



Hi, I'm James Schramko. If you're a typical offline business owner, online marketing may be a challenging concept for you. What you might not know is how good online marketing can be for your business. That's why in this podcast episode, we'll discuss the benefits of online marketing, how you can learn it, some tips for doing it effectively, and how to sidestep a couple of common mistakes.

The challenges of a small business

Here are some of the challenges of a small business. Trying to just get on top of business is a daily struggle for you as a business owner. You've got taxes, staff, customers and perhaps salespeople trying to sell you things 15 times a day. You've got to deal with rent, you have competitors expanding right next to you. At the same time, you need to work out how to be a digital marketing expert and use a lot of new technology. There's a natural lag period until you can catch up with the sort of stuff that full-time online marketers chat casually about over a meal.

How can offline businesses benefit from online marketing?

So how can your offline businesses benefit from online marketing? Offline businesses or traditional businesses can really harness the advantages of having an online approach. You're going to have targeted traffic to a specific relevant call to action that could generate leads. You could use it for some of the other following points:

- Host online training content that can help educate people who have purchased things from you before
- Help your customers get ready for something that's about to happen by pre-educating them
- Build anticipation, increase desire, reducing the fear of uncertainty
- Use it as a place to create training materials for your internal team
- Use online collaboration tools to manage yourself, book appointments, and also look after your team better

Where can you learn marketing?

So where do you learn about this marketing? When you've worked on actual jobs, and you've experienced working for businesses, you can apply the marketing principles that have been handed down from experts and talk your colleagues about what's working and what's not.

And you can actually pick up the stuff that's worked offline and then translate it to an online business because the fundamentals still work. The fundamentals are exactly the same. You have leads turning into conversions, which makes a customer. And then of

course you have the transaction value amount, the frequency of transactions and the margin. That leaves you with profit. That formula is a great formula to work with

Online vs. Offline marketing

When you compare online to offline marketing, there's a lot more choice online. There are so many options. You can have a fast timeframe. You'll get results very quickly, plus you can go and buy traffic on popular sites and steer it straight to your sales offer. You've got the ability to track, test and measure in detail with anything online compared to offline. It's a little bit harder to track the direct response from a campaign in an offline business or an offline medium, especially if you're using things like outdoor media advertising. But with online, it's very easy to track a website address with a tracking ID to a conversion page. And you can test in real time. The great thing is when you can find winning campaigns; you can drive more traffic to them by buying more traffic.

Steps to successful content publishing

Content publishing is a great way to leverage a business online. Let's look at some of those steps.

1. The first and foremost rule of thumb is to put your best content on your site and then you share your content with other sites, like Twitter, Facebook, Google+, YouTube, iTunes and LinkedIn. This really helps the idea of list guarantee or a double subscription. This is where you might have subscribers who will find you on other platforms and then subscribe to it. Someone might subscribe to your email list, but they'll also stay in touch with your iTunes feed or your Facebook page.
2. At some point, they'll cross over between not knowing you, to somehow feeling like they know you, they trust you, they like what you're talking about. And they're ready to buy.
3. Once you've got a routine in place, make it a standard operating procedure. So that you can have someone else in your team do this. A call to action in every piece of content will help you make sales. When you get enough frequency, and you have the right message at the right time, people are going to follow that call to action and end up purchasing something. Knowing who your target audience is and creating information that's really relevant to them will give them the right context to being able to make that call to action.

Content creation tips

So here are a few content creation tips:

- Post things that rock the boat a little bit in your industry. Stand up for something that you believe in.
- Cause people to take action because they also believe in that.
- Be factual with your information.
- Be respectful of your audience's time. For example, if you do podcasts or videos, short episodes tend to get listened to in completion.
- Always deliver on the promise of your subject lines and titles.
- Give courtesy previews so that people can see what they're in for before they commit to it.
- Let people know what the next step is when you've completed your content delivery.

When creating your material, pay attention to online trends. Sift through the nonsense and get to the real material very quickly. People have short attention spans. Find trusted sources of information to stay tuned in. Use RSS feeds to collect the information that you can use as some kind of notes that you could then extrapolate into a meaningful piece of content.

The power of digital solutions

Here are some other digital solutions that might help an offline business. Online webinars are so much easier and cheaper to organize than offline events. Online meetings for clients instead of going to a client's place doing screen share. Hire entire work forces in another country and take advantage of geoarbitrage so that you can have more employees per dollar and you can actually hire people who are very skilled to just about anything that can be done on a computer where they don't have to be in the physical premises.

How to stand out

When it comes to setting your business apart from other businesses, you can really do good branding online. Get on top of your market by having your own website with your own themes, and colors and style guide. Get yourself a fantastic WordPress website

that you have hosted on a server that you control that will work on any mobile device. If you have your email list setup, then you'll be able to collect email addresses and get in touch with people whenever you'd like to make a sale.

When you've done that, you've now got the foundation where you can start doing really simple things like putting your phone number on the site, and your address, and tell people how they can contact you. Make them fill out a simple form if they're interested in hearing more from you. Don't ask for too many fields because you can get more information once you're speaking to someone. Then you can deliver your message and build on top of that.

How to protect your intellectual property

When it comes to protecting your intellectual property, put as much of your intellectual property on a website that you control, because if you start putting it on social media sites, you might find they get shut down. No one thinks it's professional when you have billblogs@hotmail.com written on the side of your truck. You really want to have your own domain name and your own email address.

Pick a top level domain name in the market that you serve. If you're a U.S.-based company, you'd have a .com. For a UK company serving the UK, you'd have a .co.uk. And an Australian company, of course .com.au.

It's worth having the main assets for the most popular websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram because if you don't, someone else might take your name and start trading as you, and this can be a problem. If someone else was going to register it, they're going to want to charge you a fair bit to get it back, unless you hold the appropriate trademark. It could even be a competitor trying to confuse your customers and to steal sales from you. So I suggest you look into trademarking your name early if you know it's going to be a big company.

How do search engines understand your site?

Let's talk for a moment about how search engines like Google figure out what's going on with your website. They'll look to see what the page title is. In technical terms, this is called a meta title. There's also a metadescription, and that's the source code of your page that will show up in the search results when people search for phrases that you'd like to rank for. A lot of programs, in particular WordPress, will allow you to easily change that for each post or page.

There are a few other factors that Google look for as well. They'll take into account the words on the page. They'll see if they're original or if they already have them in their index. This will help them decide the theme of the page. Other things like images will also help them form a picture of what this page is about.

They'll even have a look at who's linking to the page and what words they use to describe those links. These words are called anchor text. This helps your site get ranked in Google if they're relevant. They'll also be looking to see how fast the page loads and if it gives someone a good user experience. You want to make sure that your site works on a mobile device because more than 50% of people are searching on a mobile.

Should you have a budget for content marketing?

Sometimes I get asked if you should have a budget for content marketing, and I say yes. A lot of your budget should go toward content marketing because you're creating digital assets that grow over time, which can deliver you a return on investment that is trackable.

Content marketing, especially podcasting is a phenomenal medium to generate sales. It can even replace paid traffic, joint ventures, affiliate sales, press releases, and even SEO to a small extent. Just pick a medium that is suitable for you to sustain that you can be at elite level for. Keep doing that consistently, and you'll be getting great results.

Mistakes to avoid and how to fix them

Just before we close, let's cover a few mistakes. Us-focused websites are a no-no. A lot of businesses talk about, "We do this, we do that, we're this, we're that." Customers don't really care. Customers really only care about how you can help them with their problem and solve their issues. So be customer-focused. Figure out who your customer is and build your website messaging around the customer. Even with your opt-ins. Instead of saying "Download our free report," you might want to say "Download my free report." So when a customer clicks on it, it's customer facing.

And be careful with SEO about over-manipulating it. Don't go and load up your site with exact keywords that you want. Overusing the keyword gets you marked down in the search results. What you want to do is make sure that everything about the site looks and feels just right and that it's natural, and that it's really good for human consumption.

I hope you've enjoyed this post. If you're a small business owner interested in venturing into online marketing, I can give you expert help inside SuperFastBusiness.com/membership, where there's a thriving community of online entrepreneurs who are probably a little bit further down the track than you. If some of the information in this podcast is brand new to you, they will help you get ahead much faster. Thanks so much for listening.

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