WEBSITES, SOFTWARE AND MARKETING FOR ATTORNEYS

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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by Buster Tate, COO of Foster Web Marketing

The Business of Running a Business:

Part Three: Converting Your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis Into Action

In part two of our series on "The Business of Running a Business," we discussed the critical elements of strategic planning and the requirement to assess the current status of each element of your business, set goals with metrics for each business element, conduct a gap analysis between the current status and your goals, and make a plan of action to close the gaps. The preceding words are simple to write; however, completing this task as described is not an insignificant effort—but is well worth the investment in time.

"Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work." —Peter Drucker

Once you have completed your SWOT analysis, you should prioritize the order in which you proceed by using the Pareto principle (commonly referred to as the 80/20 rule) to increase your probability of success. If you are not familiar with the 80/20 concept, you should consider reading *The 80/20 Principle* by Richard Koch. The essence of the 80/20 principle states that you will derive 80% of the benefit, in this context, of your strategic plan from 20% of the tasks identified in your gap analysis. Identifying the tasks with the highest ROI of your time will give you clarity in the prioritization process.

With a well-curated plan of action in hand and the metrics you developed during the gap analysis to quantify success, you are ready to move toward your stated goals. With the completion of each task, the creation of a new process, or the outsourcing of responsibilities, you must maintain a "trust but verify" discipline throughout. If you set up a firm policy or hire someone to provide you with a service, you must be able to verify through measurement or reporting that expectations have been met. We speak with attorneys in all types of practices from every corner of the country and hear example after example of surprised disappointment that they hired someone to perform a task, only to find out months later that it was not done or was done poorly.

I knew a wise, old Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps who would tell his troops, "You can't expect what you don't inspect." If you give your team, including vendors, tasks or instructions and assume they are doing what you have asked without checking, you are burning money.

Happiness May Be at the Tip of Your Fingers

by Karen Hoff

Karen Hoff, Foster Web Marketing's Happiness Director and Customer Service Manager, shares her tips for increasing happiness.

What does happiness look like when it comes to your business? At Foster Web Marketing, I like to spread happiness by going above and beyond for our clients. I genuinely love to see our clients succeed, so offering help where I can is a way to encourage their success.

How do you spread happiness across your client base? Do you offer free consultations? Do you take care of the little things that can make their lives easier, even though it's not your "job"? Sometimes something as simple as checking in on a client can make a huge difference. I can relate to this, and I am sure many of you can as well.

One method of coming up with ways to increase happiness is to just ask—a simple concept that many businesses forget. Survey your clients as they walk out the door; don't let them get away without collecting data to improve your services. We have gotten some great ideas for our services and software directly from client surveys and suggestions!

What does happiness look like when it comes to your business?

Another way is to have some friends or consultants go through the paces with your business. Have them come in as "regular" clients, go through the entire process, and report back with the results. Did they feel the love? Did they feel like they wanted to come back or, better yet, refer everyone they know? If not, you have some work to do.

Lastly, watch your employees and listen to the calls that come in. If you do not currently have call tracking on your site, which includes recording and reporting in DSS, contact us! This is one of the best ways to analyze your customer service, and you have the ability right at your fingertips!

I hope you find happiness in taking these actionable steps; maybe not all at once, but even small, incremental improvements help!

FREE TIP

Great customer service is how we keep our clients happy! **Karen and Kyle comprise our customer service team, and they are available from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EDT!** Take advantage of our extended hours and awesome service.

DSS

DYNAMIC SELF-SYNDICATION

ATTRACT · **CONVERT** · **RETAIN**

CONNECT Please read more about these and other new DSS features in our DSS Release Notes—right in DSS! And follow us on Facebook and Twitter for more updates.

Facebook.com/DynamicSelfSyndication

Twitter.com/FWM_DSS

Our DSS Team: Chris, Yung, and Shannon

WHAT'S NEW IN DSS?

We have a few awesome new features in the CRM form builder! You can now collapse and expand the assigned columns, making it easier to focus on which contacts are receiving what information! We've also added a cool new option: when you add a new field to a form, and you give the field a Group Label, it changes the name at the top of that form module to that label so you can better identify it on the list of fields you have added. (Don't you love it when we make things easier for you?)

With the addition of the contact or campaign counter for each tag, you can see exactly how many people are assigned to a tag. This new feature is available on several modules through the CRM, and will show you the impact that assigning or removing a tag will have on that item, whether it be a contact, campaign or newsletter. We've also added a filter option for the source of the contact on the contact search page. This allows you to easily group and search for specifically targeted users!

If you need help using any of these awesome new features, call Karen or Kyle in our Customer Service department at **844-531-4797**.

Tim and Sean Cuddigan, Cuddigan Law

From a Rocky Start to Rock Star Status: How One Legal Team Measures Their Marketing Efforts to Get the Best Possible Results

by Tom Foster, Founder and CEO at Foster Web Marketing

Do you just "do marketing" and hope for positive results? **The time you spend on marketing is an investment in your firm's future; make sure you're getting the most bang for your buck!**

When we first met our friends at Cuddigan Law—a father and son legal team based in Omaha, Nebraska—Tim and Sean were clients of FindLaw who were looking for a change. They wanted to see better results from their website, and so they joined the Foster Web Marketing family.

Just around the time the Cuddigans left FindLaw, Google released its "Penguin" search algorithm update, which hit them pretty hard. Their site lost a fair amount of web traffic, thanks to low-quality backlinks they'd acquired over the years. The Foster team had seen this many times, and knew what to do. After months of work finding and eliminating these low-quality links, the site began to recover.

So, how much business did the Cuddigans lose from these low-value links? Most law firms wouldn't be able to tell you, but thanks to Tim and Sean's diligent tracking of their lead sources over the years, they knew exactly what this algorithm update had cost their firm. Not only that, but their data showed them which marketing channels were the most successful and could be leveraged to make up the missing leads.

The Cuddigans have been using their system since 2012, and its efficacy is matched only by its simplicity. If you're not currently tracking your lead sources—or if your tracking is spotty—consider embracing their basic 3-step system:

1 Document all of your lead sources. The Cuddigans maintain a spreadsheet that lists each type of advertising that they do—everything from TV ads to previous client referrals to medical providers. You can do this too; just make a list of all the marketing you're doing. (Be sure to include your website!)

The Cuddigans have been using their system since 2012, and its efficacy is matched only by its simplicity. If you're not currently tracking your lead sources—or if your tracking is spotty—consider embracing their basic 3-step system.

2 Track all leads. The Cuddigans' intake team is trained to find out how potential clients first heard about the firm. They have the list of lead sources, and they assign each lead to one of the categories. Do you let your front desk or intake team know what advertising campaigns you have running so they can track this information for you?

3 Analyze your data. Once you have a few months' worth of data, take a look at the trends. What is your top lead source? Are there any sources you're spending money on that aren't getting you leads? Analyze your data each month to track what works and what doesn't, and make changes as needed.

Ever heard of the Pareto principle, also referred to as the 80/20 rule? In general, you can expect 80% of your profits to come from 20% of your marketing. Use a basic tracking system like this to identify which 20% of your advertising efforts get you the bulk of your business. Focus your time and money on making these channels successful. This system will also allow you to try new marketing efforts, and compare the results to your tried-and-true campaigns. ✹

FREE TIP Want to know more about tracking your leads and the Pareto principle? Visit www.FWMnews.com for in-depth information on successful marketing measurement!

Q: What is a "vanity URL" and what's the best way to use it?

Laura Johnson

A: A "vanity URL" is a unique, short and memorable web address (domain name) used for branded marketing that is forwarded to a page on your website. By directing users to an easy URL, you increase the likelihood that they'll follow through to the page.

When should you use them? Vanity URLs should be used when running a specific campaign. For example, we are running a campaign for our Marketing Boot Camp (Sunday, October 26, 2014 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET) and have purchased the domain name www.FWMBootCamp.com. It is easy to remember, easy to type into your browser, and much more visually appealing than a link with slashes, hyphens, and numbers. We also have tracking set up in GoDaddy, so we know how people found this link. (We use Google's URL builder to create trackable URLs.)

Vanity URLs should be used when running a specific campaign.

You can purchase a vanity URL from any number of domain-hosting websites, but we definitely recommend GoDaddy for ease of use when it comes to forwarding. Once you've purchased your domain name, go into "forwarding" on GoDaddy, and forward the new domain to the page that you'd like visitors to be redirected to when they type it in.

Example: We have www.FWMBootCamp.com set up to forward visitors to http://www.fosterwebmarketing.com/reports/dss-and-internet-marketing-bootcamp.cfm/?utm_source=bootcamp&utm_medium=marketing_blast&utm_campaign=vanity_url. (Notice the tracking information at the end of the URL!)

Make sure you buy a domain name for each marketing campaign, so you can determine if your flyer, billboard, radio ad, or newsletter actually brought you traffic.

FREE TIP If you need help setting up your vanity URL, you can call our awesome Customer Service team at **844-531-4797**.

The Business of Running a Business: *Part Three: Converting Your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis Into Action*

When you make a decision to formalize your business planning and consider resources available to assist your effort, keep in mind that shortcuts rarely work. There are countless books, software programs and consultants available to assist with your business planning. Following in the footsteps of others can prevent you from making a critical mistake or leaving out an essential step; however, you must not be seduced by promises of quick or easy solutions. Taking a strategic look at your business, setting goals, and executing the plan require clarity of vision and discipline. If you are a solo practitioner or the managing partner of a firm, strategic planning and business plan development are not tasks you can delegate.
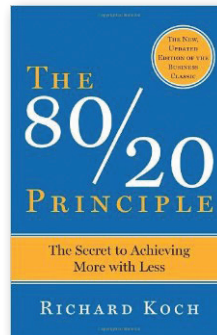
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The essence of the 80/20 principle states that you will derive 80% of the benefit, in this context, of your strategic plan from 20% of the tasks identified in your gap analysis.

I know that the brief words I have provided in this newsletter are inadequate to facilitate the creation of a well-reasoned business plan. My purpose in presenting this information in such a condensed manner is to spur your thinking, and to refocus those attorneys who get overwhelmed with fighting the urgent issues of the day and never take the time to get back to the fundamentals of business.

"The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will." —*Vince Lombardi*

FREE TIP You can find more information including *The 80/20 Principle* at www.FWMnews.com.