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The Art of Digital Marketing

by Glenn Townes

For career coach and small business consultant Randy Fisher, the key to having a virtual presence both professionally and personally is to become an expert in the art of self promotion. Fisher should know. The IT-savvy former journalist has successfully launched several startups and social marketing firms as well as one nonprofit. He is the owner of the DigiWise Career Services in Somerset.

He encourages clients to study the ways that business prospects behave online. When you do that, he says, you're able to get closer to what the customers needs — and move them to action.

Fisher will host a seminar at the Princeton Public Library on Friday, February 9, at 9:45 a.m., in which he will try to answer the question, "How does someone effectively track their digital marketing strategy?" The event is co-presented by PSG of Mercer County and the library. For more information visit www.psgofmercercounty.org.



Randy Fisher

Fisher is a Canadian native and who immigrated to the U.S. in November, 2017, with his American-born wife. He earned an undergraduate degree from the University of King's College in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and a graduate degree in organization management and development from Fielding Graduate University in Santa Barbara, California.

Before he went into business for himself, Fisher covered the business world as a journalist. Fisher says as a business writer for various publications and online media throughout Canada he had access to some of the most prominent Canadian business owners. Some of what he learned from spending time with these entrepreneurs he put to use as a contributor to the book "Cracking the New E-economy: Business Tools for the Entrepreneur." In the book he profiles several successful and prominent Canadian business owners.

Spending time with them eventually sparked his desire to start his own business. "I thought, 'Hey, I could do this and start my own business,' so I did," he says. He might also have been inspired to strike out on his own by his mother, who had a showroom in Montreal where she sold women's fashions.

Fisher says he will talk in his presentation about how entrepreneurs and young professionals can effectively track their digital marketing return on investment. He suggests a careful and basic analysis of cost as the best place to start. Tracking the monthly expense of digital tools is essential, he says. Startups should keep track of that, as well as the cost of consulting and hired help and your time getting things rolling.

He says once a budget is established and business owners know how much they are spending quarterly, they can evaluate progress towards long term goals.

He offers further advice to business owners looking to use digital marketing to their advantage:

Set things up properly. Have a well designed and functioning website with content that is focused on the customer. There should be a clear product or service offering and connections to Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. He adds that once things are set up digital marketing becomes speedy and prolific.

Don't ignore the analytics. Fisher says paying close attention to details regarding users' behavior gives business owners insight into what's appealing to customers.

Experimentation. "Try new things and different tactics," he says, although he adds that if you can't measure what you're doing, it's probably not worth doing. "You won't be able to figure out what's working or what could work better" if you're not tracking the results of your experiments.

Embrace your successes. "The digital world never stands still, with tomorrow bringing a new set of problems, challenges, and opportunities," he says. "When you succeed, make it a point to celebrate and share with your customers and stakeholders."

Fisher says forming strategic partnerships is vital and a frequently overlooked benefit of digital marketing. He is also an advocate of old-fashioned word-of-mouth marketing. "An owner may partner with someone who never buys anything but refers business tenfold over the initial investment of time, expense and effort," he says.

Fisher isn't the only one who is touting the potential benefits of digital marketing for small businesses. On Monday, February 12, at 9:30 a.m., the National Black Chamber of Commerce will host a "Boost Your Business With Facebook" event at Rho Waterfront in Trenton. Online registration is at boosttrenton.splashthat.com.

A study last year by GetResponse, an online marketing platform with more than 350,000 customers across the globe, showed that the most popular marketing tool for small businesses was Facebook. Among other things, the study examined digital marketing strategies among hundreds of small businesses during the 2016 holiday season.

Among the businesses surveyed more than one third named Facebook advertising as the digital marketing channel they primarily used to "improve or increase holiday sales."

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