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Maximize Your Online Business Plan in 2009

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Competing in today's challenging business climate requires that you make the most of your organization's combined web and email communication resources. Your online presence must function as more than a simple promotional vehicle for your organization. Rather, in many cases, your website serves as a direct extension of your entire business process... Working as your sales representative, customer service manager, your vendor coordinator, your fulfillment and delivery center, your customer retention manager, your document archive, your accounts receivable representative, your research and development department, your public relations manager, and more.

An effective online business plan is your key to working smarter, selling more effectively, speeding product development, retaining more customers, enhancing service delivery, generating more referrals, streamlining operations, and doing it all at a *significantly* lower cost.

Here is an initial thought to build a successful, comprehensive online business strategy for the coming year...

Think "MULTI-CHANNEL." Your website should promote and support your business on many different levels at the same time. Consider the many different audiences that your organization must attract and serve in order to grow and prosper: *New Sales Prospects, Existing Customers, Employees & Associates, Stakeholders, Vendors, Industry & Media Influencers*, and many others. A comprehensive online communications plan will ensure that you are reaching and responding to each of these critical audiences. But, how can you balance and present clear, relevant and uncluttered interactive content to several different groups all within the same website? Perhaps, you should try a different approach.

The days of "one-size, fits all" website design are quickly fading. Instead, consider the creation of a series of interconnected, but highly targeted "landing pages" or "micro-websites," each implementing a single, unique business task positioned under your unifying brand. For instance, offer a dedicated technical support page where existing customers and their previous online service history are identified automatically by login when requesting new assistance. Or, create a product-specific "trial offer" page, with its own stand-alone web address, promoted exclusively via short-term, keyword pay-per-click advertising.

Use the same multi-channel approach with your pro-active email communications. Instead of sending a lengthy comprehensive "newsletter" to your entire mailing list, packed with numerous topics attempting to appeal to the widest range of recipients, try creating shorter, precise "micro messages" written and designed to elicit a single response from a more narrowly defined audience. Under this approach, the right message will be delivered only to the most appropriate and receptive audience member, increasing the chances that your communication will be read and acted upon.

What's next? We'll look at more ways to enhance your online business plan next month.

About the author:

As one of the region's earliest pioneers in the field of online communications, *Kip Cozart*, along with CC Communications owner/partners *Russ Husky* and *Loretta Cozart*, have consulted with hundreds of businesses and organizations to enhance and produce effective web, email, multimedia marketing initiatives and business process improvements for more than fourteen years. Contact kcozart@cccommunications.com or call CC Communications at 704-543-1171.

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