't Happen – there most likely are times during the course of a business's existence that the company stumbles upon an opportunity and has the good sense to run with it. Often a byproduct of an R&D process will yield something unexpected and fabulous. Sometimes the market applies a different use for a product than originally intended. All of these are unplanned acts a company takes, sometimes to great advantage. Most of the time, however, you need to plan. Planning allows you to allocate resources, put timetables on events, and approach the market (including competitors) in an organized manner. Without plans, much of what you hope to accomplish simply won't occur, because you lack the infrastructure – driven by the plan – to make it happen.

5. Growth Doesn't Come Free – the cost of growth extends beyond the resources you need to dedicate to the implementation of your growth plan. There are the costs of mistakes you will inevitably make, as well as the cost of missed opportunities lost as you focus on the growth path you have selected. The trick is to calculate the losses to mistakes ahead of time, so they do not sidetrack your attention. As for the missed opportunities, work hard to make your chosen growth path work and they won't matter so much. Some you will be able to go back to, and some will be overshadowed by existing growth.

With these strategic truths come some tactics options. Driving growth can be achieved by adhering to these 10 Rules for Growth:

1. Build Upon Your Existing Customer Base – the customers you already have are always a great place to start when looking to grow. You have already undergone the process (and cost) of acquiring them as customers. They are familiar with your company and (hopefully) satisfied with your products and services. You should be able to look to them for additional purchases, provided what you are trying to sell is consistent with your core offer and is on the same level of value and quality they have come to expect from you.

2. Find New Uses for Old Products - a great way to find a new market (new customers) is to find a new way to use your existing products. New markets are all about getting an additional group of people to see value in what you are selling. Sometimes this means pointing out that your existing product can be useful in additional ways. For example, the anti cholesterol ads popular these days, plugging existing products as a way to also lower cholesterol are finding new markets for their existing products.

3. Introduce New Products – new products are an essential part of growth because they not only give you an opportunity to introduce your company to new customers, but they provide existing customers with a reason to buy from you again. Your new products need not be a “new and improved” version of your existing product, but rather can be something that is consistent with your existing products – something that a buyer of your existing products would have the same motivation or reason to purchase.

4. Refresh Your Offering – nothing goes stale as quickly as an offering. You need to refresh your offering every now and then to renew interest and draw in the people who were not sufficiently impressed with it the first time out. This does not mean that you need to have constant sales or need to drive people crazy with different offers (ala the cell phone companies). It only means that you need to mix it up a bit and make sure you are offering something of value at all times.

5. Be Service Oriented – if you think anything other than service is king you need to change your court advisors because you are being sorely misled. The only thing more important than service, is better service. You need to make sure you are meeting the needs of your customers – always, on time, hassle free, and with a great big smile.

6. **Ask How You're Doing** – there is nothing worse than thinking your customers are happy with your company only to realize, as they move to your competitors, that something is wrong. The best way to keep on top of what your customers need from you and what they think of you is to ask. Make sure you are going back to them periodically and asking them how you're doing. Take their criticisms seriously and make efforts to correct whatever shortcomings they point out.

7. **Be Creative**- there is nothing worse than a business that appears to be standing still. Your company may be healthy, but if you aren't showing the market sparks of enthusiasm and innovation nobody will know. The danger of appearing standing still is that you soon might find yourself actually stuck in the mud, as customers act on the perceptions and move to competitors who give the appearance of innovation and motion.

8. **Be True to Your Brand** – your customers are confused enough by the competing claims of your competitors, the varying price points, and differences in quality and value. Perhaps the only thing they can rely on is what your brand stands for. If you start playing with your brand by being inconsistent, introducing incompatible products, or becoming lazy, you will let your customers down, and they will punish you with diminished loyalty. Make sure you treat your brand like it is something important, because to your customers, it is.

9. **Leverage the Internet** – if you do not yet have a competent website consider yourself admonished. The web is no longer a luxury or just one more tool for your marketing. It is now a business imperative. Look into all the opportunities the web offers and begin to leverage the ones that make the most sense for you. You will find it to be a channel for significant growth.

10. **Know When to Move On** - not everything lasts forever, and business has its ups and downs. One of the most important growth tactics you can use is knowing when to move on. When something is not working, it isn't a sign to throw more money at it, or wait to see what happens. When something is not working it is time to move on, write it off, and go on to the next thing in your plan.

Growth is the engine that drives your business. Too often businesses try to take the easy way around growth by creating unnatural revenue streams from either services that were previously free or products that are inconsistent with their core concept. These either confuse or annoy customers. There is no reason to substitute poor growth actions for genuine growth tactics. The initiation and implementation of true growth policies will lead to sustained growth, which, unlike activities designed to cause spikes in sales, creates value. The worth of your company, in more ways than one, is demonstrated by how you approach and execute your quest for growth.

Ilan Sarid specializes in sales. He resides in Montreal, Canada



SEO FOR THE SME

By David Feingersch

The word Google is now a verb. The relevance of this grammatical oversight is that it demonstrates the extent to which the action of engaging an online search engine for information has become embedded in our daily lives. The good fortune for Google, as opposed to Yahoo and MSN, is that they have become the standard bearer and the go-to site for online information. But whether you Google or not, the fact remains that there is an excellent chance that a great deal of the information you are getting, and the data you use to formulate a significant percentage of your buying decision making, is coming from online sources. And you're not the only one. It's all of us. And this means the search engines are now the gateway to big business.

As with every major business revolution the Small and Medium Sized Enterprise (SME) plays a critical role in the acceptance and growth of the Internet. The indication of the prominence of the SME role can be seen in none other than Google and their quest for local search, allowing web searchers to focus their search on specific geographic areas. Were there not a huge number of SME websites, the need for such searches would be mute. It is the SME embrace of the Internet that makes these searches necessary of Google is to remain the center of the web, as it so aspires.

In many ways the SME has been pushed out of the current web structure. The current ranking systems, based on relevancy and more importantly the purchase of key words, has limited the ability of the smaller business to gain prominent ranking in the listings. But insofar as most people are seeking companies close to their home or business, the searches limitations to large companies is a definite drawback.

The SME needs to re-establish its presence on the Internet and maintain the central role in the web economy that it does in the economy at-large. There are 7 things Tudog believes needs to be done for this to be achieved. They are:

1. Have a Great Website - there is no excuse any more for a lousy website. Sure, when the Internet first launched with all its frenzy there were companies demanding fortunes for websites. On the other extreme were the SMEs having their nephews in high school do their sites. The mid-ground is the answer. You don't need to spend a fortune, but you do need an excellent site.

2. Think in Terms of SEO from the Start – there is little sense in designing a site based on the creative whims of your graphic designer (even if he is your nephew). The purpose

of the site is to draw and retain visitors. One of the ways you draw visitors is by being search engine friendly. Therefore, at the design stage, make certain you are not doing anything that may damage your attractiveness to the search engines.

3. Know Your Industry's Keywords - each industry has certain buzz words that inherent to itself. You need to know these words as they are the ones people will most likely use when they search your industry. If you have these words properly placed on your website, they will draw the attention of the search engines.

4. Title Your Pages – the page title is one of the elements the search engines look at first, so if you have your pages titled you will draw attention. If your pages are untitled the search engines will not pick them up until they get to the level of the search that includes the elements you have incorporated into your site. So the more elements you incorporate and the more of the critical elements you have – like page titles, the better you will organically rank.

5. Use Different Meta Tags on Each Page – the meta tags are less important than page titles, but still can add to your position when taken cumulatively with the other SEO elements you are including on the website. The meta tags have been slightly out of favor with SEO professionals because the search engines have downgraded their importance somewhat due to abuse and misrepresentation. Nonetheless, the meta tags are a core component of good SEO practices.

6. Embed Your Keywords – the keywords used in your industry, and the words used on your site should be the same. The idea is to use the keywords in the content of your website, so when the search engines rank according to relevancy, your site, with content matching the keywords, appears to be highly relevant (thereby ranking higher).

7. Stick to One Topic Per Page – while not widely understood, and therefore not widely practiced, the focus on one topic per page helps with search engine ranking because it presents the information in a very organized manner, and does not require the search engine's software to try to figure out what you're about. Multiple topics runs the risk of confusing or misleading the search engines, resulting in lower ranking.

The SME has always been the backbone of business and introductions of new technologies has never served to disrupt SME prominence. The challenge has not been whether to incorporate new technologies, but how and in what ways that make it cost effective and useful. The Internet has demonstrated its usefulness and its place as a crucial business tool. While SMEs can't compete against the bigger companies when it comes to advertising dollars, they can even the playing field a bit by making sure the design and execution of their websites maximizes their organic placement on the search engines. By doing this, and having well organized, inviting websites, SME can use the web to their advantage, making the impact the Internet has on small and medium sized businesses proportionately far greater than the affect it has on large companies. The leveraging of changes like the web for their own benefit is what SMEs do best.

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