

Monthly Newswire

Welcome to our monthly newswire. We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and find it useful.

September 2017

BLOGGING AS A MARKETING TOOL

When you think of social media, the first platforms that come to mind are probably LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Have you ever considered using a blog as a social media marketing tool? Blogs can help drive traffic to your website, help search engines to find your firm and can enhance recognition of your brand.

Blogs are a way of sharing regular, up-to-date content with your existing and target audience. They provide an opportunity to create content which shows off what your business has been doing and promote the products or services that you provide.

If you want to create a successful blog you need to start with your content strategy. First of all, think about your customers. Who are they? What type of people are they and what are they likely to want to read?

The most successful blogs are compelling and normally part of a series, drawing their readers in consistently and encouraging them to share the posts with their own networks. As such, you should ensure that your blog has links which make it easy for users to share on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, etc.

You can also use your blog to drive traffic to your firm's website. The blog should cover a variety of different topics to increase your potential readership and drive more people to click on links to your website.

Blogs tend to gain a following if they are useful to their readers. Whether it's news, expertise, humour, insight or fun, it doesn't matter. What matters is that when someone reads your blog, they get something out of it. You should try to make this relevant to the type of business that you run so that your readers associate your firm with your content. This can help to build your firm's reputation.



Your blog should not be a sales pitch. In fact, directly selling your products or services via your blog should be avoided. You can refer to the products or services that you provide, but the purpose of your blog is to build your reputation and encourage people to become familiar with your firm and its brand. If you target the right people, in the right way, the sales enquiries should follow naturally.

MANAGING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

When we have positive interaction with a business we feel good about it and will probably tell friends or colleagues about the experience. So how do you go about managing customer experience in your business so clients are raving to their friends about you and your firm?

Let's start with customer service. A customer's first point of contact with a business is usually interaction with an employee (by visiting your office, speaking on the phone or online). This gives your business an opportunity to deliver excellent customer service. However, customer service is only one aspect of the overall customer experience.

If you were to book a holiday over the phone and the person you are speaking with is friendly and helpful, that's good customer service. If your tickets arrive early, you get champagne on arrival and the hotel room is upgraded for free, then that is a good overall customer experience.

Managing customer experience within your firm starts with understanding your customers. If your business is going to truly understand the needs of its customers, then your people need to understand the issues that your customers face and how your products / services can help to solve them.

Some businesses create a customer experience vision, which defines a set of guiding principles to ensure that each customer has a consistently great experience with the firm. The customer experience vision might include things like turning things around quickly and embracing customer feedback in order to improve the service offering.

Your firm should take customer feedback seriously. The best businesses regularly survey clients and collate feedback to drive positive change across the firm to improve customer experience. It can also be useful to gather employee feedback. For example, you may want to ask your team members for their views on whether the business has the ability to deliver exceptional service and if not, then why not? The business can act on this feedback in order to improve the customer's overall experience.

Please contact a member of our team if you would like to discuss any of the issues raised.

Call: 01909 472 310 Email: kirsty@johnharrison.co.uk

MICROSOFT SURFACE LAPTOP

Microsoft has just launched a laptop version of its Surface tablet. From a business user's perspective, this has been designed for now, rather than the technology that is likely to be popular in 5 years' time.

By designing the Surface laptop around the concept of what users want / need today, Microsoft has created a computer with all the connectors and ports you are likely to need, a 13.5-inch touch-screen secured with a sturdy hinge and enough power to run typical business applications like Microsoft Office, etc.

The design looks smart and up to date while the screen is sharp with a resolution of 2256 x 1504 pixels. The case design is slim and the battery is designed to last up to (a claimed) 14 hours.

On the right side of the Surface laptop you will find the port for Microsoft's proprietary charger. On the left there is a headphone jack, MiniDisplay port, and a single USB 3.0 port. Note this is not USB-C. As the Surface laptop has been designed for today rather than 5 years in the future, it has been designed to connect to today's printers, cameras and accessories – all of which tend to use standard USB connectors.

Buyers can specify the Surface laptop with Intel's Core i5 processor or the more powerful Core i7. You can also choose between 4, 8, or 16GB of RAM, and 128, 256, or 512GB of solid-state storage. The choice of specification obviously affects the price, which starts from £979.00 to about £2,000 for the top spec version. Most buyers are likely to choose a mid range spec which will typically retail for around the £1,250 mark (including VAT).

The Surface laptop comes as standard with Windows 10, but most business

users will want to specify it with Windows 10 Pro which has additional network management features, etc. The Surface laptop is a capable piece of kit that is likely to appeal to business users who want a solid, powerful tool that looks good and has decent battery life.



HEALTHIER PEOPLE = MORE PRODUCTIVE PEOPLE

For a number of years, businesses have invested more and more in health and wellbeing initiatives. Large international businesses tend to have the resources to put such initiatives in place, but smaller firms can also introduce positive measures without spending a fortune.

Most businesses recognise that sitting in front of a computer all day doesn't offer much opportunity for movement. In addition, office environments don't typically lend themselves to healthy eating as team members often bring unhealthy snacks into the office. Time poor employees tend to grab a quick lunch which can be unhealthy if it is fast food or similar.

The above can have a negative impact on the productivity of your team. Sickness absence tends to be higher among unhealthy people and this puts pressure on those people who have to pick up the extra workload.

What can you do to address this? Let's start with activity. If you have the

budget, perhaps you could offer a contribution towards gym memberships for your staff. Most gym chains offer discounts for business staff. Another option may be to organise lunchtime running sessions or form a company sports team.

From a nutritional perspective, your firm could offer nutritional education to staff members via regular lunchtime talks which are free to attend. The firm could encourage healthy eating by offering healthy snacks such as fruit bowls in the office. If you have a vending machine in the office building, you could request that the supplier swaps it for a healthy snack / drinks machine.

Other options to consider rolling out in your firm might include offering standing desks for staff. This encourages movement and can be better for people who suffer with back problems. If a lot of your staff are smokers, you can offer "quit smoking" classes at lunchtimes.

Encouraging your people to become healthier can help turn your business into a more attractive place to work. Introducing a few small lifestyle changes such as those outlined above doesn't have to cost a fortune but may contribute towards creating a healthier, happier and more productive team.

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