

SMALL BIZ SURVIVAL – Thoughts on Small-Business Marketing!

by Glenn Muske *Reprinted with permission from: Small Biz Survival*

Let's start with a paraphrased quote – "Marketing is everything you do" – Jay Conrad Levinson

This quote is distilled from a slightly longer one in Levinson's book, "Guerrilla Marketing." I have used it for years when talking about marketing. Marketing should be on your mind from the moment you have an idea. Why? Because you need to think not in terms of what you would like to do, but, in terms of what the market wants and will pay for.

And marketing continues well after you have sold an item as the item must perform as promised so that the customer comes back again. In the best of worlds, your customer tells others about your small business.

Having your customer as your ambassador is probably the best marketing tool one could ask for. I recently came across a quote that makes this point through terms of branding, "Your brand is what other people say about you when you are not in the room" – Unknown author.

This short, 6-minute video, [Three Ways to \(Usefully\) Lose Control of Your Brand](#), by Tim Leberecht, digs deeper into the world of branding. It outlines ways to help you build your own brand.

In this video, Tim talks about ways that businesses expand their brand by losing control of it on purpose. That loss sparked their business then and often continues to spark their business today. One of his examples is when Interflora watched Twitter and responded with a bouquet of flowers to people having a bad day. Maybe you cannot offer anything that substantial but even a heart-felt, sincere note might be well received if it ties into your company's mission and public face.

Another example of building your brand, this time in terms of a commitment to customer service, comes from this Inc. magazine story. WestJet, again by watching the Twitter feed, was able to capitalize on another airline's misfortune. It showed their creativity and ability to overcome obstacles.

Maybe you don't want to use the misfortune of another business as an opportunity for your own. But, maybe there is a way to help out a competitor when they have a disaster – different response but, again, a way to build your brand.

Good marketing has a focus and is driven by your company's mission. That means that everything you do, every marketing tactic you use, needs to spring from the idea of establishing your face or your brand.

So what's your marketing about?