

Business goes to Cyberspace

It is a well known axiom of doing business in any industry that those who do not stay in step with the times will be those companies that eventually die out. There is no place where that truism is more evident than in the way that companies in virtually every business sector are finding to integrate an internet marketing strategy with their traditional communications and to provide the public with an internet "presence" to supplement their public profiles in other venues.

Of course, the value of the internet for sales and promotions has been well known in the industries that service the youth markets and for the companies dealing with entertainment and the arts. Because the internet is in virtually every home and even now on hand held devices of every description, the access it gives to reach a target market are phenomenal.

This explosion of an entirely new marketing model has introduced the world of business to entirely new paradigms of marketing and new ways to achieve greater market penetration and sales. And so any business who has had to get out on cyberspace to keep up with the competition has already had to learn a whole new vocabulary that has grown up around the internet marketing phenomenon. Now terms like "Search Engine Optimization", "Auto responders" and "Viral Marketing" become important and powerful tools to any business that wants to tap the power of the internet to increase sales.

The second wave of businesses that, perhaps reluctantly, ventured out into cyberspace were traditional retail business that you would not associate with cyberspace at all. This includes sport teams, restaurants and even retail giants such as Wal-Mart and Border's Book Stores. In fact, the wave of change in how products and services are sold has been so rapid that entire market niches have been virtually revolutionalized by internet sales techniques. Book and music outlets have been virtually hard hit as a large percentage of their customers have abandoned the "brick and mortar" sales outlets entirely to use the more convenient tools of internet shopping.

This has made it tough on some retailers to keep up. For the "mom and pop" business, the change has been particularly devastating. Already small, home grown businesses were struggling to compete with the giant mega-stores like Wal-Mart to keep their loyal clientele coming back. Add to that the migration of customers to the internet and the need for change just to stay in business became even more urgent.

But even businesses who do not depend on marketing at all have seen the need to

build and maintain a well functioning business web site so they will have a "face" in cyberspace. In the modern marketplace, the consumer will go to the internet first to find out about a company and it's goods and services. This has turned traditional ways of connecting with existing and new customers upside down entirely.

The good news is that these rapid changes in how modern markets work have made the business world more diverse, more able to adjust to changing business dynamics and more open to the creative and innovative minds that have always been the real life blood of the business world. And, ironically, it is often the small business that is most capable of making rapid changes to its online presence and ways to doing things.

In that the internet is a phenomenally dynamic place, new ways of reaching our customers change almost annually. Where one year a simple web page may have been sufficient, soon we had to have chat rooms, MySpace pages and YouTube compatibility. Any business that sees these changes as chances to do something new and exciting with their business will be the companies that thrive in this modern world. And, as always, those who do not thrive with change will be destined to be made obsolete by it.