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MANAGING MULTIPLE TEAMS

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It is not uncommon to find some examples of sarcasm and irony within the pages of Tudog's newsletter, and so this article can find its place among the rest. The idea that a company might seek to intentionally handicap their SEO - thereby reducing their exposure on the Internet search engines - is indeed absurd. And yet the examples of poor (and sometimes outright horrible) SEO are everywhere to be seen.

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DULY QUOTED

"In business it is useless to be a creative original thinker unless you can also sell what you create to management".

- David Ogilvy

WISH WE SAID IT

"In business, the rearview mirror is always clearer than the windshield".

-Warren Buffet

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH

Pick Up the Phone

Could it get any more frustrating? Making a call these days is about as annoying as it gets. There is never anyone on the other side, and getting to a real human being requires not only the patience of a saint, but the skill of a NASCAR driver maneuvering the trickiest of curves.

What happened? Why has customer service disintegrated so drastically and why is it that companies are afraid to talk to their customers? It is more than a nightmare, it is a tactical error and the companies that bring back the good old receptionist will be those companies rewarded with customer loyalty.

And somehow that isn't the whole ugly story. The fear of the phone is actually a much larger phenomenon than mere lousy customer service. It has infested the very way we do business.

An attempt at business development these days results in your phone call being left on the answering machine of the person you are trying to reach, never to be returned. The notion that the intended recipient doesn't bother to return the call is only half the offense. The other half is that the communication system in place negated all possibility that the party seeking to establish a relationship actually present their proposal. So what might have been an excellent, mutually beneficial business opportunity evolves into nothing at all because one side was unable to get through to the other.

Is this how we want to do business? Do we want to miss out on possible opportunities because we construct walls in our communications systems that disable those seeking to reach out to us? The answer needs to be an aggressive no.

Pick up your phone. Let the world back in and you might find that many of your business objectives are easier to achieve as some of what you hope to accomplish can be achieved through working with others. Those others are calling you....but you are ignoring them.

We need to stop barricading ourselves behind technologies that make getting in touch with us all but impossible. We need not only to be able to reach out to the world, we need to make sure it can reach in to us. Pick up your phone, and get back to work.





MANAGING MULTIPLE TEAMS

By Craig R. Frank

The old sports saying that there is no “I” in the word team was born out of necessity. Dealing with large groups of people is always complex and getting each person to put aside his/her personal agenda, personal ambition, emotions, and prejudices is an extremely complex task. When you add to the mix the need to manage more than one team at the same time, and the added dynamics of competition, jealousy and territory, the task seems almost daunting.

But have no fear. Tudog is here to calm the waters and provide 10 easy steps to the smooth and simple management of multiple teams. They are:

1. *Don't Be Afraid to Lead*

Since you can't be in two places at once, and you are managing multiple teams, you need to be willing and able to make your leadership felt even when you are physically absent. This can only be achieved if you are a confident, organized leader who demonstrates his/her leadership under all circumstances. As a strong leader, your actual presence will become less necessary, as the teams will be properly motivated to meet your expectations even when you are unable to be there and cheer them on. By leading in a clear and precise manner you are giving your teams direction, supervision and comfort.

2. *Give Thought to Team Structures*

Make certain you structure your teams with a balance of strengths so that they are able to work competently and together even in your absence. This means you need to make sure you are matching personalities, with an eye toward only one dominant character, and a good balance of complementary skills. By structuring your team members – and team responsibilities carefully, you will avoid the time spent on conflict resolution and be able to focus on goal development and attainment.

3. *Set Up Easy Communication Channels*

Since you will be interacting with each team remotely at least part of the time you need to make certain that you have set up reliable and sustainable communication channels.

You need to make sure you have reports on progress from all teams and need to be certain that inter-team communications, to the extent necessary, is taking place. By having the right communications channels and protocol in place, you will make sure that you are always informed and able to make decisions and adjustments as necessary, as well as seeing to it that your teams all have the information they require to proceed with their respective mandates.

4. Don't Encourage Competition

Many leaders seem to think that what they call “healthy competition” serves to improve motivation and get their different teams striving to be the best. In actuality, it often leads to a decline in motivation, because for every “winner” there are multiple losers, and more often than not the losers decide that giving it their all is unnecessary because their efforts are measured in an all-or-nothing measurement driven by the competition. This is a recipe for discontent. Rather than encourage healthy competition, you are better off promoting cooperation and teamwork.

5. Delegate

Filling in the gaps during your absences is a key and repetitive strategy when managing multiple teams. By definition you will be unable to be with each team all the time. Your only solution is to delegate both authority and responsibility so that your objectives can be pursued even in your absence. The assignment of responsibility is a delicate matter. You need to make certain that you select the appropriate proxy and that you manage your delegates.

6. Teach Stress Management

While this may not seem the most sensitive of statements, the less you need to interact with the personality weaknesses of employees the more time you'll have to handle the demands of your job. This is not to suggest that you turn a cold shoulder to the needs of your employees, but rather that you train and empower them to better handle the stress they encounter so that they need to rely upon you less. Giving your employees the ability to handle the challenges they face is a win-win for you and for them.

7. Teach Problem Solving

Once again, the less time you need to spend dealing with “issues” that could (and should) be resolved without your active involvement, the more time you will have dealing with those matters that you need (and want) to be focused on. Yet, simultaneously, you want those matters kept from you and resolved in your absence to be concluded in a manner that meets your standards and is consistent with the company's overall objectives. Therefore, you need to teach your staff how to resolve issues the way you want them solved. You need to provide examples, set up reviews, and keep involved until you are certain that those charged with being your proxies have the skills, thoughtfulness and discipline to successfully resolve matters that routinely arise.

8. Practice Accountability

The designation of responsibility and the assignment of authority need to be accompanied by accountability. Not only does this make certain that people are more

careful in the execution of their mandates, but it also provides you with the mechanisms you need to manage remotely. By making certain that everyone knows what they are expected to do, how their performance will be measured, and what the consequences of poor performance are, you set the standards and rules in a way that remain even after you have physically left the building. You need to make certain you actually enforce your rules, otherwise they will cease to have meaning. This does not mean you need to have a heavy hand, or treat people rudely. It means you need to make sure every lives up to their part and that the rules you have set up are designed to help them do so.

9. Provide Honest, Timely Evaluations

People like to know where they stand and you need to know that your employees are making an effort to improve their performances in areas where they are in need of improvement. You cannot expect them to identify their weaknesses on their own. You need to be there for them and make sure you provide timely, honest evaluations. Keeping in mind that people respond better to constructive criticism, it is best to make sure you deliver your evaluations with improvement, not criticism. The goal is to get people to do better, not reduce confidence or obstruct motivation. Let you the members of your multiple teams know what you expect from them and how they can meet your expectations. By providing them with the means to succeed, they will recognize your interest is in helping them excel, not in criticizing them.

10. Provide Paths for Improvement

The management of multiple teams, with all the associated dynamics is more easily accomplished when you have training sessions embedded into your management processes so that everyone involved has access to the information and knowledge necessary for him/her to improve individual performance. By making certain that the know-how is available, you can get a better handle on performance and maintain higher standards over an extended period of time.

Managing multiple teams is not, as it may seem, about multi-tasking. Actually, it is all about repeating the same set of tasks multiple times. The shortcuts to success is making sure these tasks are part of your overall management processes and that you have taken the steps necessary to eliminate distractions and are able to focus exclusively on the productive tasks. By doing this you will be able to transform your multiple teams into one larger set of management objectives – which, by definition – will be easier to manage, leading to better all around results.

Craig Frank is CEO of The Tudog Group.



BUSINESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

By David Gilad

One of the primary challenges business leaders have is determining a management style and process that serves to promote the interests of the company and advance the objectives the company has set forth to be accomplished. Part of the difficulty stems from the lack of structured strategies that are “plug and play” leaving each manager with the need to customize strategies to suit the parameters of the workplace, the market, and the company. Another element to the challenge is the dynamics of the environment within which the strategy must succeed. These dynamics are not always static, meaning there is a need to find a strategy firm enough to allow for progress, but flexible enough to allow for change. No easy task.

This article will explore the considerations one must take into account when trying to construct a management strategy that will serve to maximize your potential as a manager and the potential of the people you lead. While these parameters should prove helpful in understanding the fundamentals, the article will also provide three examples of management strategies to serve both as examples and also as options.

Building a Management Strategy

The construction of a strategy that meets the needs of the current situation and the anticipated demands as the company grows and the market changes is achieved by thinking ahead and incorporating all the necessary elements into the character and nature of the strategy. Under consideration should be:

- The Needs of Your Business – what does your business demand of its management strategy? Do you need to be thinking in terms of competitors, new product/service introductions, capturing of market share, expansion of customer base, and so on? These factors will help you determine the strategy from the perspective of your business, making certain that your leadership is focused on meeting the needs of the company and that the management systems you put into place are designed to meet the performance targets you establish.
- The Needs of Your Customers – what do your customers need from your business and how does your management strategy ensure that they will receive it? Your customers are purchasing your product/service because it either fulfills a need they have or satisfies a desire. Once you understand why your customers

are using your product/service you can manage to make certain that the need is always met or the desire always gratified.

- Your Own Outlook on Management – who you are, as a person and as a manager, will naturally greatly affect the way you manage. You need to make sure that the strategy you develop is compatible with your personality, your style, and your beliefs on how your business should operate.
- Your Employees – just as you need to make sure your strategy is attuned to your way of thinking, you need to make sure it is also in step with the way your employees think. This is not to suggest that you need to develop a strategy that caters to the whims of your workers, but rather that you need to make sure you have synergy between the way you manage and the people you manage. An absence of this meeting of the minds will leave you spending much of your time managing people instead of your business.

Three Strategic Options

Although there are a number of strategy options to choose from, Tudog has selected three that we believe provide a good foundation for further thought and implementation. The three strategies are:

- AAA – Aim, Act & Access
- SCM – Supply Chain Management
- TMS – Time Management Strategy

AAA

The Triple A strategy requires that, as a first step, you determine your goals so that you can build strategies that will assist you in realizing them. This step is called “Aim” because it seeks to clarify the goal or aim of the strategy.

The second step is implementation. Called “Act” it requires the execution of the strategies so that you can see them in action. This phase is not exclusive of the “Aim” phase, meaning that as you implement you may find that there are additional goals you wish to set for yourself. This is natural, as the actual execution of a strategy is likely to point out weaknesses that need to be addressed and holes that need to be filled.

The final step in this strategy is called “Access” and it is where you review the results of your implementation and determine where it requires strengthening and how you can make it stronger. This stage is where you examine how well your strategy meets the needs of your company and of your customers, and whether it is compatible with your personality and those of your employees. Management is an evolving skill, and the “Access” phase permits you to draw some lessons and improve your management capabilities.

SCM

Contrary to how it may sound, SCM – Supply Chain Management – is not a logistical tactic but rather a management strategy. SCM is about meeting the needs of the customer in the most efficient and sensible manner. This task is a management task that requires planning and specifically structured execution. Moving the goods or services you provide through your company, into the market, and into the hands of your customer

is essential for the sale. Doing it in an efficient manner is essential for profitability to occur. The management of the process is what makes the difference between no profit, a little profit, and significant profit. Insofar as it is safe to assume that your company is shooting for significant profit, in most cases you will need some degree of SCM.

TMS

Perhaps a critical management strategy for every leader is time management. The proper use of time is not only an asset to the Company and to your reaching your stated objectives, it also serves as a proper example to employees and shows them how to best utilize their time. The issue of time management has to do with both how we allocate the time we have and how we set priorities – meaning what matters we elect to devote our time to addressing. Time management not only improves efficiencies (and adds to the related benefits efficiency provides) it also emphasizes Company values and your standards as leader.

Business management strategies are complex to structure because they need to be molded not only to the business but also to the people involved. This is not always an easy task, making the position of manager somewhat challenging. Conversely, management can also be a rewarding task as it gives you the ability to influence outcomes. As manager you get to set goals and create the paths to reach those goals. The proper strategies aid you in your efforts.

David Gilad is President of The Tudog Group.



VIRAL MARKETING REVISITED

By Ilan Sarid

Viral marketing is now universally recognized as a low cost and highly effective way to get a marketing message to spread rapidly. The second-cousin to word or mouth, and sometimes uncomfortably close to multi-level marketing (without the sales component), viral marketing is being explored by nearly every company as a tactic that can (and should) be deployed whenever possible.

From the feedback and questions coming in to Tudog, there seems to be some confusion out there as to what actually constitutes viral marketing and how best to implement a viral campaign. Although Tudog has reviewed this topic (twice actually) in past editions of our newsletter, the level of interest and the scope of understandings, has led us to conclude that this article – which will define viral marketing and explore some execution options – is necessary.

Defining Viral Marketing

Viral marketing gets its name from the idea of a virus, something that spreads from person to person. The idea is that, typically within an Internet environment, marketers are able to encourage (through incentives and great services or experiences) people to recommend a website to their friends and family. The first real success at viral marketing was Hotmail, which was the first free email service. Hotmail grew at a dizzying pace because they included a postscript on every email sent by a hotmail address that identified the email as originating from a hotmail account and informing the recipient that the service was (a) free, and (b) available to them (by clicking on a link attached to the postscript).

At the time, some people thought that the mandatory postscript reduced the attractiveness of the service, as business professionals and others would not want the postscript attached to their outgoing emails. While there may have been some people who declined a hotmail account for this reason, the hundreds of millions of accounts opens demonstrated that mandatory viral announcements did not serve as a significant barrier. And so the rush for viral perfection began.

Today the idea of viral marketing has extended beyond the Internet, as companies in the mainstream have tried to launch campaigns that encourage people to pass on their marketing message to others. Such efforts to create a buzz have met with mixed results

as the traditional marketing environment does not have the mechanisms for mandatory viral announcements, nor the ability (through a click or email) to execute an immediate viral message. Nonetheless the notion of viral marketing, still strong on the Internet, is gaining traction in traditional marketing channels as well.

Effective Viral Tactics

The success of a viral campaign rests on the logic and implementation of the tactics deployed. Tudog has identified 5 tactics we believe should be considered as central to a viable viral campaign. They are:

1. Provide Incentive

Although it may seem curious that we, as consumers, are often willing to serve as marketing channels for the brands we buy – by wearing their brand across our chests for example - most people don't readily pass on to others marketing messages without some sort of reason to do so. In many cases the reason could be a high level of satisfaction or a narrow market need that is well fulfilled (for example, people may recommend a successful medication to someone they know suffers from an ailment similar to their own). But otherwise we tend to keep our satisfaction to ourselves (although we share our dissatisfaction readily).

To break the habit and get people to spread the marketing message marketers should devise incentives that serve to encourage people to get the word out. Sometimes this can be done by giving something away for free. Sometimes it can be done by establishing a program that rewards per person successfully recruited, and sometimes it can be achieved by distributing praise. The elements to the incentive system you construct should be based on the people you are targeting and your understanding of what will serve to properly motivate them. In all cases though, you should have an element that serves to motivate.

2. Make it Easy

The hesitancy people may feel at serving as carrier of your marketing message may be compounded if they have the added burden of having to make a concentrated effort at it. It is pretty safe to say that under those circumstances only the die hard fans of your company and product will serve as evangelists. The task before you is to establish simple, easy, non-intrusive ways for people to carry your message forward. This can be done online through email, web notification buttons, software giveaways and other tactics. In the more traditional marketing environment this can be achieved through clothing, buttons, hats, product giveaways and more. In every instance, however, the key is integrating your mechanism for how they pass on the word with their existing flow of activity.

3. Press the Right Buttons

In understanding why someone might elect to pass on your marketing message you need to recognize why the individual is so pleased with your company, product/service and image. By becoming a link in your viral marketing chain the individual must feel something – and it is that something you need to tap into.

Your product/service may symbolize coolness, sensitivity, success, or beauty. Your viral promoters may be seeking to demonstrate their know-how or gain attention. Whatever the underlying motivations are, you need to plug into them and make certain that your viral campaign serves to satisfy the need.

4. Tap into Existing Communication Channels

People have their preferred methods of communicating and they engage the channels that best suit them. Some people are comfortable with email and instant messaging and others like the telephone and snail mail. You need to make certain that you provide the means for your viral agents to communicate within the channels that they already prefer. Trying to get them to use a different channel will most likely meet resistance and affect the efficacy of the campaign because it brings people away from their normal habits. The use of communication channels that are already popular and in use allows people to spread your message as they traditionally communicate. Not only does this increase the chances of your message being passed on, but it also serves to preserve the integrity of the message as it is coming not only from a trusted source, but through the usual channel.

5. Deploy Existing Resources

There are existing channels you can use to get your word out and have others do the preaching for you. For example, online chat rooms and targeted websites can be excellent forums for viral marketing. In the traditional environment there are publications and news outlets that can be deployed (as well as events and promotions). All of these resources are already in place and only require that you tap into them. That is a much quicker and cost effective alternative to creating the channels on your own.

To be sure, even though every company is searching for ways to get other people (their customers) to do some of their marketing for them, viral marketing is not right for every company. The products you sell and the people you sell to need to be compatible with the viral market. If they are not, all the planning and attempts at execution won't serve to establish a successful campaign. On the other hand, if your products and customer base are suitable, viral marketing is a great way to get your message out.

Do us a favor and pass it on.

Ilan Sarid resides in Canada and serves on Tudog's Board of Advisors.



HANDICAPPING YOUR SEO

By David Feingersch

It is not uncommon to find some examples of sarcasm and irony within the pages of Tudog's newsletter, and so this article can find its place among the rest. The idea that a company might seek to intentionally handicap their SEO – thereby reducing their exposure on the Internet search engines – is indeed absurd. And yet the examples of poor (and sometimes outright horrible) SEO are everywhere to be seen.

Perhaps once upon a time (like 2 years ago) the secrets to great SEO were known only to a few and so companies could not be expected to operate websites with strong search engine appeal. Today, however, we live in an enlightened era when all companies have access to the actions they can take to make certain someone searching Google or Yahoo! for something they sell might happen upon them.

But this article is not for those of you who want to be found on the search engines. This article is for those companies who are against making sales and are interested in remaining invisible to potential customers searching on the Internet. Yes, this article is all about how to have really lousy search engine exposure. (***Author's Note: For those companies seeking really great search engine exposure simply do the opposite of what this article suggests.***)

Tudog has identified 5 things your company can do to have the absolute worst possible Internet strategy. These include:

1. *Have Lousy Content*

By lousy content it is not intended to mean that what you say should be composed poorly or be unfocused or fail to explain what you do (although these are also excellent bad business practices). As relates to search engines, your website should seek to have content that is completely unfriendly to the search engine crawlers. By having information the search engines cannot index you will be able to avoid being picked up and listed. Just for the record, if you were trying to get preferred listing (and no one is accusing you of wanting that) you would want your homepage to "tell" the search engine what your company (website) is about by having 200 carefully selected (keyword intensive) words.

2. Isolate Yourself

Hey, what could be more annoying than all those pesky websites linking themselves to your website. So what that their content and yours are compatible and that they are sending traffic your way. No matter too that those links serve to validate your website for the search engines, resulting in higher ranking. The best thing you can do to make sure your website is completely invisible is to isolate yourself and keep away from links.

3. Ignore Your Visitors

There is absolutely no reason to know where the people visiting your website are going and definitely no reason to enrich the most visited of those same pages with keywords so that they attract more visitors. Just because those pages are the most popular on your site doesn't mean you want to draw more attention to them. You could, if you suddenly decided you wanted to optimize these pages, put titles on them that emphasized the content that was attracting so many visitors, and you could, also, if you wanted to, embed keywords in the text that would allow the search engines to recognize and give priority to the topic you wish to emphasize.

4. Go With Fancy Graphics

Nothing says "I have no interest in search engine ranking" like a homepage with no text, or even better, one built with flash. The search engine crawlers cannot read flash, and so for them, your website doesn't exist. But, hey, isn't it more important to look flashy, even if no one comes to see it? On the other hand, if you did want to create your graphics with an eye toward optimization, you could coordinate the graphics with the text, making sure that you don't place graphics anywhere that might inhibit or limit the ability of the search engines to recognize and index your website.

5. Use Graphics for Links

The best way to make sure the search engines don't pick up your website is to use graphics (jpegs, bitmaps) for your links. Many graphic designers like to use these because they have a nice look, and for those seeking to handicap their SEO, the graphic links are perfect. For those hoping to get noticed and ranked by the search engines, the design benefits should be sacrificed for the more practical goal of getting the listed.

Perhaps this article is a bit too tongue-in-cheek, but it has tried to push the envelope a bit to emphasize how we sometimes sabotage our own businesses by acting in ways so blatantly against our own interests that it could appear to an outside observer that we intentionally seek poor performance. The way to shake that absurd appearance is to conform to best practices and take the easy, simple steps to improve our performance. When it is clear we seek excellence we send a message that we are excellent. All joking aside, isn't that really how you want to be perceived?

David Feingersch works with Tudog in Florida.



INTERNET MARKETING REVISITED

By Leisy Melian

The marketing landscape for Internet companies has been shifting as the search engines take a more prominent role, advertising remains steady and the other tactics (such as affiliates) demonstrate their usefulness to specific types of companies. The shifts in the market have left many companies uncertain where the Internet fits in their marketing paradigm and how to integrate the Internet into their overall marketing strategies.

This article aims to share Tudog's 7 step Internet marketing process, which allows a company to set and implement their online strategy. The Tudog system includes:

Step One: *Contemplate*

Before you launch your Internet marketing you need to have a good understanding of what your company is doing on the web, what you are trying to communicate and who you are communicating to. These seemingly simple considerations form the core of your successful online effort and need to be taken as seriously as positioning questions in the traditional marketing arena. This step is all about the fundamentals and you know that the fundamentals form the foundation for good marketing. So think about the key components and begin structuring your online marketing in the right way.

Step Two: *Set Your Budget*

As with traditional marketing, online marketing campaigns can be developed for millions of dollars or thousands of dollars (and sometimes even hundreds of dollars) depending on the resources and objectives of the company. In order to construct a viable marketing plan that delivers results above the resources invested, the amount of funds available needs to be determined. The mix of marketing channels may change depending on the amount, as may the mix of tactics.

Step Three: *Construct*

Once you have identified your message and target and you have your budget set you can construct the elements you need for a successful campaign. These elements will include your website (which may be built but will most likely need adjustments to suit the new campaign), banners, ads, and SEO elements (on your website).

Step Four: *Test*

One of the best parts about the Internet is that all marketing that takes place online can be measured so that the efficacy of the program can be evaluated. It makes sense to take advantage of this inherent benefit and test your marketing plan before you go into full implementation. You will learn from the test results what needs to be adjusted and corrected before your full launch. The net result is that your plan, when ultimately executed, will be highly effective.

Step Five: *Implement*

Once you have tweaked your plan (according to the results of your tests) you can begin implementation and launch the plan. The implementation should be staged so that you do not come onto the web with a big bang and then fade. It is more effective to sustain a longer, lower profile.

Step Six: *Measure*

Once again, the beauty of the Internet is that you can measure your results in real time. This eliminates any excuse for continuing with ineffective tactics and messages that are not yielding the anticipated results. By measuring on a constant basis you will be able to adjust your marketing and maximize your ROI.

Step Seven: *Maintain*

A successful online marketing program is sustained over a period of time to allow the inherent benefits of the Internet to take effect. The Internet allows people to bookmark a site they like and return as their needs or interests dictate. Similarly, the Internet has certain viral marketing tendencies, which are enhanced and supported by a sustained marketing presence. The maintenance of your marketing plan is a function of constant measurement, proper adjustment, and the dedication of sufficient resources.

The growth the Internet can afford your company cannot be underestimated and should be pursued aggressively. The Tudog system, if properly implemented, will aid your company in leveraging the power of the Internet and drawing qualified leads to your website, where they can be informed about your company and your products (as well as perhaps make a purchase if available). When you consider the reason your website is there – to represent your company, inform your market, and provide the buy incentive – the Tudog system suits your objectives and enhances your fulfillment. The Internet is a distinctive marketing tool. Use it as an integral part of your overall marketing plan.

Leisy Melian is Tudog's Director of Training.